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# Collecting the World

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The British  
Museum



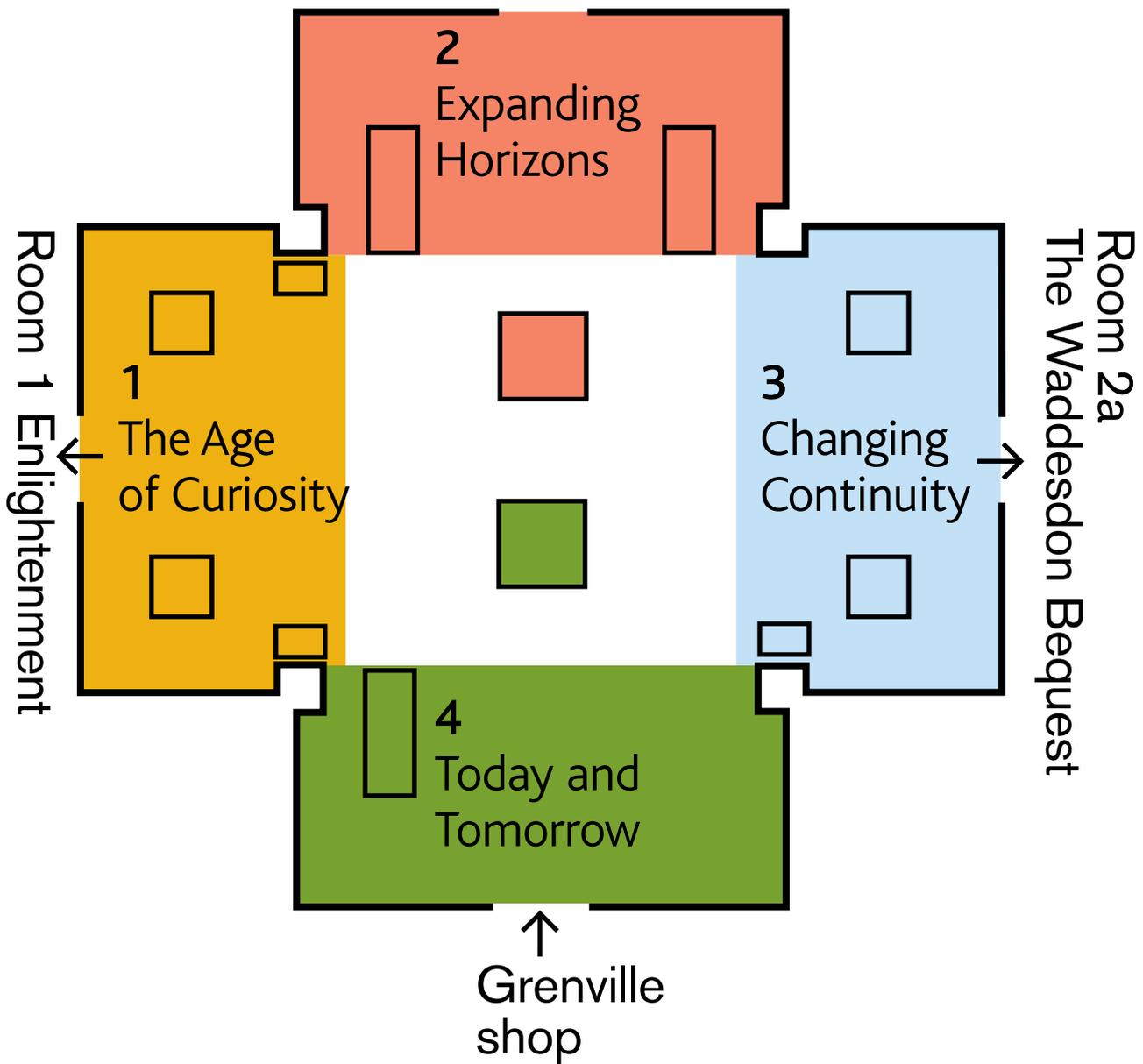
## **Collecting the World**

Founded in 1753, the British Museum opened its doors to visitors in 1759.

The Museum tells the story of human cultural achievement through a collection of collections. This room celebrates some of the collectors who, in different ways, have shaped the Museum over four centuries, along with individuals and organisations who continue to shape its future.

The adjoining galleries also explore aspects of collecting. Room 1: Enlightenment tells the story of how, in the early Museum, objects and knowledge were gathered and classified. Room 2a: The Waddesdon Bequest, displays the collection of Renaissance and Baroque masterpieces left to the British Museum by Baron Ferdinand Rothschild MP at his death in 1898.

# Gallery plan



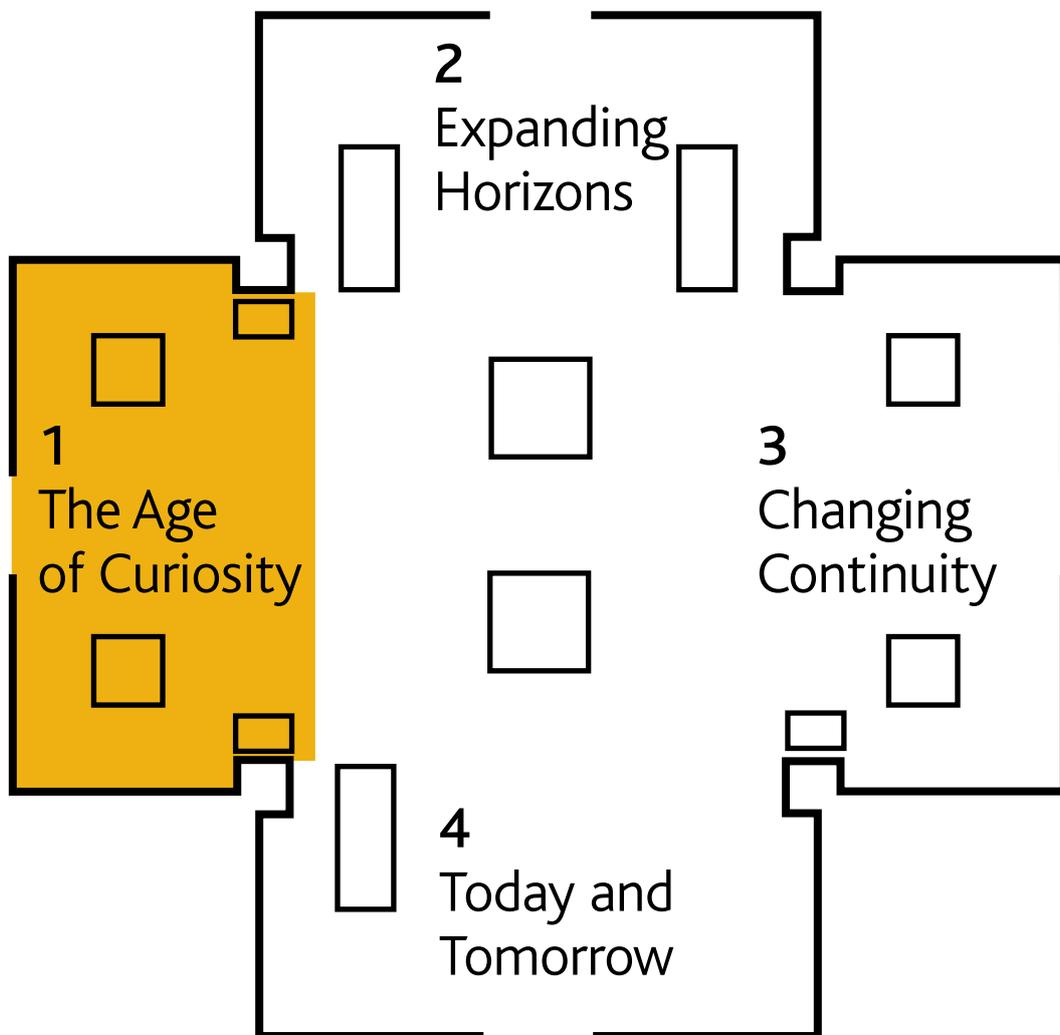
# Collecting the World

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# Section 1

The Age of Curiosity, 18th century

## Gallery plan



## The Age of Curiosity

The British Museum was founded in 1753 as a place of recreation 'for all studious and curious persons'. Its founding collection belonged to the physician Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753). His collection of 'natural and artificial rarities' included books, manuscripts and natural history specimens, as well as objects made by hand.

As the Museum expanded in the eighteenth century, its collections increasingly began to reflect the interests of well-to-do gentleman travellers who had been on the Grand Tour of Europe, such as Charles Townley (1737–1805), who collected Roman marble sculpture.

Image: Sir Hans Sloane, attributed to John Vanderbank, 1730s

## **Charles Townley (1737 – 1805)**

Townley collected marble sculpture and a great variety of smaller antiquities. As a Catholic he was restricted in civic life and could not be elected to parliament. Collecting gave him a different public role, and allowed him to pursue his interest in religions.

Image: Charles Townley  
by James Godby, published 1812

## **Sistrum**

Egypt, Roman period,  
1st or 2nd century AD

Townley appreciated this bronze ceremonial rattle as both an everyday object and a work of art. The Egyptian gods Hathor and Bes are shown on the handle. As their empire expanded, the Romans absorbed other gods in to their religion.

## **Dr Richard Mead (1673 – 1754)**

A respected Royal Physician, Mead had an outstanding collection of art, antiquities and books. Known for his patronage and generosity, Mead helped establish the Foundling Hospital for abandoned children in London. At his death his collection was sold according to his wishes.

Image: Richard Mead  
by Allan Ramsay, 1747

## **Mask of Dionysus-Osiris**

Roman, 200 BC – AD 200

This bronze mask is from the handle of a vessel used in the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine. Silver and bronze highlight the eyes, horns, and lips. Once owned by Mead, it was purchased for the British Museum in 1989.

## **Clayton Mordaunt Cracherode (1730 – 1799)**

Born into wealth, Cracherode, a clergyman, lived a quiet and retiring life, only ever travelling between London and Oxford. He bequeathed a particularly fine collection of coins, engraved stones, books, manuscripts, prints and drawings, shells and minerals to the Museum.

Image: C.M. Cracherode, about 1817

### **Roman coins, seals, engraved stones and papal medals**

Cracherode's collection was influenced by his knowledge of ancient history and the classics. His quiet temperament deterred him from advancing his church career, but his religious interests were reflected through collecting papal medals, such as the two fine silver pieces here.

## **Clayton Mordaunt Cracherode (1730 – 1799)**

Cracherode's bequest of old master prints was a significant acquisition for the Museum, becoming one of the Department of Prints and Drawings' founding collections. He became a Museum Trustee in 1784, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Image: C.M. Cracherode, about 1817

### ***Jan Six***

Dutch, 1647

Cracherode acquired prints of the highest standard. The outstanding quality of this Rembrandt etching of his wealthy Amsterdam friend and patron, Jan Six, can be seen in the subtle lighting of the shadowy interior.

## **The Age of Curiosity**

Montagu House, a seventeenth-century mansion which once stood on this site, was purchased for £10,000 in 1755 to be the home of the new British Museum. It opened its doors to the public in January 1759.

From its very early days, the Museum attracted donations, and the building soon ran out of space to house the growing collection. In 1808, an extension was built on the west side of the gardens to house the sculptures acquired from the Charles Townley collection, as well as Egyptian artefacts, including the Rosetta Stone.

Image: Montagu House  
by Sutton Nicholls, 1728

## **The Age of Curiosity**

On 15 January 1759, The British Museum opened its doors to 'studious and curious persons'. A limited number of tickets were issued each day to avoid overcrowding. Entry was free, but visitors had to apply in person to the Porter, return another day to collect their ticket, and then come back at the appointed time for the visit itself. Under-Librarians took groups of five around the Museum, with tours conducted at a rapid pace to make way for the next party.

