

# The Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford Magazine

**BafM**  
First Prize  
Newsletter  
Awards  
2016

**Interview with PRM  
Director**

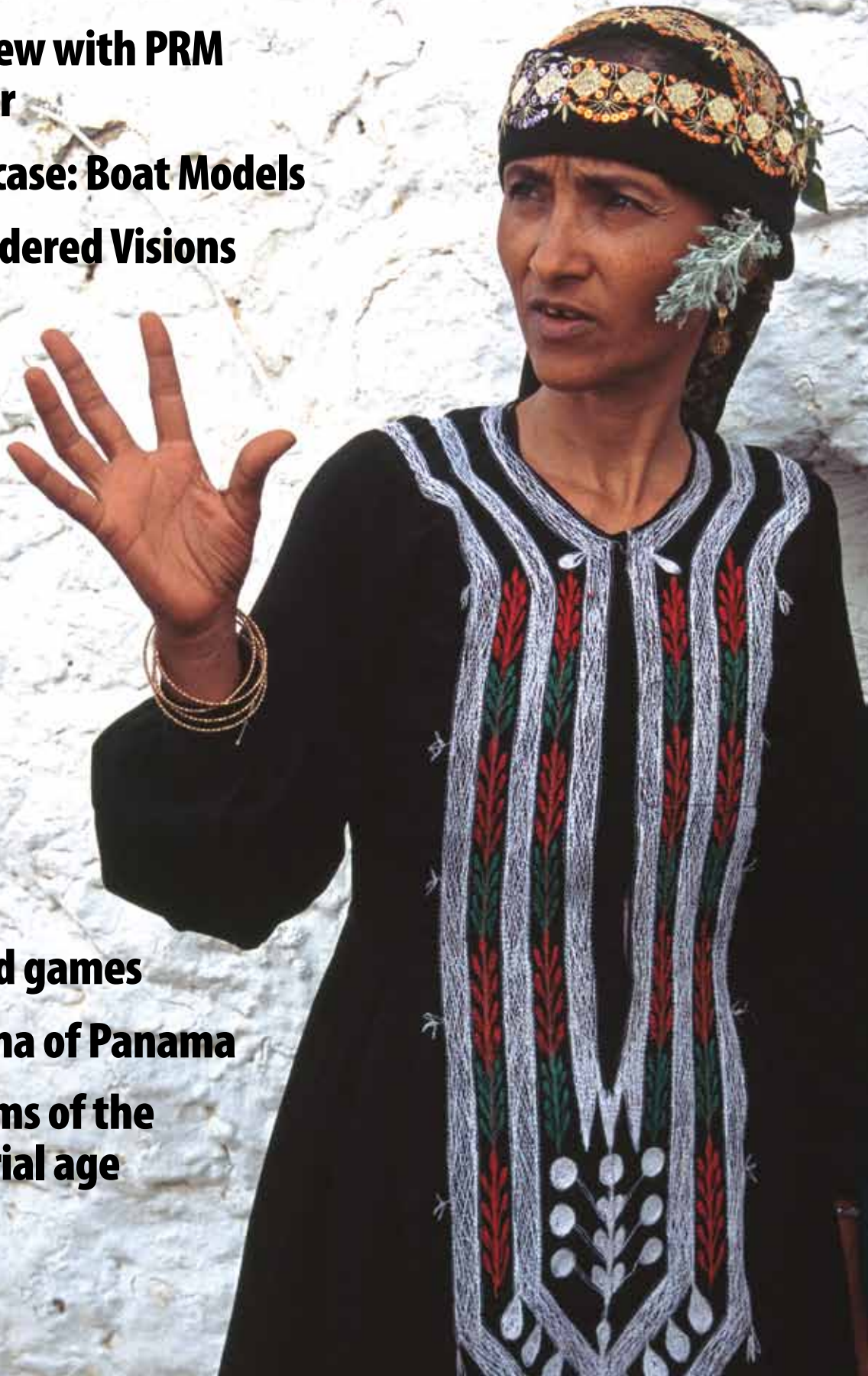
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## News from the Museum

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### Editorial

This is my last issue as Editor before stepping down at our June AGM. I've had a great time during my six-year term, would like to thank everyone for their support and am delighted to have had the opportunity to get to know a wide range of contributors and readers. I'd now like everyone to welcome my successor Dawn Osborne. She got to know Oxford and the PRM well during her undergraduate days at Magdalen College and is now a highly-regarded intellectual copyright lawyer. Dawn travels at every opportunity and is especially interested in visiting lesser known cultures, such as the Kuna of Panama (p9).

On pages 4 and 5 PRM Director Laura van Broekhoven tells Jonathan Bard her visions and strategy for the Museum today and tomorrow. The centre spread (pp 6 & 7) is devoted to a pair of museums celebrating the culture of the industrial age in France and England. Zena McCreevy continues our Take a Case series with a look at the new Model Boat display which she curated (p8).

Thank you to Nicky and Jerry Moeran for their customary written and photographic contribution on the recent Kenneth Kirkwood Lecture Day (p10). Dedicated to Nicky's father, the first president of the Friends, it raised a record £1,064.50. The stunning Sheila Paine evening is celebrated (largely) in pictures (p3).

Finally, we return to A Younger View, on P11, with a charming contribution on the Hawaiian Feather Cloak by Laura van Broekhoven's son, Tiuri.

**Juliette Gammon, Editor**

**Cover image:** Photo by Sheila Paine of Yemeni woman wearing an embroidered dress  
© Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

It has been an exciting few months with many activities in the evenings and weekends that transform the Museum and bring in new audiences. The Friends have organised a great many meetings, and I am thrilled to see how events fill our lecture theatre week after week.

In March we celebrated International Women's day with two events. The first was a University of Oxford women's network meeting. This brought together many young scientists – even rocket scientists! – together with the Vice-Chancellor. For many it was their first visit to the Pitt Rivers. For the second, the Museum was 'taken over' by the Young Women's Music Project (YWMP), a youth empowerment charity doing important work with often very vulnerable young people in Oxfordshire. Their focus is on using music, art and general creativity to allow young people to grow in confidence and learn about their rights and how to exercise them.

