

PRESS RELEASE

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New online Image Gallery: Image/Object/Text

The latest online image gallery from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), entitled Image/Object/Text, sheds light on an important archaeological collection held by the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford.

The online image gallery, which launches this week, features 12 specially commissioned photographs of English archaeological objects collected by the Victorian archaeologist General Augustus Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers, who gave the Museum its founding collection of some 30,000 items. Today, the Pitt Rivers Museum holds more than half a million objects. Consequently, relatively few of the General's founding collection are on display and the online gallery now makes immensely detailed images of these archaeological objects available to the public for the very first time.

The artefacts in the image gallery range in date across the Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age and Roman periods, and they come from across England - from London, Oxfordshire and Sussex to Yorkshire, Suffolk and Shropshire. The photographs of flint knives, stone axes, pottery vessels and other items also reveal some of the recording methods used by Pitt-Rivers and later museum curators. The gallery's captions highlight how the writing found on objects and labels reveals elements of the object's modern life-history, as well as its deeper archaeological past (although unlike older such writing, recent museum inscriptions are designed to be removable).

The gallery has been made aided by a collections-based research project undertaken by Professor Dan Hicks of the University of Oxford. Dan's project, funded through a grant from the Designation Development Fund of Arts Council England (ACE), was titled Excavating Pitt-Rivers. Working in the Museum stores, the project documented the English archaeological material collected by General Pitt-Rivers between c. 1865 and 1880. The project team documented some 10,696 archaeological artefacts from across England and published them on the Museum's online database. In most cases, this was the first time that the objects have received such detailed examination since they came to Oxford in 1884.

For more information and to view the gallery please visit:

<http://excavatingpitrivers.blogspot.co.uk/>

Ends

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Notes for editors

- The Pitt Rivers Museum is one of Oxford's most popular attractions, famous for its period atmosphere and outstanding collections from many cultures around the world, past and present. Admission, exhibitions and events are FREE.
- The Pitt Rivers Museum was founded in 1884 when General Pitt Rivers, an influential figure in the development of archaeology and evolutionary anthropology, gave his personal collection of 20,000 items to the University on condition that a museum was built to house the material, and that a post was created to lecture in anthropology. Today the collection numbers some 600,000 items, and the Museum remains an active department of Oxford University doing and supporting research and teaching in archaeology and anthropology.
- The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funds world-class, independent researchers in a wide range of subjects: ancient history, modern dance, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, English literature, design, the creative and performing arts, and much more. This financial year the AHRC will spend approximately £98m to fund research and postgraduate training in collaboration with a number of partners. The quality and range of research supported by this investment of public funds not only provides social and cultural benefits but also contributes to the economic success of the UK. www.ahrc.ac.uk

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