Image: Entrance ticket to the British Museum, 1790

## **Sarah Sophia Banks (1744 – 1818)**

Banks lived in London from 1779 with her brother, Sir Joseph, and his wife, Dorothea. Unusually for a woman in this period, she gained recognition as a collector of ephemera through her status and busy social life.

Image: Sarah Sophia Banks  
by Angelica Kauffmann, about 1780

## **Tokens, coins and medals**

Tokens were used as local currency, admission tickets and gaming counters, and were bought as souvenirs. The penny token commemorates the purchase of Montagu House for the British Museum. The gold medal marks Admiral Lord Nelson's 1798 victory at the Battle of the Nile.

## **Sarah Sophia Banks**

Banks' vast collection provides a snapshot of society through ephemera such as playbills, advertisements and newspaper clippings. It was bequeathed to Dorothea, her sister-in-law, and immediately donated to the Museum.

Image: Sarah Sophia Banks  
by Angelica Kauffmann, about 1780

## **Print of Warren Hastings and tickets to his trial**

England, 1780s

Hastings, a former Governor General of Bengal, was tried for corruption in 1788. Held in Westminster Hall, London, the trial became a social event attracting spectators, including Sarah Sophia and Dorothea. He was acquitted after seven years.

## **Sir Joseph Banks (1743 – 1820)**

Naturalist, botanist, explorer and patron of science, Banks inherited a fortune. He gained international recognition exploring the uncharted South Pacific on Captain Cook's first voyage to the region.

Image: Joseph Banks  
by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1773

## **Clubs**

North America, mid-1700s

Carved by the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people, these clubs were collected by Cook and donated by Banks. The whalebone example was a status symbol used by war-chiefs for fighting and hunting. The wooden club was perhaps a speaker's staff or talking stick.

## **Major General Charles Stuart (1757/8 – 1828)**

Stuart lived in India from about 1777, becoming a keen student of Indian life and traditions. He collected all manner of Indian artefacts, including sculpture. His collection was displayed at his house in Calcutta, which was open to visitors.

Image: Charles Stuart's tomb in Calcutta

## **Standing figure of Krishna**

Bengal, 1700s

This black basalt statue of the youthful Krishna playing a flute was among the many Indian sculptures collected by Stuart. Most of his collection was acquired by the Bridge family after his death and donated to the Museum in 1872.

## The Age of Curiosity

Voyages of discovery and exploration in the eighteenth century went beyond Europe to encounter 'new' civilisations and create political, commercial and scientific opportunities.

Less well-travelled collectors could still impress society through the collections they put together at home. Sarah Sophia Banks (1744–1818), younger sister of Sir Joseph Banks, was renowned for her extensive collection of popular prints, coins, tokens and general ephemera. Today, her collection forms an important source of knowledge about the society of the period.

Image: Sarah Sophia Banks  
by Angelica Kauffmann, about 1780

## **Richard Payne Knight (1751 – 1824)**

Payne Knight's collection of bronzes, coins, gems, cameos and old master drawings was left to the Museum on his death. A controversial figure, known as 'The Arrogant Connoisseur', he damaged his reputation by mistakenly declaring that the Parthenon sculptures, newly arrived in London, were Roman rather than Greek.

Image: Richard Payne Knight  
by Thomas Lawrence, 1794

## **Cupid**

Roman, 50 BC – 150 AD

This bronze decorative fitting for a carriage or boat takes the form of Cupid, god of love, emerging from a plant. The eyes and feathers of the wings are inlaid with silver. Payne Knight, its former owner, considered it to be one of the best bronzes to survive from antiquity.

## **Sir Joseph Banks (1743 – 1820)**

Banks held leading positions in learned institutions and was Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, and President of the Royal Society. His home and collection in Soho Square, London, became a hub of intellectual Georgian society. A British Museum Trustee, he helped acquire objects from subsequent global expeditions.

Image: Joseph Banks  
by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1773

## **Bowl**

Hawaiian Islands, 1700s

Used to serve 'awa, an intoxicating drink, this bowl is decorated with pearl shell, and sections of boars' tusk. A Hawaiian chief presented it to Captain Charles Clerke during Cook's third Pacific Voyage. Clerke bequeathed it to Banks who gave it to the Museum in 1780.

## **Charles Townley (1737 – 1805)**

Townley, a wealthy Lancashire gentleman, amassed a substantial collection of Roman sculpture, having visited Italy three times. Viewing the collection at his London home was highly recommended. *The Picture of London* described it as 'the finest collection of antique statues, busts, etc, in the world ... collected with the utmost taste and judgement'.

Townley was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Society, and the Society of Dilettanti. In 1791, he became a Trustee of the British Museum, which acquired his collection following his death after negotiations with his family.

Image: Charles Townley  
by James Godby, published 1812

## **The Knucklebone Player**

Roman, 1st – 2nd century AD

A young girl plays a game of knucklebones using animal ankle bones as four-sided dice. This fine Roman marble sculpture was acquired by Charles Townley in 1768 during his first Grand Tour of Europe.

## **Major General Charles Stuart (1757/8 – 1828)**

Born in Ireland, Stuart joined the East India Company army and sailed for India when he was nineteen. In 1798, he transferred to the Bengal Native Infantry and was promoted to Major General in 1814. Stuart greatly admired Indian culture, collecting extensively during his travels there.

Stuart was the first European to have a serious interest in Indian sculpture and to appreciate its aesthetic qualities. Championing all aspects of Indian culture, he opposed attempts to convert Hindus to Christianity and urged English women in India to adopt 'sensible and sensual saris'. He became well-known in India as 'Hindoo Stuart'.

Image: Charles Stuart's tomb in Calcutta, built to resemble a Hindu Shrine.

## **Vishnu standing on a lotus**

India, 1000s

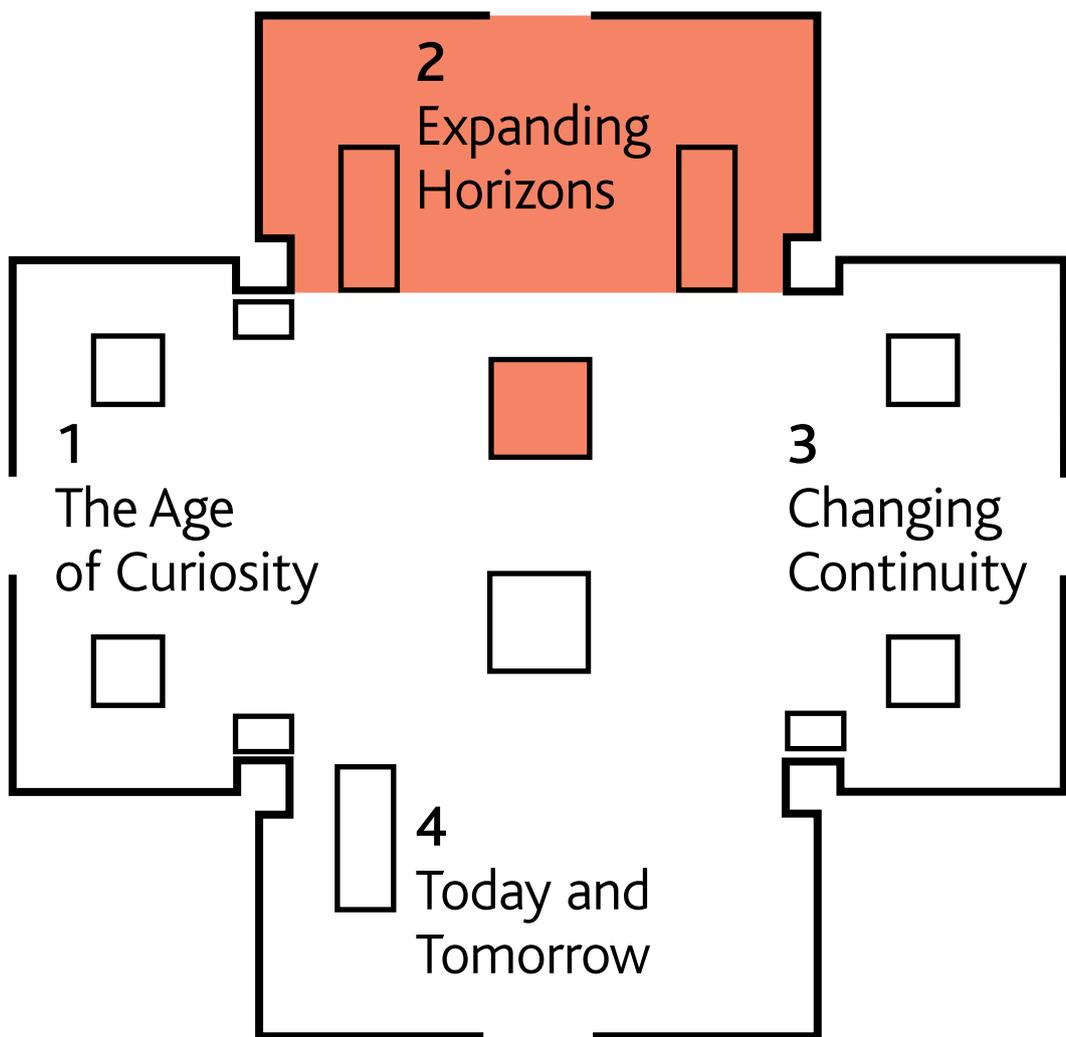
Vishnu is one of the great Hindu gods, regarded as the protector and preserver of the universe. This elegant carving in grey chlorite was subsequently blackened in England. His missing arm would have held a conch shell, an attribute of this deity.



# Section 2

Expanding Horizons, 19th century

## Gallery plan



## Expanding Horizons

During the nineteenth century, a new class of professional curator, such as Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–1897), steered the Museum into new areas of collecting. Increasingly, the Museum became a collection of material artefacts from all over the world, past and present.

The emerging discipline of archaeology led to a greater appreciation and understanding of the history of ancient Britain.

The Museum also sponsored archaeological excavations overseas, such as those of Nathan Davis in Carthage (in present-day Tunisia), bringing whole civilisations to light that were previously known only through classical literature and the Bible.

Image: Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, about 1874

## **Charles Roach Smith (1806–1890)**

Roach Smith is considered to be the father of London archaeology. The notes and observations he made in handwritten journals, detailing the development of the city, are still used by London's archaeologists today.

Image: Charles Roach Smith,  
about 1865

In 1855, the British Museum purchased Roach Smith's collection of 5000 Roman and medieval antiquities mostly found in London. His collection greatly increased understanding of everyday life in the past, particularly of Roman Britain.

### **Inscribed stone**

England, 1st century AD

This gravestone fragment was found in 1842 in front of a cottage near King's Cross, London. It was erected in memory of a Roman soldier serving in the 20th Legion. Sadly his name is not known.

## **Felix Slade (1788–1868)**

Slade, a successful lawyer born in London, inherited a fortune from his parents' estates. He collected antiquities, books, ceramics, Japanese ivories, glass and prints, and bequeathed much of his collection to the Museum.

Image: Felix Slade  
by Margaret Sarah Carpenter, 1851

Slade's bequest of over 900 glasses, ancient and modern, shows how glassmaking developed over many centuries. He prepared the catalogue of his glass collection, which was edited by his friend Augustus Wollaston Franks and published in 1869. The Venetian glass catalogue was published by Alexander Nesbitt in 1871.

## **Ewer and beaker with cover**

Italy, late 1500s

Slade's collection of Venetian glass from Murano was especially fine. Here, glass canes with opaque white twists alternate with straight white canes which have been embedded in clear glass, then blown to produce delicate filigree patterns.