I am proud to say that today the Museum's staff is largely female. We stand on the shoulders and follow in the footsteps of some remarkable trailblazing and passionate women who were involved in collecting, displaying and cataloguing the collections. Their histories and agency are engrained in the very fibre of the Museum. We aspire to explore more of their histories in 2018 when we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act.

**Laura van Broekhoven,**  
Museum Director

### VERVE update

VERVE has had a busy season of activities with local refugees and LGBTQ+ community groups, two of the new audiences with whom the Museum wishes to build relationships. LGBTQ+ activities included the Party at the Pitt, a lively night co-curated with members of these communities that turned the Museum into a safe space for over 400 people. This was part of the launch of the LGBTQ+ trail across all four University Museums.

Helen Adams will return to lead VERVE in mid-March. I have greatly enjoyed steering this dynamic team and am proud of everything we have accomplished, from new displays to working with new audiences.

**Laura Peers, Interim VERVE Project Manager**



© Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

Left: 'Two-Spirit' LGBTQ drum by First Nations artists Jessica McMann (Cree) and Elijah Wells (Blackfoot), purchased by VERVE for the PRM collections, 2017

### Between Friends

OUR aim of achieving closer integration of FPRM and PRM is progressing well. This was particularly evident at the *Embroidered Visions* event described by Felicity Wood on page 3. On 15 March, we enjoyed a talk by the anthropologist André Singer, who described his involvement in the long-running TV series *Disappearing World* (1970-1993). He donated his archive of still images from South Sudan (see issue 87) to the Museum in 2009: they will be available online in the Autumn. Following some discussion about the Museum's 'cause' for the proceeds of the 2016 Christmas auction, it will contribute to the *Origins and Futures Indigenous Researchers and Artists* programme instead of the LGBTQ+ drum, as previously reported. We are also delighted to donate £5,000 towards the acquisition and installation of artworks by the indigenous Australian artist Christian Thompson; this exhibition will be formally opened in June, together with a seminar discussion.

Changes are afoot on the Friends' Council. This year's Beatrice Blackwood evening will be the last of four organised by Barbara Topley; Juliette Gammon is to take over. Two key roles will change after the June AGM: Juliette will be replaced by Dawn Osborne as Magazine Editor and Philip Goose will follow Terri Costain as Treasurer. Dorothy Walker and Emily Wu have taken on the role of Membership Development following Conor Pickering's resignation due to health problems. Jonathan Bard has agreed to take over as Secretary from Inga Ristau, who is leaving Oxford. Warm thanks to all, for generously contributing their time to the Friends.

**Gillian Morriss-Kay, Chair of the Friends**



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# Sheila Paine's Embroidered Visions

ON 25 January there was a special evening for Friends and their guests to celebrate *Embroidered Visions*, the exhibition of photographs by Sheila Paine, intrepid traveller, embroidery expert, photographer, very special Friend, and also the launch of the book of the same name.

In 2011 Sheila gave more than 3,000 colour slides to the Museum. The funds raised by the Friends' 2015 Silent Auction were used to support the framing of a selection of these photographs for the exhibition. Money from the Micklethwait gift and the Friends' Kenneth Kirkwood Memorial Fund helped to fund the accompanying book. This special evening was therefore a moment to celebrate not only Sheila's wonderful photographs but also the Friends' contribution that had helped the exhibition and the book to happen.

After introductions by our Chair, Gillian Morriss-Kay, and PRM Director, Laura van Broekhoven, a selection of the photographs was presented by Philip Grover (Assistant Curator,

Photograph and Manuscript Collections), who – together with Katherine Clough – had curated the exhibition and co-authored the book. Julia Nicholson (Curator and Joint Head of Collections) then spoke about the textiles collected by Sheila now in the Pitt Rivers. Some – including her blue burka – were displayed on a table. Finally, the film-makers Jenny Duff and Amanda Feldon spoke of their visit to Yemen with Sheila in 1995 to make a documentary for Channel 4. Clearly they had huge admiration for her energy and enquiring spirit. We all felt the same when we watched the film, seeing Sheila bound up steep steps in the hot sun, talking to embroiderers, riding pillion on a motor bike and much more.

Philip presented Sheila with two framed photographs. It was then time to buy copies of the book and to take a look at the photo exhibition and the *Stitch of a Symbol* case display of her textiles on the Lower Gallery.

**Felicity Wood, Friend**



Clockwise from top left: Herero woman in double-pointed hat said to represent cattle horns, Namibia, 1999. 2012.4.878; Man in Turkmen hat (telpek) with patterned coat lining, Kunya-Urgench, Turkmenistan, 1984. 2012.4.2218; Woman in chevron-patterned tunic and yellow shawl, Harar, Ethiopia, 1997. 2012.4.673; Man in embroidered felt coat, Kuz Paro, Pakistan, 1993. 2012.4.1534

## Embroidered Visions: Photographs by Sheila Paine

Authors: Katherine Clough and Philip N. Grover  
Available from the PRM shop or online:

<http://pittrivers-photo.blogspot.co.uk/2017/04/embroidered-visions-photographs-by.html>

© All photos: Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

# Interview with the PRM Director

**Dr Laura van Broekhoven is not only the distinguished director of the Pitt Rivers Museum and professorial fellow of Linacre College but is a much-published academic speaking five languages. Laura has now been here for a year and I recently interviewed her about her plans, learning how wide-ranging the Museum's work is in showing and using its collection. She, her husband and young family live in North Oxford.**

**Laura, could we start with your telling me something about your background?**

My first degree was in archaeology at the University of Leiden, a sister university of Oxford, but much of my work has been in exploring historical sources and in ethnography, mainly in Meso-America. My MA thesis focused on the oral history in Tamulté de las Sabanas, a Mayan village where I worked with the local youth and elders. My PhD was based on a community museum in the central Nicaragua town of Juigalpa, which has one of the most fabulous collections of statues in Central America. Afterwards I started working in the National Museum of Ethnography in Leiden and developed work with indigenous peoples from the Amazon, Brazil and Suriname. I wanted to continue to teach so combined curatorial work with teaching at the University. After a few years, I became Head of Research at Leiden and in 2014, when we merged with the Tropenmuseum and Afrika Museum,



*Laura discussing a photograph album with Philip Grover and Katherine Clough*

I had the honour of leading the new curatorial team and the opportunity to rethink our focus and programming. I spent several happy years there but, when Mike O'Hanlon retired, it seemed a natural step to apply for the Directorship of the Pitt Rivers Museum, and here I am!

