



**Press Release**

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## **Sharing Heritage Craft Skills between Benin and Banbury**

The Pitt Rivers Museum has been collaborating with Tooley's Boatyard in Banbury on a new display, installed at the Boatyard in early May 2026.

The display, featuring an interactive video screen, explores the importance of supporting heritage crafts both here in the UK and on the global stage. It focusses on a collaboration between one of the Pitt Rivers Museum's resident maker fellows, Phil Omodamwen – a sixth-generation bronze caster from Benin City, Nigeria – and the resident blacksmith at Tooley's Boatyard, Emilia Orving. Exploring shared practices and concerns in the two metalworking traditions, the display highlights the ways in which heritage craft practices have survived and how we might support them into the future. The video content available to watch shows Phil and Emilia working together in the Boatyard's historic forge to make what are likely the first ever 'Benin Bronzes' to be produced in the UK.

The display is available to view at Tooley's Boatyard in Banbury during their regular opening hours: Tuesday - Friday 10am to 1pm and on Saturdays when they hold open days from 10am to 4pm with full access to the boatyard, museum, and other areas usually closed to the public.

Visitors will also be able to view the historic forge, in continuous use since 1776, in which Phil and Emilia worked. The Boatyard also offers blacksmithing courses, held in the forge, for any visitors interested in exploring heritage crafts themselves.

This collaboration between the Museum and the Boatyard is one of many that the Museum is looking to foster, building closer relationships with local artisans and communities right here in Oxfordshire.

This collaboration is supported by the Pitt Rivers Museum's AHRC-funded *Making the Museum* project (2024-2027). With grateful thanks to Phil Omodamwen, Emilia Orving, Creative Jay design, Tim Hand Productions, and staff at both the Museum and the Boatyard for their work to bring this display to life.

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For images of the project and display opening, please contact the Pitt Rivers Museum Press Office at [press@prm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:press@prm.ox.ac.uk).

### **About the Pitt Rivers Museum**

The Pitt Rivers Museum is the University of Oxford's Museum of Anthropology and World Archaeology. It was founded in 1884 when General Augustus Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers, a pioneer archaeologist and keen collector, donated his collection of over 26,000 archaeological and ethnographic objects to the University. Today, the Museum is home to more than 700,000 objects and archival artefacts. These collections of historical, social and ritual significance are of an extraordinary range and depth, including great works of art, invention and design from around the world. The Museum carries out world-leading conservation and research and welcomes half a million visitors each year. It is currently focused on developing more socially engaged practice with the emphasis on inclusivity. Today, the Museum is a dynamic, forward-looking institution with connections to stakeholders around the world.

### **About the *Making the Museum* Project**

*Making the Museum* is the first major research project in an ethnographic museum to investigate maker identities and agencies across the breadth of its collections. Through detailed analysis of the Museum's database, associated documentation, objects and archives, it will also pioneer a series of maker research fellowships that will transform our understanding of the knowledge, skills, and cosmologies embedded in objects, as well as their continuing power for people today. The project started in 2024 and will run until 2027. Find more information on our website at:

<https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/making-museum>

Watch Phil Omodamwen and Emilia Orving casting Benin bronzes at Tooley's Forge at:

[Benin City comes to Banbury](#)