## **Felix Slade (1788–1868)**

Slade's bequest of over 8000 prints included work by the best British printmakers. This portrait of Slade by Margaret Sarah Carpenter is the only one known. Her husband, William, was the Keeper of Prints and Drawings and a friend of Slade.

Image: Felix Slade, 1851

In addition to Slade's great bequest of objects to the Museum, he left funds to set up professorships of Fine Art at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London. The funding given to London covered scholarships for students and provided for the establishment of the Slade School of Art.

## **Toilet dish and kohl tube**

Egypt, 1391–1307 BC  
and 1500–1196 BC

Slade's collection included fine ancient glassware. In ancient Egypt, new glassmaking and casting techniques enabled objects, previously made from stone, to be made from the very thinnest glass. The clam-shaped toilet dish is a rare survival.

## Expanding Horizons

In 1821, the architect Robert Smirke began to draw up plans for the east wing of a new Museum building that would eventually replace Montagu House. Begun in 1823, The King's Library as it was known (now Room 1: Enlightenment) adjoins this room. Smirke's new Museum was built in the Greek Revival style which was then the height of fashion.

The south front of the Museum, shown here, was finished by Robert's brother Sydney, and features Sir Richard Westmacott's pediment sculpture 'The Progress of Civilisation' above the entrance.

Image: View of the Smirke building from Great Russell Street by William Simpson, 1852

## **Nathan Davis (1812–1882)**

The Reverend Davis was a respected traveller and antiquary. Born in London of Jewish descent, he later converted to Christianity. He spent a number of years in North Africa living in an old Moorish palace near Tunis.

Image: Davis' encampment at the Carthage (Tunis) excavations, 1861

From 1856 to 1858 Davis was employed by the Museum to undertake excavations at Carthage and Utica, north Africa. In addition to a series of fine Roman mosaics, he sent back more than 150 limestone funerary stelae, many from the *tophet*, a cemetery at Carthage for the burial of young children.

## **Funerary stela**

North Africa

4th – 2nd century BC

This stela marked where an urn containing the remains of a child called Arisham was buried in the tophet. The Phoenician inscription also names the two main Carthaginian deities, Tanit and Baal Hammon, into whose care the child had been given.

## **Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–1897)**

Franks joined the Museum in 1851, later becoming the first Keeper of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography, a post he held for 30 years. He wrote: ‘Collecting is an hereditary disease, and I fear incurable’.

Image: Augustus Wollaston Franks,  
about 1874

Franks enhanced the Museum’s collection in many areas through careful acquisition using dealers and agents, and by the donation of his own vast and valuable collection. With a particular interest in ceramics, he formed the core of the Museum’s Japanese collections and encouraged comparative study by amassing work of different types and styles.

## **Incense burner**

Japan, early 1800s

This glazed stoneware piece, in the shape of a standing monk, released smoke through the open mouth and eyes. It is typical of the utilitarian ceramic work that appealed to Franks. The inside of the vessel has the signature of the artist, Katsumasa.

## **Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–1897)**

One of the best known antiquaries of his day, Franks counted many other collectors among his friends. He was instrumental in the acquisition of the ethnographic collection of Henry Christy, and the glass collection of Felix Slade.

Image: Augustus Wollaston Franks,  
about 1874

Franks was one of the Museum's greatest benefactors and has been described as its 'second founder'. As an employee of the Museum, he made acquisitions in countless fields including prehistory, ethnography and British and Asian antiquities. In addition, he poured his large private fortune into purchasing objects to benefit the Museum.

## **Incense burner**

Japan, 1800s

Franks donated a small group of Japanese bronze incense burners to the Museum in 1883, all of which take the form of birds. The crane is an auspicious symbol in Japan, and a popular design.

## **Henry Christy (1810–1865)**

Christy followed his father into the family hat-making and cotton businesses. Aged 18, he was at work in the hat factory at Stockport. The death of his older brother led him to inherit both management responsibilities and wealth when his father died.

Image: Henry Christy about 1845

Although bound to the business for many years, Christy had wider interests. He began travelling in 1850, visiting Turkey and Cyprus where he collected antiquities and objects in everyday use. His concern for peoples whose lives and cultures were threatened by colonialism inspired him to collect objects from the places he visited, and from further afield with the help of dealers.

## **Jug with lid**

Turkey, 1800s

Christy acquired this Ottoman glass jug in Turkey. It was there that he discovered Turkish loop-pile towelling. Having invented machinery for its manufacture at their Stockport mill, the firm exhibited it at the Great Exhibition in 1851, gaining royal patronage.

## **Henry Christy (1810–1865)**

As a Quaker, Christy believed that all people are born equal. He hoped that his collection would preserve world cultures and aimed to show how and why societies differ without being inferior or superior to one another.

Image: Henry Christy about 1845

Christy spent several months in Mexico in 1856, where he recorded ancient and modern objects and customs. He made extensive additions to his Mexican collection both in Mexico and after his return home. His most significant acquisitions were the Aztec turquoise mosaics he bought at auction in 1859. These are currently displayed in Room 27.

## Figurine

Mexico, 1800s

Realistic wax figurines were popular in Mexico in the 1800s. They give a glimpse into daily life and social conditions at the time. Christy collected this piece during his expedition to Mexico in 1856, where he observed local festivals, and saw charcoal carriers like the one represented here.

## **Henry Christy (1810–1865)**

Christy bequeathed his collection to four trustees, including his friend Augustus Wollaston Franks, who made sure that it came to the Museum. This placed objects from remote cultures around the world alongside those of more familiar civilisations.

Image: Henry Christy about 1845

Christy also left a sum of money to care for and enhance his collection. Franks used the Christy Fund to expand the collection so that it contained over 20,000 objects by the time it came to the Museum. Christy's collection is significant because many objects were acquired during early contact with non-European peoples.

## **Flute and hand club**

New Zealand, about 1800–1830

The *pūtōrino*, a unique type of Maori flute from Taranaki, was used for entertainment and in healing and other rituals. The wood is inlaid with paua shell. Known as a *wahaika* ('the mouth of the fish'), the wooden club from the Northland region was used in close-range fighting.

## **Henry Christy (1810–1865)**

Christy travelled to Scandinavia in 1852 and 1853 to visit the museums of Stockholm and Copenhagen. Here he saw how to organize material so that it would show changes through time and different types of human adaptation.

Image: Henry Christy about 1845

Christy was interested in human evolution and the common origins of humanity. By working with the French palaeontologist Edouard Lartet, he hoped to show how cultures vary and change through time. Excavating in south-west France, they unearthed tools and examples of the oldest European art then known. Their work marked a turning point in the study of our deepest history.

## **Baton**

France, at least 13,000 years old

A galloping horse is represented on this fragment of a perforated baton made from reindeer antler. Complete batons were used as tools and weapons. Christy's idea that they were symbols of authority is still discussed. Christy discovered this piece in the rockshelter at La Madeleine.

## **Carl Alfred Bock (1849–1932)**

Bock was a Norwegian naturalist. The son of a merchant, he was educated in Oslo. After moving to England in 1868, where he married, he developed important contacts including leading members of the London Zoological Society.

Image: Carl Bock by H.C. Olsen, 1882

Travelling on many expeditions, Bock visited Norwegian Lapland, Indonesia, Sumatra, Borneo, Thailand and Tibet. In Sumatra, he collected previously unknown species of birds and other fauna, and in Borneo studied local people and their customs. He also collected ethnographic objects, appreciating the skill of local makers.

## **Bowl and cover**

China, 1750–1800

Made in China for the Thai royal market, this enamelled decoration is called *Bencharong* (five-coloured). The Museum acquired about 400 objects from Bock's collection using the Christy Fund. Other pieces previously owned by Bock, including this porcelain bowl, were donated by Franks.

## **Frederick Du Cane Godman (1834–1917)**

Godman was a leading British ornithologist, best remembered for his study of flora and fauna in Central America. He inherited a fortune from his father, a partner in the brewery firm Whitbread.

Image: Frederick Du Cane Godman by Leon Sprinck, about 1909

Godman's inheritance allowed him to travel widely in pursuit of plant, insect and bird specimens. Journeys to Spain and Istanbul also led him to develop an interest in Spanish and Islamic pottery, which he mostly purchased through London dealers.

## **Albarello**

Spain, about 1410–1420

The shape of this storage jar is Islamic with designs based on Arabic script. It is made of tin-glazed earthenware finished with metallic lustre. Luxury ceramics like this piece from Manises in Valencia were exported throughout Europe in the 1400s.

## **Frederick Du Cane Godman (1834–1917)**

Godman's first ceramic purchase was recalled by his daughter Edith, 'He used to pass a shop on the way to the British Museum and he passed it many times before he made up his mind'.

Image: Frederick Du Cane Godman  
by Leon Sprinck, about 1909

Godman's importance as a naturalist was recognised by the leading offices he held including President of both the Zoological Society and the Royal Entomological Society. He gave his natural history collections to the Natural History Museum and intended that his ceramics would be offered to the British Museum, where he had been a Trustee since 1897.

## **Mosque lamp**

Turkey, about 1510

This stonepaste lamp is one of the finest pieces from Godman's collection of Ottoman pottery. Associated with the mausoleum of Bayezid II, its decoration has been attributed to the influence of Baba Nakkas, an important court artist.

## Expanding Horizons

In the 1800s, improved communications, greater opportunities for travel, and the rise of a new and wealthy middle class saw an increase in the numbers and quality of private collections.

The widely-travelled businessman Henry Christy (1810–1865), was inspired to collect both at home and abroad. His collection, which included objects from non-European cultures, came to the Museum after his death. Under the direction of curator Augustus Wollaston Franks the collection was classified and arranged systematically, anticipating what would become the new discipline of ethnography.

Image: Henry Christy, about 1845  
Given by Elinor Brownlow

## **Charles Roach Smith (1806–1890)**

Roach Smith was one of Europe's leading antiquaries. A London-based chemist, his passion was collecting Roman and medieval antiquities. Most of his collection was dredged from the Thames or found during sewer construction.

Image: Charles Roach Smith,  
about 1865

Roach Smith wrote a wide range of books and articles. His collection of about 5000 objects forms the core of the Museum's Roman Britain collection. He collected objects to illustrate 'the institutions, the habits, the customs, and the arts of our forefathers', and between 1848 and 1880 published seven volumes of *Collectanea Antiqua*.

## **Journal, volume II**

England, 1836–38

Roach Smith kept a detailed journal of observations on the development of London, particularly during the Roman period, and the objects he acquired. This entry refers to the steelyard weight on display here.

## **Steelyard weight**

England, 1st – 4th century AD

This was made as a weight for a Roman balance, the chain of which was still attached when it was found in London. The fine bronze head may show a Molossian hound, a famous breed of dog from northern Greece.

## **Laudatory medals**

England, 1890 and 1858

Peers and friends presented Roach Smith with this bronze medal by John Pinches in recognition of his lifelong services to archaeology. The other bronze medal by William Taylor commemorates his attempts to save the Roman walls of Dax, southern France, from demolition.

## **Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–1897)**

One of the most important collectors in the Museum's history, Franks was born in Geneva, the son of a British naval officer. His family was wealthy and well-connected. He was educated at Eton College and Cambridge University.

Image: Augustus Wollaston Franks,  
about 1874

Franks began to expand the Museum's collections of prehistory and British archaeology, as well as those from medieval Europe and Asia. Franks' own collection was bequeathed to the Museum on his death. It included over 3000 finger rings, as well as silver plate, drinking vessels and porcelain.

Franks was a noted scholar and the author of a wide-range of publications, from Indian sculpture to bookplates and from Anglo-Saxon rings to Chinese paintings. He co-edited Edward Hawkins' *Medallic Illustrations of British History*, which remains the standard reference work for the study of medals.