**What were your initial impressions of the Pitt Rivers?**

The Museum was of course wonderful, as were the staff, although links with the University of Oxford were looser than I expected. I also found the budget thinner than I was used to in the Netherlands where public funding is more generous. I immediately knew that raising money was something that I would have to work on here. I also felt that, while the Museum is wonderful for exploring our artefacts, staffing is thin and space for exhibitions and outreach is inadequate, while storage for our world-renowned collections needs investment.

**What is your five-year plan?**

We want to see the Museum doing more with its unique resources. Internally, this means strong programming, excellent stewardship of our collections, and ensuring that our staff are enabled to maximise their skills and talents. Externally we want to increase



*Tattoo gun 2001.41.1 .1-4*

links with other museums and with our three pools of visitors: local community members, our own and visiting academics and indigenous peoples (the *Origins and Futures Programme*). And of course we want to show more; we display none of our unique and rare photographs (see opposite) and sound recordings.

We also want to strengthen our links with both Oxford universities. The PRM is part of GLAM (Gardens, Libraries and Museums), and we collaborate strongly wherever possible. We also work closely with the Schools of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Oxford. I always enjoy giving lectures and taking seminars for the Masters courses that the Museum hosts in Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology; these are taught by its lecturer-curators and draw a global cohort of students. We also have DPhil students and run joint anthropology seminars with students and staff from Oxford Brookes and Ruskin College. Museum staff are involved in teaching over 2,500 students from over 75 Higher Education Institutions annually for both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. I would also like to strengthen our links with science and medical departments who



*Laura examining the Headrests and Pillows (case 123a)*

would work with our objects, and language departments who could involve students in artefacts associated with the literature that they study and with the politics of colonialism and empire.

Finally, we want to build on the soon-ending VERVE programme which has allowed us to improve the Museum and to initiate outreach to the general public, particularly to





My Identity 1-4 by Gonkar Gyatso, a sequence of four colour prints on the identity of the Tibetan artist in different cultural and political environments. 1. As 'traditional' painter in Tibet; 2. As Tibetan artist in Communist-controlled Tibet; 3. As artist in exile, Dharamsala, India; 4. As Western-based artist

socio-economically challenged groups and audiences for whom the Museum can provide a welcoming space. These include groups involved with autism, partial-sightedness, dementia, and refugees as well as local BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) organisations and other grassroots movements. I am proud to say that these plans were drafted collaboratively with our staff who would like the PRM to be a key resource for Oxford and the world.

**What is the Origins and Futures Programme?**

This is something close to my heart. I want to enable people from indigenous cultures to visit us and to re-establish contact with Museum artefacts that are meaningful to them. Sometimes, these interactions are private as individuals see themselves as awakening objects that have lost contact with their original owners. On other occasions, they are public as in the displays of material from the Haida people who have worked with Professor Laura Peers. We have to understand people often feel strongly about objects that are dear to them but that ended up at the PRM for (sometimes difficult) historical reasons. Objects are often more than merely things, they are ancestors embodying very personal and emotional ties.

**And how will you pay for all this?**

A good question! Realising our plans will need money, more than

is provided by the University of Oxford who currently fund just over a third of our budget. We need to be more innovative in our fundraising and are approaching trusts who may help with new staff but we will also pursue other strategies such as having a café and hosting more private events. We hope to encourage visitors to be a little more generous than they are now. We have over 430,000 visitors a year and if each donated just a single pound coin rather than the current 8p, many of our financial problems would be solved. We need to make people aware of the importance of their donations to us.

**Finally, how do you see the role of the Friends and how can it be enhanced?**

I am looking forward to the Friends and the Museum having a closer relationship. I thought that the recent and wonderful event organised by Philip Grover and Cathy Clough around the Sheila Paine exhibition (see p10) provided a good example. The Friends funded the framing of the pictures and the printing of the book, while the Museum provided the staffing, the book design and all other costs. I also hope that we will be able to do more with our Patrons and build up the number of Friends, seeing how we can enhance the value of membership so that Friends can view themselves as Museum ambassadors.

**Jonathan Bard, Friend**

*Laura van Broekhoven chose the images for this article*



'Desert Melon', by Christian Thompson, 2012. 2013.181.1

© Christian Thompson

© Gonkar Gyatso

# Two museums dedicated to industry and the 'iron age'



## Guest museum France: The EcoMuseum at le Creusot



*Top right: A Chadebec safety poster: 'Always think before you act'; Main photo: Le Creusot EcoMuseum: main building and former glass kiln, now a theatre; Bottom left: The theatre's interior*

LE CREUSOT is a small French town, 35 km west of Chalon-sur-Saône and 20 km south-east of the Morvan National Park – essentially the back of beyond. It first came to prominence in 1786 when Queen Marie Antoinette's crystal glass factory, the Château de la Verrerie (Crystal Palace) was built there; this was bought by its competitors in 1832 and closed down. In 1837, following the discovery of deposits of iron ore nearby (the closest large town is called Monceau-les-Mines), the buildings were bought by the Schneiders, a family of ironmasters who developed the site for the heavy industry characteristic of the age of steam. Today, their company, Schneider Electric, is based in Paris and has an annual turnover of €30 billion; it is around the 200th largest company in the world.