## **Medal**

England, 1633

The gold medal by Nicholas Briot marks the return of Charles I to London after his coronation as King of Scots in Edinburgh. The detailed view across the river Thames shows London Bridge and old St Paul's Cathedral. Franks donated this fine medal to the Museum in 1872.

## Token

England, 1884

Franks commissioned this personal token from Allan Wyon, Chief Engraver of Her Majesty's Seals. Its purpose is unclear, but it bears his motto, CONTEMNIT VULNER VIRTUS (Courage despises wounds). Franks gave this gold piece, thought to be unique, to the Museum in 1884.

## Ring

England, AD 200–300

Franks acquired a number of rings found in Britain during the Victorian period. This gold ring was discovered in Oxford. It is set with an onyx intaglio with a standing figure of Minerva, Roman goddess of the arts and war.

## **Sleeve fastener**

Ireland, 1150–750 BC

This finely decorated gold object was probably a sleeve fastener, similar in use to a button or cuff-link. Bequeathed by Franks, this piece was acquired as part of the collection of the archaeologist Richard Cornwallis Neville, 4th Baron Braybrook.

## **Jade book**

China, 1700s

Before the Chinese invented paper, they wrote on wooden strips. A lover of jade, emperor Qianlong (1736-95) is known to have commissioned several jade books imitating these strips.

This jade book is about filial piety and old age. It was donated by Franks, who used agents in Asia to seek interesting cultural objects to purchase for the Museum. The end leaves of the book are decorated with five-clawed dragons, implying that it was commissioned by the emperor himself or his court.

## **Clasp**

Romania, 1600s

This silver gilt and enamel clasp is set with pearls, turquoises and faceted garnets. *Hefteln*, or huge discs worn as clasps or pendants, were characteristic of Saxon German women's dress in Transylvania in the 1600s – 1700s. It was part of the Franks Bequest.

## **Wine taster**

Switzerland, 1500s

This shallow embossed cup in silver gilt was used for tasting wine. It may have been a gift to commemorate a marriage, as it bears the arms of two Swiss families from Schaffhausen inside the bowl. It was bequeathed to the Museum by Franks in 1897.

## **Cup**

Germany, 1597

Made in Augsburg by Tobias Kramer, this large silver gilt wine cup was made for display rather than use. The central roundel is enamelled with the arms and name of the owner, H. Martin Scholl, and dated 1597. Franks bequeathed this cup to the Museum on his death.

## **Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–1897)**

Franks expanded the Museum's collection into new areas and often used his own money to assist with purchases, regarding it as a public service. He was knighted in 1894.

Image: Augustus Wollaston Franks,  
about 1874

This photograph of Franks is one of only two known. Franks is said to have been modest in character with a strong dislike of public speaking, despite belonging to many learned societies. His few surviving letters reveal that, although irritable on occasion, he also had a sense of humour as shown in this extract from a letter he sent to his colleagues when suffering from smallpox in 1863.

‘My face is diversified with 150 or more excrescences of various shapes which I presume are ornamental as the Doctor says they are very nice... As an additional charm the ground work is of a dusky hue produced by india rubber dissolved in chloroform the exact merits of which I have not yet ascertained ... I shall probably reappear in a beard.’

Through his work and generosity the Museum acquired many significant objects. He donated the Franks Casket (Room 41) in 1867 and bequeathed the magnificent Oxus Treasure (Room 52) in 1897. The Royal Gold Cup (Room 40) was purchased by Franks, who appealed for funds from the Treasury and subscribers so that it could be given to the Museum.

## **Dish**

China, 1662–1722

Kakiemon style ceramics were made in Arita, Japan from 1670-90. Their popularity led them to be much copied by other makers wishing to compete in the lucrative European market. This dish was made in Jingdezhen, China and came to the Museum as part of the Franks Bequest.

## **Edward Hawkins (1780–1867)**

Hawkins was a collector of coins, medals and British satirical prints. After a long career in the Museum, his medal collection was purchased on his retirement in 1860.

Image: Edward Hawkins, after Eden Upton Eddis, 1833

His collection of over 10,000 satirical prints, amassed over 50 years, was purchased from his estate after his death. It formed the basis of the Museum's world-renowned collection of such material. The collection includes work by James Gillray, the foremost British satirist and caricaturist of his day.

## ***Monstrous Craws, at a New Coalition Feast***

England, 1797

Gillray's satire on the royal family is depicted on this hand-coloured etching and aquatint. King George III, Queen Charlotte and the Prince of Wales are seated around a bowl of coins, ladling gold guineas into their mouths.

Gillray caricatures the royal family outside the open gates of the Treasury. The bowl from which they gorge is inscribed 'John Bull's Blood', implying that they are devouring the wealth of the nation to fill their craws, the sacks of flesh which hang from their throats.

The 'New Coalition' of the title refers to the public announcement of reconciliation between George III and his eldest son, ending a long period of estrangement. The agreement was forged by a parliamentary grant of £161,000 to help the Prince of Wales pay off his ever-increasing debts.

## **Edward Hawkins (1780–1867)**

Hawkins, the son of a banker, was born in Macclesfield, England. For a time, he followed his father's profession, but went on to join the British Museum, becoming a long-serving Keeper of the Department of Antiquities.

Image: Edward Hawkins, after Eden Upton Eddis, 1833

An avid collector of coins and medals, Hawkins was a founding member of the Numismatic Society of London, twice becoming its president. He was also a fellow of the Linnean Society and served as Vice-president of both the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries.

Having joined the Museum as an Assistant Keeper of the Department of Antiquities in 1825, Hawkins became Keeper within a year. He held the position for 35 years until he retired aged 70. The Museum's collection greatly expanded under his direction.

Hawkins' main scholarly contribution was in the field of numismatics, the study of coins and medals. In 1841, he published *The Silver Coins of England*, which for nearly a century, remained the standard work on English coinage.

Hawkins' interest in British historical medals began before he joined the Museum. His personal collection was exceptional, and was purchased by the Museum on his retirement in 1860. His great work on the subject, a catalogue of medals relating to British history, was printed in 1852 but quickly suppressed.

## ***Numismatica Britannica***

England, 1852

The Museum Trustees soon realised that his publication, subtitled *A Description of Medals Illustrative of the History of Great Britain from the Conquest to the Demise of William II*, revealed Hawkins' personal and political views rather than just descriptions of the medals.

## **Popery Restored**

Italy, 1555

This bronze medal by Giovanni da Cavino is listed as number 12 on page 42 of *Numismatica Britannica*. By describing it as commemorating 'the return of England to the yoke of Rome' and Pope Julius III as 'the licentious profligate', Hawkins revealed his anti-Catholic prejudices.

Hawkins' opinions horrified the Museum's Trustees who ordered all but six copies of *Numismatica Britannica* to be destroyed. Finally published in 1885 in much revised form, the re-named *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Death of George II* remains the standard reference work.

## **Medals collected by Edward Hawkins**

*Henry VIII, about 1524*

*Michael Mercator, 1539*

*Edmund Withipoll, 1562*

*Maria Dimock, 1562*

*Defeat of the Spanish Armada, 1588*

*Battle of Nieuport, 1600*

*Naval Reward, 1653*

*Cromwell Protector, 1653*

*Duke of York, Naval Action, 1665*

*Christ's Hospital, Foundation  
of Mathematical and Nautical School,  
1673*

*Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, 1678*

*The Rye House Plot, 1683*

*Landing of William of Orange at Torbay,*  
1688

*Roman Catholic Chapels Destroyed,*  
1689

*Appeal against the House of Hanover,*  
1721

*Earthquake at Lisbon, 1755*

*Montreal Taken, 1760*

*The Reform Bill becomes Law, 1832*

*Opening of the Grand Junction Railway,*  
1837

## The Duke of Wellington's Continental Victories England, 1815

This bronze box-medal shows Wellington and has an inscription on the reverse praising his skill and heroism. The paper discs inside give the names and dates of Wellington's victorious battles against Napoleon in Portugal, Spain and France, 1808–1815.

## **Frederick Du Cane Godman (1834–1917)**

As an ornithologist and naturalist, Godman was an avid collector of bird and other natural history specimens. He also amassed a significant collection of Spanish and Islamic pottery.

Image: Frederick Du Cane Godman  
by Leon Sprinck, about 1909

In 1901 Godman described his motivation for collecting ceramics as wanting ‘to make an artistic and historical series illustrating that branch of the ceramic art which comprises the work of the Moslem potter’. His superb collection was displayed prominently in his dining room.

Godman always intended that his collection of over 600 pieces of Islamic pottery should be offered first to the British Museum. After his death it remained with his family for sixty years, still proudly displayed in their home in Sussex.

The future of the collection was decided by his surviving daughter. Carrying out her father's wishes in her will, Edith Godman bequeathed what was the largest private collection of Islamic pottery in the world to the Museum in 1982.

## **Dish**

Turkey, 1550–1600

Iznik, south of Istanbul, was the centre of Ottoman ceramic production. In the 1550s its potters added a brilliant red, traditionally known as Armenian bole, to their palette. They used this and other vibrant colours for their exuberant floral designs as seen on this stonepaste dish.

## **The London Missionary Society**

The Society was established in 1795 as part of an evangelical revival in the Protestant church. Missionaries were initially sent to Tahiti and other islands in the Pacific, and later to many other places including North America and South Africa.

Image: The Museum of the London Missionary Society published in the *Illustrated London News*, 1859

Objects collected by the missionaries on their travels often represented gods, or were pieces central to the ritual practices of the people they sought to convert to Christianity. The London Missionary Society displayed these objects in their museum on Bloomfield Street until its closure in 1910. The collections were then acquired by the British Museum and other institutions.

In 1797, the London Missionary Society sent missionaries to the islands that were to become French Polynesia. Tahiti in the Society Islands became their main base, under the support of the converted chief, Pomare II, who was baptised in 1819. The Society had limited success in the outlying islands, where French Catholic missionaries worked from the 1830s onwards.

## Human figure

French Polynesia,  
late 1700s – early 1800s

This heavy wooden figure is from Mangareva, one of the Gambier Islands in the eastern Pacific Ocean. It is thought to represent Rongo, the god of agriculture, bringer of rain and plentiful breadfruit crops. Few such figures survived the destruction that marked the island's conversion to Christianity in the 1830s.

The London Missionary Society began to work in Madagascar in 1818. However, Queen Ranavalona I was strongly opposed to this foreign presence. The missionaries abandoned their efforts on the island in the 1830s, returning after her death in 1861.

## **Ladle**

Madagascar, 1800s

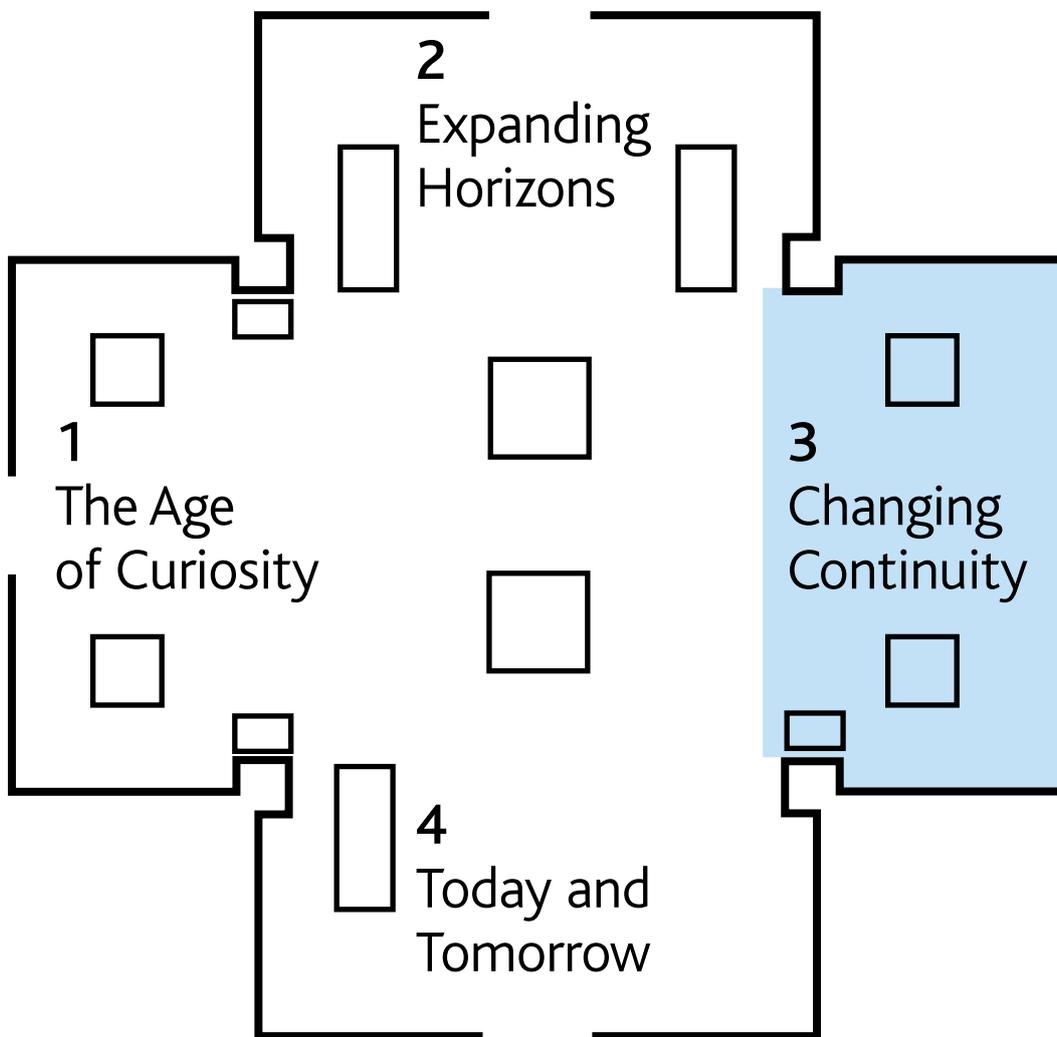
The handle of this wooden rice ladle is carved with powerful human and animal imagery. Humped cattle were important because they were sacrificed to the ancestors, while crocodiles were the island's main predator. To Madagascans, rice represented the toil of past generations, as paddy fields were passed down within clans and families.



# Section 3

Changing Continuity, 20th century

## Gallery plan



## **Changing Continuity**

Two World Wars and much social change in the twentieth century greatly affected the way that the Museum presented itself.

Greek and Roman antiquities continued to be admired, but artefacts from non-European cultures, such as those of contemporary Asia and Africa, were increasingly included in the story of art. Objects were appreciated for their artistic merit, as well as their historical and cultural significance.

The Museum continued to benefit from individuals with specific and personal collecting passions. Courtenay Adrian Ilbert (1888–1956) collected comprehensively in his field of interest, amassing all kinds of scientific instruments, clocks and watches, and associated material.

Image: Courtenay Adrian Ilbert, about 1954

## **Courtenay Adrian Ilbert (1888–1956)**

Ilbert was educated at Eton College and Cambridge University. He then qualified and worked as a civil engineer. Throughout his life it was collecting that inspired him.

Image: Courtenay Adrian Ilbert,  
about 1954

## **Night clock**

London, 1665–1675

Night clocks were a favourite of Ilbert's. Lit by a naked flame, they could catch fire, so this is a rare survivor. The hour numeral moves up and over the arc every hour. This clock by Joseph Knibb currently shows 8:14.

## **Courtenay Adrian Ilbert (1888–1956)**

After his death, Ilbert's collection was destined for auction, but it was cancelled following a major donation by Gilbert Edgar, CBE. The collection was purchased in 1958 after a public appeal and a government grant.

Image: Courtenay Adrian Ilbert,  
about 1954

## **Carriage Clock and Lantern Clock**

France, 1830–35  
and England, 1665–75

Ilbert admired Abraham-Louis Breguet and collected over 40 of his pieces. This carriage clock is by Breguet's son Antoine. The large bell on the lantern clock by James Markwick would announce the time to the whole household.

## **Courtenay Adrian Ilbert (1888–1956)**

Ilbert's collection was very broad in its scope. It included many pieces by the finest makers alongside cheap, mass-produced watches. Whether high quality or everyday pieces, Ilbert saw them all as part of the story.

Image: Courtenay Adrian Ilbert, about 1954

**Rock-crystal watch** by Jaques Sermand, Geneva, 1650–60.

**Gilt-brass coach-watch** by David Buschmann, Augsburg, 1680–90 (held by Ilbert to left).

**Chrome Duplex watch** by Waterbury, America, 1885–95.

**Silver sundial** by Thomas Tompion, London, 1700–10.

**Journal of Ilbert's voyage aboard *SS Orient*, 1908.**

## **Frank and Helen Lloyd (1854–1927 and 1855–1925)**

Belonging to a family of paper mill and newspaper owners, the Lloyds spent vast sums on Worcester vases and were generous benefactors. Playing fields in Croydon still bear their name after a gift of their land.

Image: Frank Lloyd, mid-1920s

The Lloyds' gift of over 400 pieces of Worcester porcelain, collected especially for the Museum, arrived in 1921. Their daughter presented further pieces after her father's death. Representing every aspect of 18th-century Worcester porcelain production, the gift transformed the Museum's collection into one of the best anywhere.

## **Worcester vase**

England, about 1770

This porcelain vase was painted by the Irish artist Jeffyres Hamett O'Neale, who specialised in figures and horses at the Worcester factory. It depicts a classical scene with Venus on one side and a landscape with horses on the other.

## Changing Continuity

In the twentieth century, the Museum once again extended the building to increase capacity for the ever-growing collection.

The King Edward VII Building was added to the north side of the Museum. Named in honour of the late King, who had laid the foundation stone in 1907, it was opened by King George V and Queen Mary in 1914.

Further expansion resulted in the completion of the Duveen Gallery where the Parthenon Sculptures were installed in 1939.

Image: Opening of the King Edward VII building on 7 May 1914 showing the carriage carrying the Royal party

## **Campbell Dodgson (1867–1948)**

The son of a stockbroker, Dodgson attended Oxford University and joined the Museum's Prints and Drawings department in 1893, later becoming Keeper. He was an expert on European printmaking.

Image: Campbell Dodgson  
by William Strang, 1905

Dodgson became an authority on early German prints. Fluent in both French and German, he developed close links with museum curators and artists in both countries. His inherited wealth allowed him to collect old master and contemporary prints, which from the outset were destined for the Museum.

***L'Oeuf***

France, 1885

The dream-like quality of this lithograph is typical of Odilon Redon's work in this medium. Dodgson's bequest of over 5000 prints contained work by modern British, European and American artists including Edgar Degas, Paul Gauguin and Edward Hopper.

## **Peter Wilding (1907–1969)**

Linguist, biographer and pianist, Wilding bequeathed two great collections: 40 pieces of silver tableware made between 1697 and 1723 by French Huguenots living in London, and 17 gold cigarette cases commissioned from Cartier as virtuoso objects.

Image: Peter Wilding as a young man

Wilding greatly admired the Russian goldsmiths' firm of Fabergé, which had closed in 1917. Wishing to prove that goldsmiths of the 1960s could still excel in traditional skills, he approached the jewellers Cartier. He worked with the firm to design his cigarette cases, always intending to give them to the Museum.

## **Cups and cigarette case**

England, 1791 and 1972

Wilding insisted on the best quality. The gold cigarette case has intricate mother-of-pearl inlay, a highly polished interior and precisely-cut emeralds, which also form the feet. The silver cups have fine engraving and applied work.

## **Emil Torday (1875–1931)**

Torday was born in Hungary. An adventurer-turned-anthropologist, he worked as a Museum agent on expeditions to what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. He collected widely as he undertook ethnographic surveys.

Image: Emil Torday with dogs, Duke and Sanga, Congo expedition, 1907–9

Torday amassed an unparalleled collection of over 3000 objects. It includes wooden sculpture and carving, richly patterned metalwork, and textiles predominantly made by the Kuba and other peoples of the southern Congo Basin. When displayed in the Museum, these collections helped alter public perceptions of the region.

## **Drinking cups**

Central Africa, about 1900

Elaborately carved wooden cups, often in female form, were highly personal possessions used exclusively by men for drinking palm wine. These cups were carved by the Ngeende, Wongo and Lele of the southern Congo Basin. Torday was interested in their stylistic differences.

## **Anne Hull Grundy (1926–1984)**

Hull Grundy formed the greatest post-war collection of 19th-century jewellery. Her gift of 1200 pieces to the Museum in 1978 prompted many subsequent acquisitions from other donors.

Image: Anne Hull Grundy, wearing jewellery now in the Museum, about 1960

‘I am an art historian and my collections were formed to be written about’, Hull Grundy explained. Her gifts of jewellery to museums across Britain inspired new research and publications. She deliberately gave cameos and intaglios to the British Museum to restore losses from bomb damage in 1941.

## **Jewellery and box**

1850–1950

These objects show the range of Hull Grundy's collections, from Victorian botanical jewellery and Italian cameos of 1850–60, to a French buckle and enamel box made about 1900. The swan brooch was designed in about 1950 by the Italian Duke of Verdura.

## **Anne Hull Grundy (1926–1984)**

Bedridden from her thirties, Hull Grundy never visited Japan, but acquired objects through dealers and salerooms. She was particularly interested in netsuke, having studied and published her own collection, and bequeathed around 700 to the Museum.

Image: Anne Hull Grundy, about 1960

Reflecting her passion for jewellery, the majority of the Japanese objects collected by Hull Grundy were small and elaborately decorated. Fashion-conscious men, from warrior to merchant, wore these pieces as daily attire in pre-modern Japan (about 1615–1868).

## **Items of male adornment**

Japan, 1800s–1900s

*Inro* (portable tiered containers)

*Netsuke* (toggles)

*Tsuba* (sword handguards)

*Fuchi* (sword hilt collars)

*Kashira* (sword butt caps)

*Ojime* (cord fasteners)

## **Anne Hull Grundy (1926–1984)**

Hull Grundy's wealth came from the banking and manufacturing businesses of her art-loving Jewish family in Germany. In 1933, the family resettled in England, re-establishing their metal toy company to produce the profitable Corgi toys.

Image: Anne Hull Grundy, about 1960

Anne, along with her husband Professor John Hull Grundy, enjoyed collecting *jizai* (articulated animal sculptures) made in Japan for export to Europe and the United States. These examples, along with others, including a dragon, snake, carp and various insects, were proudly displayed in their home.

## *Jizai*

Japan, 1800s

These articulated iron sculptures of a crab and hermit crab are able to move as if alive. They demonstrate the incredible level of skill attained by Japanese metalworkers. They were mostly made by armorers supplementing their income as the demand for armour decreased.

## **Changing Continuity**

Originally a museum of natural history, books and manuscripts, art and archaeology, the Museum has evolved into a collection of art and artefacts from the world's cultures.

Following the relocation of the British Library to St Pancras in the 1990s, construction of the Great Court began, creating more space for collections, exhibitions and learning activities.

Opened to celebrate the new millennium, the Great Court is a hub for visitors at the heart of the Museum, uniting past and future, old and new, under its spectacular glass roof.

Image: The Queen Elizabeth II Great Court designed by Foster and Partners and opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 6 December 2000

## **Percy Thomas Brooke Sewell (about 1878–1958)**

Brooke Sewell, a banker, greatly admired Indian and Far Eastern art. Wanting it to be better represented in the Museum's displays, he made a substantial financial gift during his lifetime and another as a bequest.