The original estate at Le Creusot is now the EcoMuseum of Man and Industry. My husband and I happened on it while holidaying nearby. The site is impressive with its elegant 18th century French building surrounding a very large courtyard containing two enormous cone-shaped structures, the original glass kilns. Within the main buildings are several museum areas. The first describes the 18th century glass company and

its manufacturing processes, together with a display of the glass made there. Another includes models of items such as industrial plant and locomotives made by the Schneider Company, together with large-scale historic paintings of men working in 19th century forges and metal-working factories.

Slightly detached from the main buildings is the Pavilion of Industry, a central feature of which is a model of the whole Le Creusot site at the height of its manufacturing capacity. It was extraordinarily large, with its own railway station and dedicated line, a small private town to house its workforce and many distinct factories. There are numerous examples of the company's products, from simple metal pipes to enormous pieces of high-quality steel designed for use in nuclear reactors, and fascinating historic films showing heavy manufacturing processes.

The glass kilns were redesigned early in the 20th century. The one on the right was converted into a chapel and is not on public view. The other became a private theatre for entertaining important guests and potential clients. Trompe l'oeil paintings cover the walls and ceilings and the auditorium is designed as an elegant sitting room. Under the stage is a tiny orchestra pit for a conductor and a dozen musicians, and an electric lighting control panel that was state of the art a 100 years ago. We were shown round by the delightful and enthusiastic lady from the ticket office – please see her when you want to visit the cone.

Within the main building, there is a separate space for temporary exhibitions. The one that we saw was an unexpected delight: it honoured the work of Bernard Chadebec, a major graphic artist who spent his career at the French National Institute for Research and Security producing hundreds of industrial safety posters. These convey essential safety messages through simple images that appeal to common sense and humour rather than being officious or dictatorial.

Most of the museums that this Magazine reviews are concerned with anthropology. The Le Creusot EcoMuseum showcases artefacts of the past 200 years, the work of very modern man, or contemporary anthropology. We urge you to go.

**Gillian Morriss-Kay**, *Chair of the Friends*





# Guest museum England: The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

**Juliette Gammon spent the weekend in Ironbridge last October at the British Association of Friends of Museums Conference. The Friends of the Museum Trust won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2016.**

'GUEST MUSEUM' is actually something of a misnomer as the Trust is an umbrella for 10 museums in and around Ironbridge, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution and one of the UK's first World Heritage Sites.

The iconic Ironbridge itself rises 16.75 metres above the River Severn near Telford, Shropshire and weighs 387.5 tons. Erected by ironmaster Abraham Darby in 1779, it proved an excellent advertisement for his new cast-iron wares. David de Haan, retired senior curator at the Trust and now Vice Chair of the Friends, has studied the bridge for 35 years, writing its conservation plan and acting as English Heritage's consultant. He guided a party of us under and over it to the *Toll House* where the tariff board shows that prices set in 1779 by Act of Parliament were still applicable when it closed as a thoroughfare. Even the royal family must pay and when Prince Charles visited in 1979 he had to borrow the required halfpenny.

After the abandonment of the iron industry in the 1950s, the Trust was formed to rescue the disused buildings and factories, and maintain the bridge. Both sides of the gorge are imperceptibly sliding inwards but Wrekin Council has secured an £18 million grant from World Heritage to underpin its structure and

stabilise the land.

The entrance to the *Museum of Iron* in Abraham Darby's former Coalbrookdale Company Works is dominated by the Cupid and Swan Fountain cast for the 1851 Great Exhibition. On the upper floor, the massive Deerhound Table, weighing 800kg with its corners supported by four life-size dogs, was a highlight of the 1855 Paris Exhibition. The water-powered blast furnace where Darby perfected iron smelting with coke is in the adjacent *Foundry*. From the first beam engine cylinders in the 1720s to the first locomotive in 1802, the international demand for cast-iron products grew and by 1800 Coalbrookdale was the largest employer in the country with 1,000 workers.

Next door, younger visitors will be delighted by the remarkable interactive science and technology museum *Ingenuity* where I also saw the Costume Project exhibition. This profitable venture makes 18th and 19th century costumes based on original historical patterns for museums, productions and re-enactments. Nearby are the '*Darby Houses*', the former homes of the Quaker ironmasters.

The *Jackfield Tile Museum* sits above a working factory dating from 1874. The Victorians had a passion for tiles and

inside you step on them, sit on them, lean against them and touch them. The visitor walks through an Edwardian underground before passing 1929 tile murals from the children's wards of Middlesex Hospital, a Victorian butcher, pub and church. Tiles for all the Circle Line's original stations were made here (and for the 2005 restoration) as were those for the 1876 Centennial Building (part of the Smithsonian) in Washington DC. When it needed repair in the 1970s, the Friends found the original moulds in an old factory tip.

Our final stop was *Blist Hill*, a recreated Victorian town. There's a lot to learn and enjoy dipping into the shops and workplaces but my highlights were a full-scale working replica of the 1802 steam railway locomotive and the *Spry* (1894), the only surviving example of a Severn Trow. These flat-bottomed sailboats date from the 1400s and carried iron goods from the inland Coalport, where the Severn canal meets the river, to Bristol and Gloucester ports.

Sadly, there wasn't time for the *Coalport China Museum*, the *Tar Tunnel* and the *Broseley Pipeworks*. But the good news is that the £27 museum pass lasts a year, allowing you to return whenever you wish.

**Juliette Gammon, Editor**



All images: Copyright and courtesy of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust



• TABLE of TOLLS .	
For every time they pass over this BRIDGE.	
For every Coach, Landau, Hearse, Chaise, Chair, or such like	2.0
Carriages drawn by Six Horses, Mares, Geldings, or Mules	1.0
Ditto By Four Ditto	1.0
Ditto By Two Ditto	1.0
Ditto by One Ditto	0.6
For every Horse, Mule, Ass, pair of Oxen, Drawing or Harness'd to draw any Waggon, Cart, or such like carriage, for each Horse &c.	0.3
For a Horse, Mule, or Ass, laden or unladen and not drawing,	0.1
For a Horse, Mule, or Ass carrying double,	0.2
For an Ox, Cow, or neat cattle	0.1
For a Calf, Pig, Sheep, or lamb	0.0
For every Horse, Mule, Ass, or carriage going on the roads and not over the Bridge, half the said tolls.	0.0
For every Foot passenger, going over the Bridge	0.0
N.B. This Bridge being private property every Officer or Soldier, whether on duty or not, is liable to pay toll for passing over, as well as any baggage waggon, mail-coach or the Royal Family.	

Top: Ironbridge, the world's first cast iron bridge, designed by Thomas Farnolls Pritchard (1723-1777); Clockwise, far left: Cupid and Boy Fountain, lithograph, Dygby Wyatt 1852, showing its original colours; Deerhound table designed by John Bell (1811-1895), and made by the Coalbrookdale Company; Tollboard 1779; Tile murals from a Middlesex Hospital children's ward, 1929

# Take a case: new Boat Models display

**H**AVE you noticed the new ‘Boat Models’ display in the Court Gallery near the totem pole? If not, when you next visit the Museum I encourage you to look at this custom-made case, which allows viewing many of the models from multiple angles. Although most were previously on display, they were difficult to see and some – like the large river boat from Myanmar (Burma) – now have the rigging and sails carefully reassembled thanks to Conservation staff.

The display text and labels include information about all the models but I am focusing on three Tasmanian Aboriginal canoes made about 1843. One consists of three bundles of tea tree bark (*Melaleuca*), bound with fibre from the Tasmanian hemp bush (*Currajong*); the other two are reeds bound with plant fibre. The first is approximately 76.5 centimetres in length and 19 centimetres wide, the other two are longer and thinner.

There are 19th century illustrations of very similar looking full-size canoes, which were made of bark or reeds. Written records and cultural knowledge note that they were used offshore, as well as inland, and were made in various sizes (one was known to carry eight people). The models are extremely important as no full-size canoes from this time period have survived. Zoe Rimmer, a Curator at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) and a member of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, visited the PRM in 2014 and emphasised:

“The Tasmanian model canoes are very rare objects and are significant to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as they are three of only nine known surviving models from the 1840s (one at the British Museum; five at TMAG.) The reed canoe models are particularly special as they are the only two known to be made of this material.”

Zoe Rimmer, 2014 *pittrivers-object*.  
[blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/visiting-researchers.html](http://blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/visiting-researchers.html)

Zoe mentioned that the community used the models at TMAG to help revive the practice of making canoes. When I started



© Image: Jack Robert Tissot, The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Above: 2007 full size bark canoe on display in ningina tunapri gallery;  
 Right: 2007 scanning canoe model M5349



© The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

working on this display I contacted her to find out more. In 2007 CT scans of the models revealed that the hulls were made of many small bundles of cut-and-rolled paperbark. Knowledge of the basic construction method, pieced together with cultural knowledge, enabled a group of men from the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to make the first full-size version in nearly 170 years. This four-metre stringy bark canoe is displayed in the *ningina tunapri* gallery at TMAG. The boat builders’ second canoe was launched in the Derwent River in 2007.

In addition to the very practical role models can play in preserving, and reinstating, boat building techniques and cultural practices, they are also extremely emotive and poignant objects. All three of the PRM’s canoes were collected from Flinders Island in 1843 by John Franklin, the Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania (then Van Diemen’s Land). Aboriginal people taken to Flinders from mainland Tasmania to be ‘civilised and christianised’ were forbidden to practice their ‘old ways’. Artist Julie Gough, who has studied these models, brings to life their power:

“Made at a time that our ancestors were forcibly exiled on Flinders Island (1831 to Aug 1847)... made (it seems) for sale to visitors to the island... I am not sure if they were commissioned as gifts for visitors like Governor Franklin – a seafaring navigator/explorer himself – but that seems likely.

I consider this making of model boats to be very moving, considering our ancestors’ exile too far from the Tasmanian mainland for our canoes to make the distance home. These models seem, to me, to be a lament for exile and loss of our country.”

Julie Gough, email correspondence with author 2016

The models display team is currently working on the Museum’s naval ship models, which will be displayed in the adjoining case.

**Zena McGreevy,**  
 Senior Assistant Curator



Above top: Model canoe made from bundles of tea tree bark bound with fibre from the Tasmanian hemp bush, PRM 1893.50.13; Centre: Model canoe made of reeds bound together at regular intervals with plant fibre, Tasmania PRM 1893.50.14; Bottom: Model reed canoe designed for the tapered ends of the bow and stern to rise out of the water, PRM 1893.50.15



# The Kuna of Panama

THE Kuna live primarily in North East Panama on a long thin strip of coastal land with 40 small offshore islands that they call 'Kuna Yala' (known elsewhere as San Blas). They farm, trade extensively in coconuts, gather from the forest and hunt small mammals such as the peccary and iguana. They are also well adapted to life on the water, being greatly skilled as fishermen and in the art of canoe building. Basketry is also expected of all grown men.

Households are matrilineal and pass from wives to oldest daughters, with new husbands moving to work for their wives' parents. Female babies undergo nose and ear piercing at birth and a key public building is the *chicha* house used to celebrate their coming of age, an event of great importance in Kuna culture. Girls are sequestered, bathed in seawater, painted black with the *genipa* fruit and undergo a haircutting ritual. These events are accompanied by days of communal feasting, drinking fermented *inna* or *chicha*, dancing, chanting, smoking, and flute playing (flutes symbolise masculinity), with performers wearing feather crowns and pelican-bone flute necklaces. In contrast, the only outward sign of male coming of age is the adoption of long pants, western clothing being the norm.