Image: Brooke Sewell's signature, 1948

### **Seated figures**

India, about 1100–1199

Tibet, about 1800–1900

The bronze and copper figure is of Avalokiteshvara, the embodiment of infinite compassion in Mahayana Buddhism. The bronze figure represents Padmasambhava, the Buddhist master credited with establishing Buddhism in Tibet.

## **Percy Thomas Brooke Sewell (about 1878–1958)**

Brooke Sewell leaves a unique legacy. The funds he established remain the most significant gift of their kind, enabling the Asia and Middle East departments to enhance their collections and to purchase work by current artists.

Image: Brooke Sewell's signature, 1948

## **Cones**

Tunisia, 2000

Khaled Ben Slimane's glazed pottery cones recall the shape of the hats worn by Sufi mystics. The rapidly drawn words and phrases are inspired by Sufi incantations, in which religious phrases are rhythmically repeated.

## **Bulgarian Government gift**

Bulgaria, 1971

These water pitchers are part of a generous gift from the President of the Bulgarian Committee for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. The gift prompted further donations from Balkan specialists in Britain.

Image: British Museum display, 1977

## **Water pitchers**

Bulgaria, early 1900s

The gift of 350 objects included costume (see case behind), textiles, musical instruments, weaving equipment, domestic metalwork and pottery, such as these water jugs from Sofia. The pottery comes from all over Bulgaria and includes cooking, serving and storage vessels.

## Changing Continuity

In the 1900s, as in the past, the collections benefitted from the generosity of private collectors wishing to place their life's passion into the permanent safekeeping of the Museum.

A celebrated collector, Anne Hull Grundy (1926–1984) assembled one of the greatest collections of jewellery and decorative arts ever seen. The Museum was given many of her most important pieces.

The formation of partnerships with other countries enabled cultural exchange and co-operation. The Bulgarian objects shown here were part of a large and significant gift in 1971 from the Bulgarian government.

Image: Anne Hull Grundy, about 1960

## **Courtenay Adrian Ilbert (1888–1956)**

Ilbert was the greatest horological collector of the 20th century. At his death his collection numbered over 4000 clocks, watches and other related items. Of global significance, the collection was purchased for the Museum in 1958.

Image: Courtenay Adrian Ilbert,  
about 1954

## **Clock movement and pamphlet England, about 1733**

This monumental astronomical clock called *The Microcosm*, or 'world in miniature', was made by Henry Bridges. It toured Britain and North America as an entertainment. Its case has not survived, but the pamphlet shows that it contained a moving picture and a musical organ. Ilbert discovered the movement in Paris in 1938.

## **Bulgarian Government gift**

Bulgaria, 1971

This diplomatic gift was made to mark the visit to London of the President of the Bulgarian Committee for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. Assembled by Bulgarian scholars to record traditional ways of life, it was the foundation for subsequent acquisitions.

Image: Costume from Puderevo, Sliven (centre)

## **Jacket and clasp**

Bulgaria, 1920–30 and 1880–1900

This married woman's woollen jacket from east Bulgaria is one of 40 complete costumes representing the distinctive dress from each region of Bulgaria. The image shows this costume in a display of the entire gift in 1977. The copper alloy clasp, finely hammered by hand, is from south-west Bulgaria.

## **Mona Saudi (born 1945)**

The Museum increasingly builds relationships with contemporary artists. Mona Saudi, is one of the very few Arab women artists to become a sculptor. Born in Amman, Jordan, she ran away from her strict upbringing to Beirut, Lebanon, to pursue her dream of becoming an artist.

From Beirut, Saudi went to Paris to study sculpture at the École des Beaux-Arts. Influenced by the artist Brancusi, she explores themes such as earth and motherhood in abstract forms, which also influence her drawings. Saudi lives and works in Beirut.

Image: Mona Saudi at work

## ***Mother Earth***

Lebanon, 2010

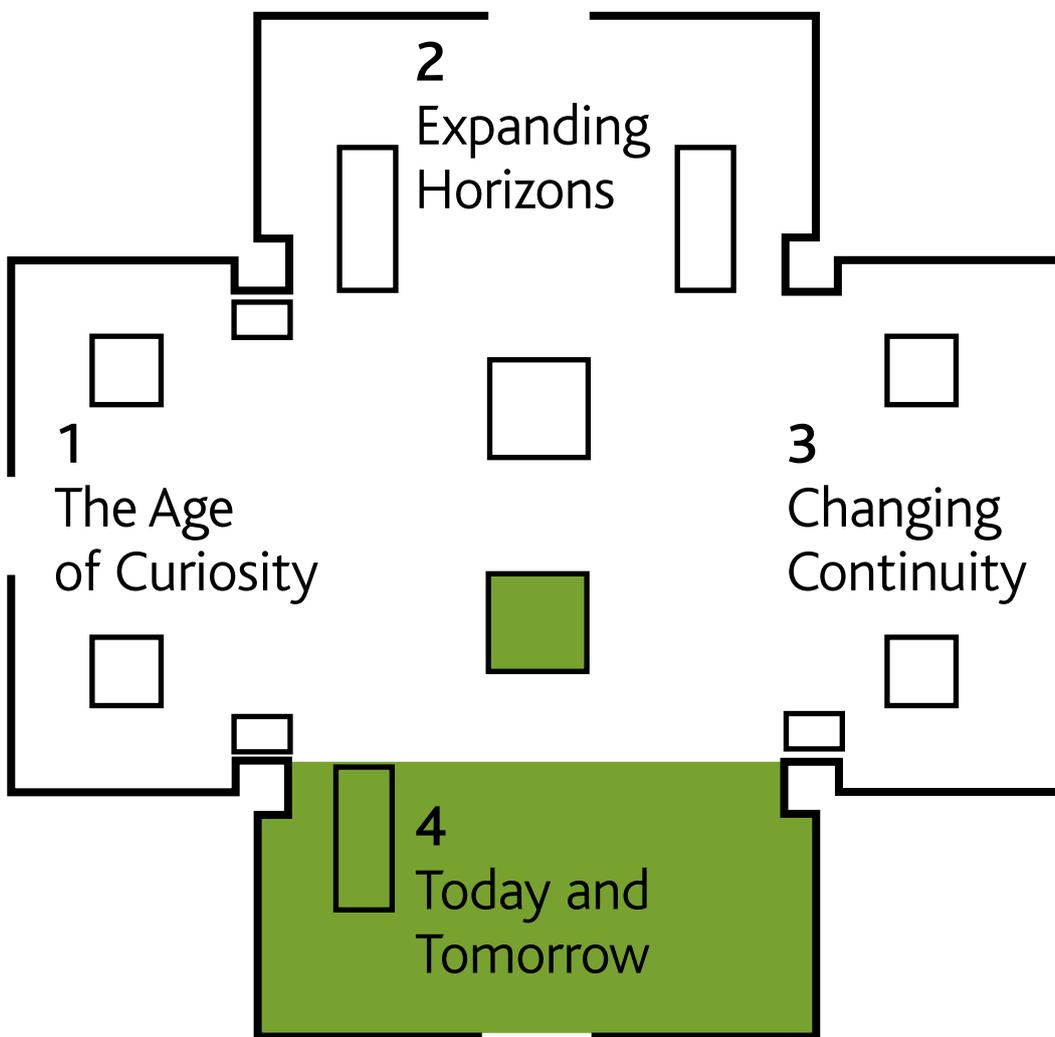
Saudi donated this Jordanian marble sculpture to the Museum in 2011. She loves working with this marble because it comes from her native Jordan: 'It fills me with joy every time I work with it. I call it the Jade of Jordan'.



# Section 4

Today and Tomorrow, 21st century

## Gallery plan



## **Today and Tomorrow**

As in the past, the Museum continues to benefit from the collecting passions of private individuals. Since 2011, its twentieth century European collection has been transformed by a substantial, anonymous gift. Focusing on Scandinavia, it includes glassware, basketry, metalwork, and ceramics.

Donations and acquisitions continue to broaden knowledge of the ancient and more recent past. Oppi Untracht (1922–2008) bequeathed Indian silver and design drawings, revealing much about taste and trade between Europe and South Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Image: Oppi Untracht,  
The Hindu Archives, 2004

## **A collection of modern design**

This anonymous gift, made since 2011, is transforming the Museum's collection. The collectors have assembled glass, ceramics, metalwork, woodwork and basketry, principally from Scandinavia, as well as Britain, Holland, Germany and Italy.

Image: The collectors' own display, 2014

## **British studio pottery**

The collection includes pieces by many respected British potters from the 1930s onwards. These pieces join a distinguished collection of British ceramics from the Bronze Age to the present. Forming a nucleus on which to build, this gift takes the Museum's collection in a new direction.

## **Vase and vessels**

England, 1974–1980

These pieces were made by Jacqueline Poncelet. The slab-built earthenware vase inlaid with coloured clays dates from the late 1970s. Her earlier work is represented by the two small, simple vessels in unglazed white bone china.

## **A collection of modern design**

The collectors understood that modern applied arts are part of a long historical tradition, and wanted their collection to be appreciated in such a context. In some areas they deliberately acquired recent works that reflected local traditions.

Image: The collectors' own display, 2014

## **Finnish basketry**

The collectors visited Finland twice a year seeking out traditional and contemporary work, including basketry. Uncommon in modern design collections, such baskets are of great quality and enhance the Museum's collection.

## **Basket**

Finland, 2007

Markku Kosonen used traditional Finnish basketry techniques to create light and modern birch bark containers. Here, the birch is loosely plaited and glued together and the silver side of the bark remains visible on the exterior instead of being turned inwards.

## **A collection of modern design**

The collectors sought to find a balance between quality and function. They often considered how objects might be made more simple and practical, commenting that, 'Domestic objects should be like an English butler, efficient but silent'.

Image: The collectors' own display, 2014

## **Finnish design**

The collectors admired Finnish glass designer Tapio Wirkkala for his ability to design anything from art objects to vodka bottles. His pieces for the Venetian firm, Venini, complement the Museum's collection of Venetian glass bequeathed by Slade in 1868.

## Vases

Italy, 1970

Wirkkala's glass designs made in Venice exploit different techniques from those used in Finland, such as internal threading or *filigrana* work. These vases are formed by joining two separately blown vessels while still hot, an Italian technique known as *incalmo*.

## **A collection of modern design**

Many pieces were acquired directly from the artists who made them, resulting in some rare objects that were not sold commercially. Everything the collectors acquired, including factory-made objects, was superbly documented.

Image: The collectors' own display, 2014

## **Finnish glass**

The collectors admired Finnish glass for its understated elegance. After 1945, Finland transformed its glass industry by employing outstanding designers. The collection has a superb group of work by Tapio Wirkkala, as well as Timo Sarpaneva, Kaj Franck and Oiva Toikka.

## ***Juliana vase***

Finland, 1972–1986

Inspired by the Finnish landscape, Tapio Wirkkala designed this vase to resemble a block of ice. Made by Iittala Glassworks, it was commissioned by the Finnish government in 1972 as a gift for Queen Juliana of the Netherlands. A few others were made subsequently.

## **Today and tomorrow**

The world in the twenty-first century is a changing place and the Museum of the world changes with it. During its long history, the Museum has become a place where all cultures can be shown but none privileged, all faiths represented, but none preached.

The Museum continues to acquire, conserve, research, publish and exhibit, sharing its collections and reaching new audiences using digital technology.

In 2014, the latest extension to the Museum's north corner opened as a hub for all aspects of collections care, with the Sainsbury Exhibitions Gallery at its heart.

Image: The World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre designed by Rogers, Stirk, Harbour and Partners, 2014

## **The Maryam and Edward Eisler Collection of Iranian Art**

The Eislers, London-based philanthropists, support projects to promote the arts in Britain and elsewhere. Founding members of the patrons' group CaMMEA, they established a fund to acquire Iranian artwork in 2011.