The Pitt Rivers owns many examples of *mola* or textiles made by Kuna women that date back to the 19th century. Their patterns are inspired by body-painting designs and are cut in intricate shapes and contrasting bright colours and then sewn onto cloth in a style



Above: *Mola: blouse with blue yoke and sleeves, San Blas Islands, Panama. 1924.46.89; Above right: Beaded arm and leg guards worn by Kuna women; Below right: Albino slaying moon dragon with bow and arrow during lunar eclipse which hangs in the San Blas Museum*

akin to, but not exactly, appliqué (where you draw, baste, cut the top layer into outlines and sew to base cloth by hand). Subjects range from nature (the sun, birds, animals, insects such as spider; marine life including sea slugs, and even worms); culture (religious and political icons); medicine (frogs legs) and the modern world (boats, planes, space rockets, basketball, food-packaging and cartoon characters such as ninja turtle). Complementarily similar, but not identical, front and back panels are traditionally used as bodices. Women also wear geometric beaded arm and leg bands, wrap-around skirts and scarves, together with nose rings, face paint on their noses and, on special occasions, large coin necklaces.

Kuna believe in the 'Great Father' and 'Great Mother' as deities and animism. Culture is expressed visually through pictures or orally through song, chant and stories. Community is, therefore, all-important and each village has a main gathering house for religious and political use. Here, chiefs, reclining in hammocks, will sing in turn to address moral codes, history, myth and



Photo: Dawn Osborne

metaphor while women sew and men weave.

Shamans who are able to perceive the spirit world and diagnose illness and effect cure can be male or female. Healing and defence against soul loss or corruption by malevolent or reckless spirits is considered essential, and spiritual healing against them is helped by benevolent spirits that reside in anthropomorphic carvings. These *nuchus* are of European-looking human beings; they are about 30 cm high and made of wood considered special, such as balsa. Such spiritual healing is considered as important as physical healing by traditional medicinal plants gathered from the forest.

A relatively high proportion of Kuna (about one in 145) is albino. They are the only people allowed out during lunar eclipses and are considered essential to slay the dragon threatening to swallow the moon during this event by bow and arrow. As such they are respected as 'Children of the Moon'. This is a delightful way of ensuring inclusiveness for people who there, and in many other cultures, were historically victimised.

Dawn Osborne, *Friend*



Photo: Dawn Osborne

# Mind games on Kenneth Kirkwood day

THE practice of altering states of human consciousness stretches back millennia, and continues across the world to this day. Pure forms range from Transcendental Meditation – the practical aspect of India’s Vedic tradition – through to the trance-like states achieved by the Shamans in Upper Amazonia and the Sufis of North Africa.

This year’s Kenneth Kirkwood Memorial Lecture Day chose the subject of ‘Altered States of Consciousness’ as its theme and began with some myth-busting from meditation expert **Nigel Barlow**. “Apps teaching you meditation are a waste of time,” he said. “Is it difficult? No. Does it need discipline? No. Does it require effort and concentration? None.”

Learning how to meditate takes no more than a handful of short sessions. “We are taught a mantra. It has no meaning but it allows your mind to settle deeper and deeper until it transcends its own activity.” The benefits are significant. “Transcendental Meditation has a rapid and profound effect on reducing anxiety... it decreases blockage in the carotid artery... it helps soldiers suffering from PTSD.” Indeed, one veteran described it as “The difference between heaven and hell. It has been absolutely transformational.”

Anthropologist **Dr Stephen Hugh-Jones**, of Kings College, Cambridge, studies the Tukanoan peoples of North West Amazonia and their use of hallucinogenic compounds found in the

abundant local vegetation. “There is a tendency to look at what drugs do to people. I want to explore what people are doing with drugs. And I want to set the whole subject in the context of different types of religious authority in the Upper Amazon.” The Tukanoans have two different types of Shaman. One fulfils the role of Wise Man, or intellectual, and the other type, known as Jaguar Shamans (or Jazz Shamans), are more associated with hunting and sorcery.

Dr Hugh-Jones gave a vivid first-hand description of the effects of taking the drug *ayahuasca*, a key feature of Wise Man rituals. So bitter it induces vomiting and causes wooziness, dramatic and realistic changes to peoples’ perception of colours, sights and sounds follow. Tukanoan Shamanism raises interesting questions about attitudes to ‘drugs’ in first-world societies that are addicted to alternative ‘drugs’ such as sugar and alcohol.

The Professor of Ancient History at Kings College, London, **Hugh Bowden**, chose ‘Prophecy, Ecstasy and Altered States of Consciousness’ in Ancient Greece as his subject. “From 700 BC to AD 400 people came looking for wise advice from the Priestess of Apollo at the Oracle of Delphi.” According to myth, she shrieked and babbled and relied on male priests to make her coherent. However there is conflicting evidence that she was not wild, but calm and peaceful and some

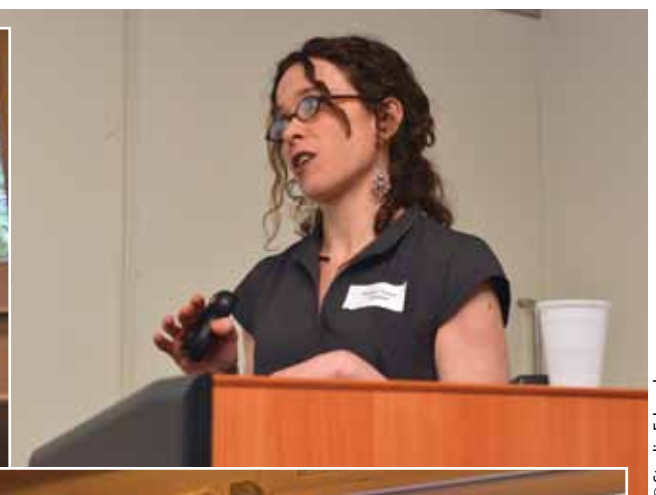
of the ritual processes may have involved meditation.