Image: Maryam and Edward Eisler, 2010

The Eisler Fund has enabled the acquisition of important works on paper by Iranian artists from different generations, including Nicky Nodjoumi, Bahman Mohassess and Hadieh Shafie. Maryam Eisler believes that major institutions like the British Museum should collect the work of such artists.

## ***Grid 21***

Iran, 2013

This calligraphic work in blue and black inks has the Persian word *ishq*, meaning love, repeated over a grid. The artist, Hadieh Shafie, describes this painting as a 'conversation with the tradition of eastern calligraphic script and the western modernist grid'.

## **Oppi Untracht (1922–2008)**

Alvin Jacob Untracht, known as Oppi, was born in New York. He studied Fine Art, specialising in metalwork, jewellery and enamelling. He became a leading expert and writer on these techniques.

Image: Oppi Untracht,  
The Hindu Archives, 2004

The young Untracht travelled extensively in India, living an itinerant life and documenting jewellery and crafts. Later, he amassed a silver collection comprising hundreds of items, mainly acquired in London. Towards the end of his life he gave much of his collection away or bequeathed it to museums.

## **Rose water sprinkler and claret jug**

Western India, about 1890

Untracht's bequest to the British Museum included ornate silver items from Kutch in Gujarat. The claret jug with a salamander handle is stamped OM, the mark of renowned silversmith Omersee Mawjee, in whose workshop both pieces were made.

## **Frank W. Hall Jnr (1940–2013)**

Hall, a professional architect who lived in New York, was fascinated by the Middle East, India and North Africa, visiting regularly. He collected mementoes, including postcards with views of important buildings, monuments and craft activities.

Image: Frank Hall, 2010

Hall's collection was bequeathed to the Museum by his family in his memory. Each postcard tells a story. They belong to a time when millions of cards were produced and sent, before the advent of text messaging and the Internet.

## **Postcards**

Hall's postcards show scenes of traditional bazaars, sites in the Holy Land, monuments, mosques and daily life from right across the Middle East. As images of everyday life, they capture specific moments in a rapidly changing political and social environment.

## **The British Museum Friends**

In 2003, with support from the British Museum Friends and a contribution from the Sosland family, a US-based donor, the Museum purchased an important collection which showcases the silver jewellery traditions of South Alaska and British Columbia.

Image: British Museum Friends

In the late 1800s, cruise ships began to visit the north-west coast of America. Local artists, known for their wood carving, soon realised that silver souvenirs most appealed to tourists. Lacking a ready supply, they re-worked silver dollars to create a new artistic tradition.

## **Bracelets**

North-west America,  
1890s and 1990s

Charles Edenshaw was the first Haida artist to incorporate European materials and ideas, producing this early silver bracelet. In the 1990s, Lloyd Wadhams made the open bracelet with the eagle design in silver, his preferred medium.

## **CaMMEA**

This British Museum patrons' group actively supports the acquisition of contemporary and modern Middle Eastern art. Set up in 2009, it enables the Middle East department to collect works on paper.

Image: Paper sculpture by Michael Rakowitz, 2009, inspired by ancient ivory pieces

These paper sculptures are by the Iraqi-American artist Michael Rakowitz. He uses disposable materials to replicate objects from the Iraq Museum, damaged or lost in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion. They emphasise the fragility of cultural heritage. The Museum has strong historical and present-day links with Iraq.

***The Invisible Enemy Should  
Not Exist (Recovered Missing,  
Stolen Series)***

North America, from 2007

*Male with Short Coat and Kilted Skirt* by  
Michael Rakowitz, 2007

*Bull Facing Left with Pattern at Horn* by  
Michael Rakowitz, 2009

## **The National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums of Sudan (NCAM)**

The Museum greatly benefits from scholarly co-operation, for example with NCAM. This is the government body which manages cultural heritage in the Republic of Sudan.

Image: Cemetery site excavation, Sudan

As part of its relationship with NCAM, Museum archaeologists lead missions to Sudan, participating in salvage campaigns connected with the construction of the Nile Valley dams. The finds given to the Museum have a known context, so their scholarly value is enhanced.

## **Bowls**

Sudan, 2050 –1750 BC  
and 300 BC – AD 350

From a cemetery site in Northern Dongola Reach and a rescue site at Gabati, these pottery bowls were excavated by the Sudan Archaeological Research Society (SARS). NCAM gave them to SARS who donated them to the Museum in 2010 and 2002.

## **Today and tomorrow**

This century has already seen an ambitious extension to the Museum in the north-west corner of the site. The World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre provides new state-of-the-art storage and collections care facilities, new conservation and research laboratories, and a new exhibition space.

By preserving the collections for the benefit of future generations, and enabling them to reach a worldwide audience through displays in London and loans both nationally and internationally, the Museum continues to further its aim to be a Museum of the world for the world.

Image: Museum conservators in the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre, 2014

## **Hamish Parker (born 1959)**

Educated at Eton College, Parker read theology at Oxford before becoming a fund manager in the City of London. Inspired by Alexander Walker, he began to collect modern and contemporary works.

Image: Display of etchings from the *Vollard Suite*, 2012

In 2011 Parker generously funded the purchase of the *Vollard Suite* by Pablo Picasso, which he presented in memory of his father, Major Horace Parker. Made in the 1930s, this complete set of 100 etchings is one of the greatest achievements in the history of printmaking and of Picasso's career.

***Reclining sculptor and model  
with mask***

France, 1933

This etching is concerned with the relationship between model and artist, one of the *Vollard Suite's* recurring themes. Picasso was inspired by the classical antiquity of the Mediterranean and by the artists Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres and Rembrandt.

## **The Yirrkala Arts Centre Australia**

Indigenous Australian art centres are of profound importance to artists living in remote areas. Controlled by local communities, they provide a supportive working environment and opportunities to sell work.

Image: Yirrkala Arts Centre, 2014

The centre supported the Museum's acquisition of seven baskets as part of its contemporary collecting. The Yolngu people from Yirrkala are influential within Australian art traditions, producing work of international acclaim. Their art has been used as legal evidence to gain recognition of their land and waters.

## **Coiled sister basket**

Australia, 2011

This pandanus fibre basket was made by Banbiyak Munungurr, a respected elder and weaver. With matching sides, sister baskets are made using a south-eastern Australian coiling technique. The skill spread as women taught their neighbours, finally reaching Arnhem Land in the 1920s.

## **Gilbert Hampden Manley (1931–2008)**

Manley, a zoologist who researched nocturnal primates at London Zoo, spent time living in the jungles of Sri Lanka observing langur monkeys. He later taught in the Anthropology Department at Durham University.

Image: Gilbert Manley, 1999

Manley developed an interest in objects from the Pacific, which he purchased at auction and then researched. In 2008, his widow Jane donated three objects from the Pacific in his memory.

This rare mask from South Pentecost, Vanuatu, Melanesia, is a significant gift.

## **Festival mask**

Vanuatu, 1700s–1800s

These masks, known as *chubwan* or *juban*, are rare. Made for festivals relating to the growth and production of yams, their appearance was enhanced by the actions of the wearer, whose costume would have included leaf and flower decorations, and possibly body paint.

## **Alexander Walker (1930–2003)**

Walker was the popular film critic for London's *Evening Standard* newspaper from 1960 until his death. Born in Northern Ireland, he studied political philosophy at Queen's University, Belfast, before turning to film journalism and writing books.

Image: Alexander Walker, 2002

Walker considered collecting to be a form of self-analysis. His eclectic collection filled every corner of his London flat, including the kitchen and bathroom. His best-sellers on film stars and the film industry funded his passion for modern prints and drawings.

***Woman on a bed***

England, 1991–2

This is one of the six etchings by Lucian Freud that Walker owned. His 2004 bequest of modern prints and drawings by leading British, American and European artists greatly extended the British Museum's graphic collection from the 1960s onwards.

## **Today and Tomorrow**

Collecting continues to the present day, but increasingly, the Museum relies on the generosity of funding bodies and other supporters to assist with the purchase of acquisitions.

It works in partnership with source countries to promote shared understanding and scholarly co-operation. In some regions, the collecting of contemporary objects helps to preserve traditional crafts.

Individual donors continue in their generosity. A bequest of 200 American and British prints and drawings from Alexander Walker (1930–2003) has greatly enhanced the modern collections.

Image: Alexander Walker, 2002

## **Public finds**

The Museum's collection grows through the acquisition of archaeological finds discovered by the public and recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Finds dating from prehistory to modern times come from all over England and Wales.

Image: Roman coin findspots, 1997–2010

## **Finger rings**

1640–1696

The first gold ring was made in memory of 'MB', who died in January 1696. It was found in Firle, East Sussex. The second gold ring asks the wearer to 'OBBAY THY KING', in support of Charles I during the Civil War of 1640-48. It was found at Leconfield, Yorkshire.

## **Finger rings**

1550–1650

The third gold ring has a French inscription 'PRENES EN GRE' ('accept this willingly'). It was found in Wilberfoss, Yorkshire. The final gold ring in this group is from Wattlesborough, Shropshire, and reminds the wearer that 'maides must say no'.

## **Notable finds**

The Roman copper-alloy bull, possibly a vessel mount, was found on the Isle of Wight. The gold medieval brooch with the French inscription 'En Bone Temps' ('in good times') was found in Northamptonshire. Used to make a wish, the Roman gold foil with letters and magical symbols was found in Yorkshire.

The Anglo-Saxon enamelled gold mount with a male portrait was found in Suffolk. Found in Nottinghamshire, the Bronze Age gold ring was probably a piece of prehistoric jewellery worn in the hair. A previously unknown type found in Dorset, the silver coin is of Valentinian II from about AD 387.

## **Portable Antiquities Scheme**

Thousands of finds are made every year by the public and reported to the British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). This invaluable co-operation enables a better understanding of our past.

Image: Metal detector users assisting at an excavation

Information on over one million objects has been placed on the PAS online database ([finds.org.uk](http://finds.org.uk)), which is available to both researchers and the public. Recorded by a network of archaeologists called Finds Liaison Officers, these finds are rewriting the history of the past.

## **The Treasure Act 1996**

There is a legal obligation for finders to report treasure under the terms of the Treasure Act. Generally speaking, finds are considered to be treasure if they are made of gold or silver and more than 300 years old, or they are groups of coins or prehistoric hoards.

The British Museum provides advice to the coroner, to whom treasure must be reported. It also manages the process which allows for treasure to be acquired by museums around the country. Most is acquired by regional museums, so that it can be displayed locally.

## **The treasure process**

The items in this case were found recently and are here at the Museum for expert analysis as part of the treasure process. Conservators clean some of the finds, particularly coin hoards, for identification by curators. Other objects may be tested for their metal content by scientists.

The coroner decides if a find is treasure, based on the Museum's advice. If declared treasure, the find belongs to the Crown, but is returned to the finder if no museum wishes to acquire it. Finders and landowners receive an *ex gratia* reward for finds acquired by museums.

The reward is paid by the government on the advice of the Treasure Valuation Committee. It is equivalent to the market value of the find, and the cost is met by the acquiring museum.

Image: Silver Viking bowl being examined at a meeting of the Treasure Valuation Committee

## **Recent finds**

This display shows some of the range of objects currently at the Museum as they go through the treasure process, or that have been brought here for further research. All will be recorded with the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

## **Group of bracelets**

about 1500 BC

Dating to the Middle Bronze Age, these pieces of gold jewellery are probably bracelets for a small child. There are eight bracelets, some of which are nested together. Found in Woolaston, Gloucestershire, the British Museum hopes to acquire them.