By contrast a feature of Bacchic ecstasy, associated with the worship of the God Dionysus, was strong rhythmic dancing that seemed to drive some women into an altered state of consciousness, “a state of divine”. Ancient Greek imagery depicts them with tambourines and snakes, symbols that find modern echoes in the musical instruments and snakes still used in services in the gospel churches of the South-Eastern USA. A worshipper at one such service was quoted as describing the experience as “Making a different person out of me... I get drunk in the spirit.”

**Tamara Turner**, also from Kings College, London, is a specialist in the Sufi-related music of North Africa. “In *diwan*, an Algerian Sufi ritual, music is essential to produce warmth that can cultivate a wide spectrum of trance – from mild trance to possession trance. Trance articulates and attends to personal suffering and social pain in the community [which is] quite involved in other people’s trance-like states – it is a theatrical, performative event.”

**Nicky Moeran**, *Friend and Kenneth Kirkwood’s daughter*

*I’d like to thank Nick and Rumi Ringshall who organised the day and the Friends who provided the delicious lunch. A record profit of £1,064.50 was raised for the KK Memorial Fund which supports PRM staff with work-associated travel. Ed*



*Clockwise from top left: Hugh Bowden; Tamara Turner; Nigel Barlow; Stephen Hugh-Jones with a Tukanoan pot used for serving the liquid ayahuasca*



© Studio Edmark



# A younger view: Hawaiian feather cloak



Feather cloak decorated all over with yellow, red and black feathers, Hawaii 1951.10.61

I FIND it fascinating that they could only pick a couple of feathers per bird and make all the different colours and patterns. Also, I like that it is a cape that was worn by kings and powerful men and that they found their backs and necks the most important part of their bodies and the cape protects that part. And that it showed that you were higher status. It must have taken ages to make, because there are so many feathers: hundreds of thousands of them! I find it amazing that it has passed through so many people and it is still in such good condition.

The black and yellow feathers come from the o'o bird, and the red feathers come from the I'iwi bird. They are both really beautiful birds that have a bit of a curved beak to suck

nectar out of flowers. The o'o bird no longer exists but there are beautiful pictures, drawings and sound recordings of their singing. There are sound recordings of the last male o'o in Hawaii but no female response to his singing is ever going to come. It is very sad to hear him sing alone with no answer.

Tiuri Geurds, age 9

# A house in harmony

WHO would think that behind such an anonymous looking front door lies a treasure trove! On our Spring Away Day we visited Jeremy Montagu's collection of musical instruments. They were on every wall and shelf, not just in the ground floor and top floor rooms, but just everywhere – trumpets in the entrance hall and bells hanging from the ceiling by the staircase. One whole wall was devoted to blown instruments, mainly *shofars*, the Jewish ritual instrument fashioned from the horns of rams and other animals. The variety was amazing, with the focus on the developmental history brought completely up to date with the vuvuzela and other plastic examples.

The collection showed that our desire to make and listen to music has a long history, and that we have employed many materials to do so. Not all were used to make music for entertainment; some were a means of communication to give warnings, messages, and news. Among our favourites were the conch shells, a Japanese temple gong (1495), a phallic Balinese drum, a playful swanee slide whistle and a Chinese mouth organ (*sheng*). Jeremy explained that the sheng is a very ancient Chinese instrument that gave rise to a whole new family of instruments with free reeds – concertinas, accordions and harmoniums, after one arrived in St Petersburg at the end of the 18th century.

Very many thanks to Jeremy and his daughter Sarah for making us so welcome.

Clockwise from top left: Jeremy Montagu playing the Chinese mouth organ; Swanee whistle with fluttering canary; a Balinese slit drum (the detachable phallus is the beater); a wall of blown instruments, mainly shofars



Photo: Gillian Morriss-Kay

# FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENTS

**Come and enjoy a wide variety of free family friendly events, activities and workshops. All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.**  
[prm.ox.ac.uk/events](http://prm.ox.ac.uk/events)

## May Half Term

**Friday 2 June-Saturday 3 June, 13.00-16.00**

### Pitt Stop: Do You Believe in Magic?

From fossilised squid to potatoes, we have lots of magical objects. Make your own lucky charm bracelet or a witch in a bottle.

**Friday 9 June, 10.30-12.00**

### Under 5s: A Little Look at... Masks

Come along and see some of our fascinating objects and make something to take home

**Sunday 2 July, 12.00-16.30**

### Cowley Road Carnival

Join us for fun with object handling and crafts.

**Friday 7 July, 10.30-12.00**

### Under 5s: A Little Look at... Feathers

**Saturday 22 July-Sunday 3 September**

### Summer Trail: Big Stars & Little Secrets

Find the biggest stars in the Natural History Museum and the best kept secrets in the PRM.

**Saturday 29 July, 10.30-16.30**

### Pitt Fest (see back page)

Object handling, crafts, special guests and live music.

**Monday 31 July, 13.00-16.00**

### Afternoon Explorers: Music

Touch real Museum objects and make something fun to take home.

**Saturday 5 August, 13.00-16.00**

### August Pitt Stop:

#### Games Around the World

Make and play traditional games inspired by the collections.

**Monday 14 August, 13.00-16.00**

### Afternoon Explorers: Money

Touch real museum objects and make something fun to take home.

**Tuesdays 25 July, 8 & 22 August**

### 14.00-16.00 Bags of Fun

Borrow an activities backpack and become a family of museum explorers.

**Saturday 2 September, 13.00-16.00**

### Pitt Stop: What Would You Take to the Afterlife?

Think like an Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh and build your own tomb.