## **Weaponry**

about 1000BC

This small group comprises late Bronze Age copper-alloy socketed axeheads, a spearhead and a sword pommel. The assemblage was found in Cherry Burton, East Yorkshire, and the British Museum hopes to acquire it.

## **Lunula**

about 2400 BC

This large gold crescent-shaped neck ornament (known as a *lunula*) was found in Tarrant Valley, Dorset. It would have been one of the earliest examples of such metalwork encountered by people at the time. Dorset County Museum hopes to acquire it.

## **Treasure donations and support**

Some finders and landowners generously donate discoveries to the Museum. Private individuals, supporter groups and funding bodies provide financial assistance, enabling important archaeological discoveries to be acquired for public benefit by museums across the country.

The British Museum gratefully acknowledges the support it receives for acquisitions from the British Museum Friends, the American Friends of the British Museum, the Art Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Arts Council England/Victoria & Albert Purchase Grant Fund, as well as private contributions.

## **Acquisitions made from donations**

Every year, roughly 100 museums in England and Wales acquire public finds, mostly via the Treasure Act (see adjacent case). Donations and external funding make such acquisitions possible and help pay for conservation, public display and continuing research.

This Roman silver coin hoard found in Selby, North Yorkshire, was acquired with the support of Rick Witschonke and the American Friends of the British Museum. The post-medieval silver-gilt cap hook has a male portrait. It was found in Kingerby, Lincolnshire and was purchased with a donation from Laurel Bezier.

Found at Little Ouseburn, North Yorkshire, this medieval silver seal matrix (stamp for making wax impressions) was acquired with funding from John Rassweiler.

The Hockley Pendant, a medieval gold reliquary found in Essex, was acquired with the support of the Art Fund and the British Museum Friends.

Made to hold a relic of the cross upon which Christ was crucified, the Hockley Pendant depicts Christ's five wounds. Relics of the cross discovered by St Helena were dispersed throughout the Christian world. She is shown carrying the cross on the other side of the pendant.

## **The British Museum Friends**

The British Museum Friends was founded as the British Museum Society in 1968 with the aim of supporting the Museum. The Friends enjoy a range of membership benefits and pay an annual subscription which helps to acquire and care for objects, and provides funding for education and research projects.

Image: The Friends at a private view

## **The British Museum Friends and the *Rosetta Vase***

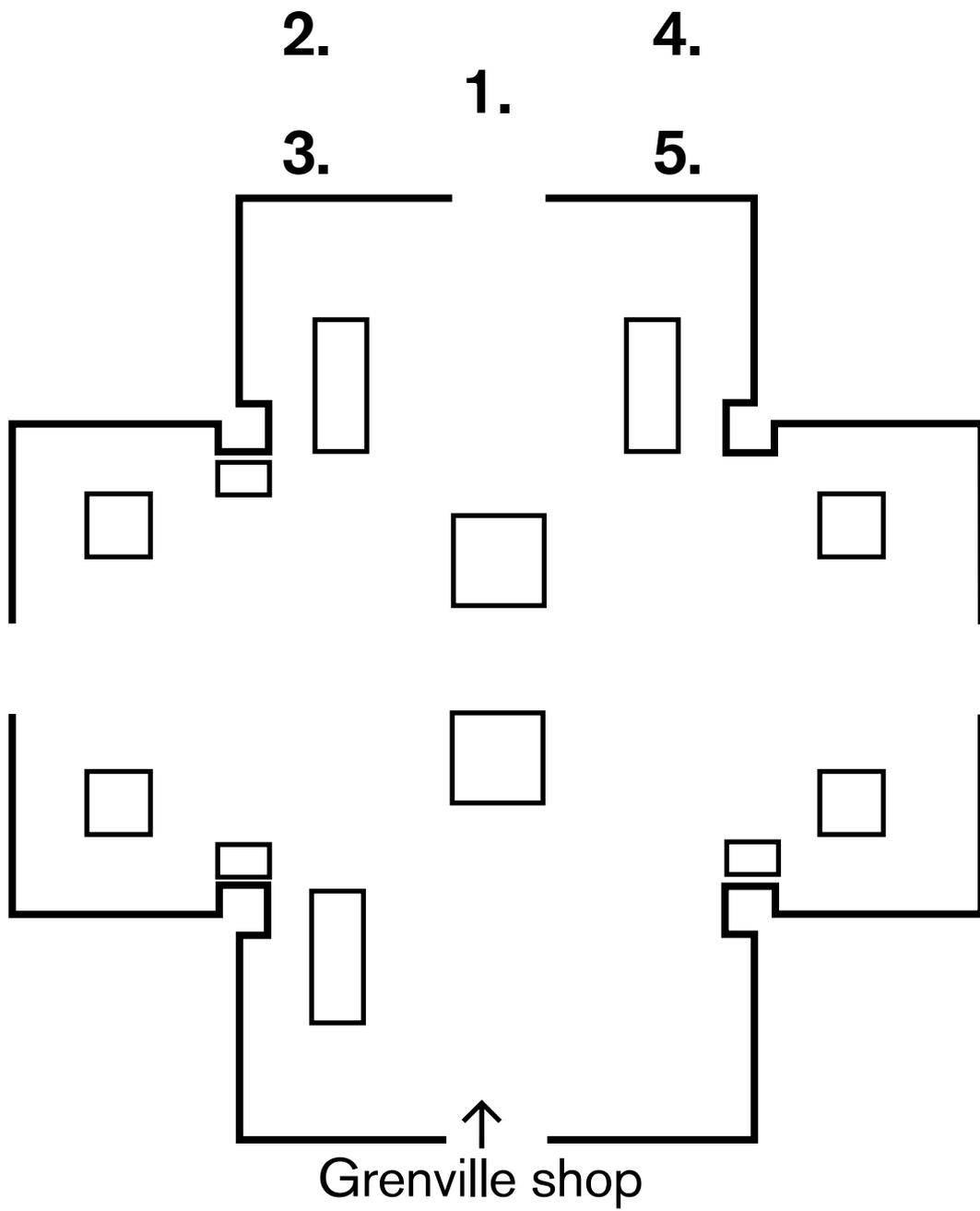
Support from the Friends enables the Museum to fill historic gaps and to engage with living artists. Grayson Perry made the *Rosetta Vase* for *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman*, an exhibition he curated at the British Museum from 2011 to 2012. The vase was then shown in the Members' Room.

## ***The Rosetta Vase***

England, 2011

The Museum is shown as a place of pilgrimage where cultures and ideas meet. The tree trunk is labelled *Story of the World*, referring to the Museum's 2010 BBC Radio 4 series, *A History of the World in 100 objects*. The vase is named after the Rosetta Stone (Room 4), an iconic Museum object.

# Portraits at balcony level



## Portraits at balcony level

### **1. George II (1683-1760)**

by John Shackleton, 1762

Donor of the Old Royal Library in 1757

Commissioned by the

Trustees of the Museum

### **2. William Courten (1642-1702)**

anonymous

Collector and friend of Sir Hans Sloane

Bequeathed by Sir Hans Sloane

### **3. Dr Matthew Maty (1718-1776)**

by Barthelemy Dupan

2nd Principal Librarian (Director)

of the Museum

Bequeathed by Dr Matthew Maty

### **4. Sir John Cotton (1621-1702)**

attributed to John Hayls

Donor of the Cottonian Library in 1700

### **5. Richard Payne Knight (1751-1824)**

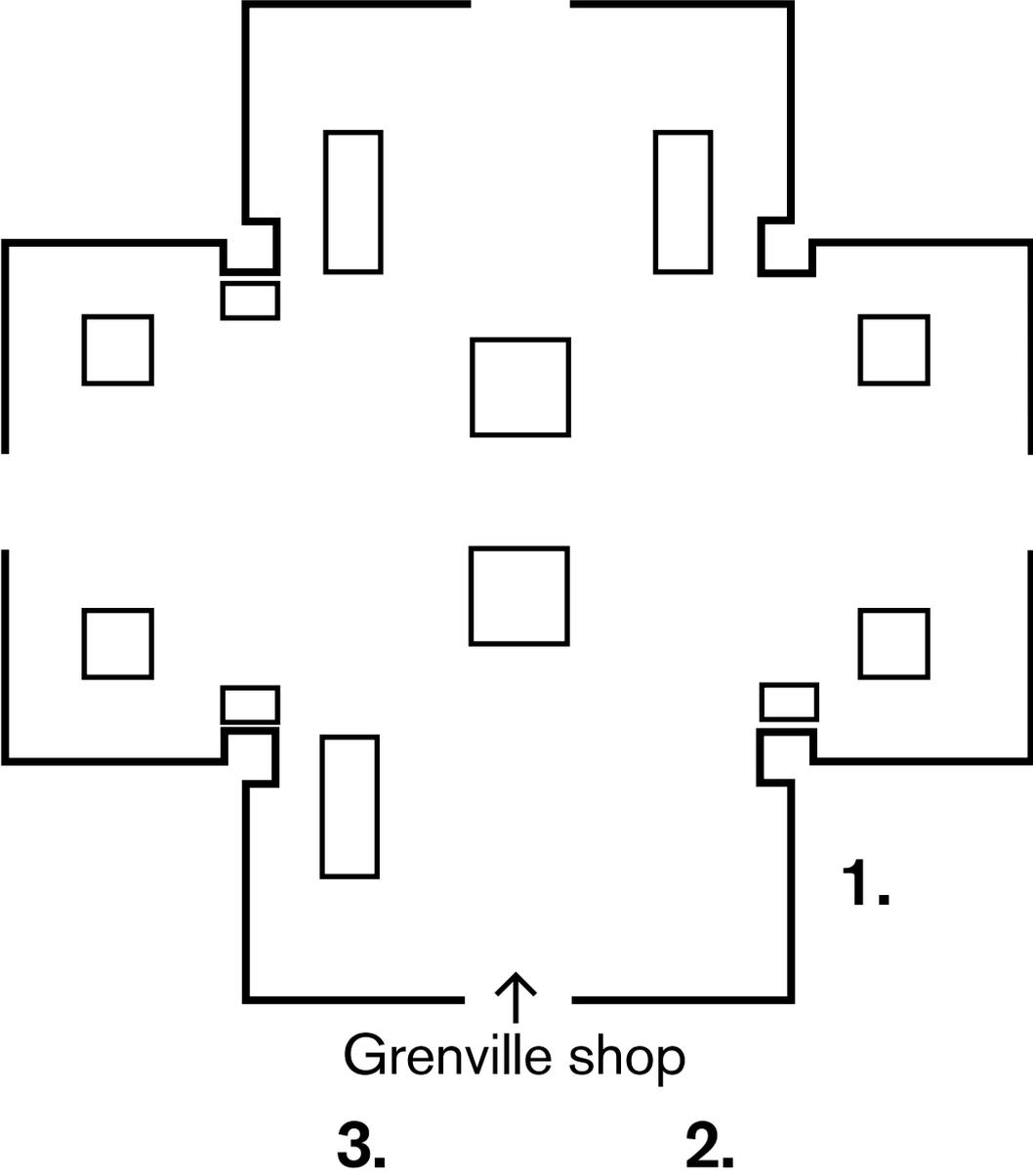
by Margaret Carpenter

Trustee and benefactor of the Museum

Donated by the artist

All paintings are oil on canvas

Portraits at balcony level



## Portraits at balcony level

### **1. Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753)**

attributed to John Vanderbank  
Founder of the British Museum,  
depicted as President of the  
Royal Society

### **2. Gowin Knight (1713-1772)**

by Benjamin Wilson  
1st Principal Librarian (Director)  
of the Museum  
Bequeathed by Gowin Knight

### **3. Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820)**

by Sir Thomas Lawrence  
Trustee and benefactor of the Museum,  
depicted as President of the Royal  
Society  
Donated by Daniel Lysons

All paintings are oil on canvas