**Friday 8 September, 10.30-12.00**

### September Under 5s:

#### A Little Look at... Food

## New Friends

Linda Barlow (Eynsham); Mary Boyle (London) Dana Goodbury-Brown (Sittingbourne); Michelle Jessop (Coventry); Uwe Kitzinger, Tess McKenney and Elinor Kitzinger (Standlake); Toby and Lucy Read (Appleton) and from Oxford Bahram Bekhradnia and Jean Harrison; Antoni Chawluk and Krystyna Cech; Anne Kitson and Alan Carter; Sam Magee; David and Carole Souter; David Sprigings and Natasha Robinson and Chris and Heather Tyzack. To learn more about the benefits of becoming a Friend, or if your details change, please contact Membership Secretary Rosemary King: [rhking17@gmail.com](mailto:rhking17@gmail.com) or 01367 242433

# INFORMATION SHEET

The Friends' Magazine is published three times a year

**BafM**  
First Prize  
Newsletter  
Awards  
2016

## INFORMATION

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**Annual Subscription:** £22 (Joint: £30)

Family: £30; Over 60; £15 (Joint: £22)

Student: (18-25); £10

**Life Membership:** (for 65+): £125

Subscription year from 1 May.

First subscription paid after 1 January

valid to 30 April of following year.

### President of Friends of Pitt Rivers:

Professor Chris Gosden

### Patrons of Friends of Pitt Rivers:

Alexander Armstrong, Sir David Attenborough, Danby Bloch, Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe, Dame Penelope Lively, Michael Palin CBE, Philip Pullman CBE.

### Museum

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**01865 270927**

Email: [www.prm@prm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:www.prm@prm.ox.ac.uk)

Open: Tuesday-Sunday 10.00-16.30

Monday 12.00-16.30

Admission FREE.

### Highlights tours

**Wednesdays 14.30 and 15.15**

Volunteer-led introduction to the Museum.

Approximately 20 mins. No booking required.

### Saturday Spotlight

**Third Saturday of the month 14.30**

A programme of general interest events, FREE.

### After Hours

Occasional themed evening events.

**Family events:** see [www.prm.ox.ac.uk/family-friendly-events-activities-and-workshops](http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/family-friendly-events-activities-and-workshops)

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The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Museum. All contributors to the Magazine are Friends unless otherwise stated.

## MUSEUM DIARY DATES

### Exhibitions and case displays



© Roger Chapman

#### Long Gallery

**Camel: A Journey through Fragile Landscapes – photographs by Roger Chapman 15 May to 29 October 2017**

#### Lower Gallery, case display

**Stitch of a Symbol – Insights into the textile journeys of Sheila Paine Until 21 May 2017**

Featuring material assembled by **Sheila Paine** during her fieldwork in East and Central Asia.

### Events

**Woodland Ways: Bark Baskets Workshop Saturday 29 July, 10.00-16.00**

Make your own bark basket using prehistoric techniques with Woodland Ways' bushcraft team. Cost: £25 (includes all tuition and materials). Book your place.

### Pitt Fest Remixed!

**Saturday 29 July 10.30-16.30**

This year we invite visitors to explore the collections via performances, workshops, tours and talks around the cases. Expect object handling, special guests and live music.

### Friday 29 September, late

**Carnival of Curiosity in PRM/MNH**

Cross-University event showcasing Oxford's contribution to European researcher's Night, a celebration of academic research for the public supported by EC. Live experiments, debates, bite-sized talks and other activities.

### Pitt Youth Action Team

**Saturdays 11am-1pm**

For 14 to 19-year-olds who want to gain experience in producing and marketing youth events or to work on collaborative creative projects inspired by the Museum.

Contact: **Katherine Rose** [katherine.rose@prm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:katherine.rose@prm.ox.ac.uk) or **01865 613004**

### Saturday Spotlight

**Visual Anthropology in Tibet in black**

**Saturday 20 May, 14.30**

**Professor Clare Harris** shares her research on the visual anthropology of Tibet, with stunning images from her latest book.

### Connecting VERVE

**17 June 2017 at 2.30pm**

As the Heritage Lottery Funded VERVE project comes to an end a chance to hear the highlights of five years of collections renewal and public engagement.

For further information about these displays and other PRM What's On information eg After Hours Tours (£10 book online) see: [prm.ox.ac.uk/whatson](http://prm.ox.ac.uk/whatson)

## FRIENDS' DIARY DATES

### Un-ruffling Feathers:

**sharing stories in the store**

**Wednesday 14 June**

\*Laura Van Broekhoven

**Laura van Broekhoven** focuses on her own research developing new practices in the ways ethnography or world culture collections have relevance to different indigenous people, telling a multitude of stories, outside the framework of museums.

**To be followed by Friends' AGM.**

### Summer Away Day

**Tuesday 13 June 2017 10.50-14.45**

**The Geffrye Museum of the Home –**

**Shoreditch, London**

Displays of London living rooms and gardens illustrate home life from 1600 to the present day reflecting changes in society, behaviour, style and taste. Set in

beautiful 18th-century almshouse buildings, amid attractive period gardens. £7 to include curator's talk and guided tour. Reserve your place by 26 May. Contact: [dorothywalker6@googlemail.com](mailto:dorothywalker6@googlemail.com) See flyer



*Period gardens in summer*

© Geffrye Museum, London / photographer Mandy Williams

### The origins of human artistic creativity

**Wednesday, 11 October 18.00 for 18.30**

**Gillian Morriss-Kay**, Professor Emeritus of Developmental Anatomy, University of Oxford, presents ideas about the evolutionary changes in perception that led to the origin and flowering of this aspect of human expressive behaviour and its practical significance.

### A future for graffiti

**Wednesday, 15 November 18.30**

**Jeremy MacClancey**, Professor of



*Banksy (and others), Bloomsbury, 2010*

Anthropology, Oxford Brookes. In a world where street art is now a career choice for budding artists, what status is left for graffiti? Threatened by urban gentrification strategies and the rise of the Net, can graffiti still pack a political punch?

Talks in Pitt Rivers Lecture Room, access via Robinson Close, South Parks Road, OX1 3PP Visitors welcome, £2. No parking.

Tea from 18.00. Contact **Terry Bremble:** [g.bremble@gmail.com](mailto:g.bremble@gmail.com) or **01865 390489**

See [prm.ox.ac.uk/friendsevents](http://prm.ox.ac.uk/friendsevents) for more information about these Friends' events.