

Annual Report

2020/21



Mission Statement

To inspire and share knowledge and understanding with global audiences about humanity's many ways of knowing, being, creating and coping in our interconnected worlds by providing a world-leading museum for the cross-disciplinary study of humanity through material culture.



Cover image: Transformed drawers as part of the What's in our Drawers? project. Objects newly housed within the drawers are shown above and throughout the report.

Design by Creative Jay

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Chair's foreword

Before the phrase 'building back better' became a political cliché, and perhaps before it was even articulated, the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) was implementing plans which will ensure that one positive outcome of the period of the pandemic is much deeper and more effective engagement with its various audiences. This is because a strategic priority has been to curate more content online and, where appropriate, offer hybrid activities. It is not an exaggeration to say that what has been delivered represents a reinvention of much of what the PRM does. As Chair of the Visitors I want to begin by congratulating the Director and the staff of the museum on this achievement.

There are so many elements of this work which merit comment. I referred last year to the online virtual tour. This has continued to be widely regarded as one of the best such offerings during the lockdowns, not least by a young grandchild of my acquaintance. The seminars, conferences and webinars that the museum has arranged have also attracted very appreciative, wider audiences, both nationally and globally, and extended awareness of its effectiveness in curating its collections and in undertaking innovative forms of public engagement. The efforts of the education team in providing digital content deriving from both permanent displays and temporary exhibitions were also strikingly successful.

The imperative of finding new ways of digital engagement has also been important in the context of the PRM's research and teaching activities in the University. And a very important, though less visible project underpinning so much that the museum does is the data-cleansing exercise which has enabled the move of all the collections' records to a new database.



None of this is to downplay the enthusiasm with which visitors have been welcomed back into the physical space of the museum. They too are now able to witness the labours of lockdown, not only in the form of compelling temporary exhibitions, but also in terms of many displays which have been better contextualised than once they were. Also of lasting significance is the transformation of the publicly available display drawers which has not only improved accessibility but greatly enhanced the quality of preservation of hundreds of objects.

All this has required immense commitment and energy on the part of the staff concerned. Some, however, have been on furlough with all the constraints and frustrations that implies. From the perspective of the Visitors the top priority, as we progress through this new academic year, is to support the Director in ensuring that the return to on-site working takes place sensitively and flexibly with the welfare of staff being the central consideration. In that connection I would also like to offer thanks to my fellow Visitors whose interest in the PRM has remained undimmed in the virtual world through which we have all interacted since the spring of 2020.

Sir Jonathan Phillips
Chair of Board of Visitors

Director's introduction

Although, due to the global health crisis, the museum had to keep its characteristic doors shut for much of the year, one might argue it was never more in the public eye. A thoroughly transformational period for the Pitt Rivers Museum, and our staff showed resilience, creativity and commitment throughout to stay connected with our partners, audiences, schools and communities during a period of unprecedented turmoil. Staff of all parts of the museum set out to design ways to transform nearly every aspect of our work, in the process developing a truly incredible set of innovative methods of delivery that we will continue to use.

Our education team transformed the way teaching to schools was delivered; our research team has never been more prominently present, participating in over 140 online conferences, webinars and events worldwide. Together, staff started developing new practices of collecting more equitably while working remotely, establishing partnerships both in the UK and globally. Although international travel was impossible, and our usual research and community partnerships could have stalled because of it, our team thought of ways to ensure that, even working from home, they would still be able to facilitate access to the collections, employing hybrid methodologies to continue co-creating content through local and international collaboration.

At times, coming into my office for one of the few on-site visits (my office was being used by other members of staff), I would find conservators or collection team members sitting on top of a table, with objects laid out in our visitor research space, microscopic imaging tools hooked up to computers, while running collaborative workshops to understand better the weaving methods used in Salish, Haida, Palestinian and Naga textiles, informing better care and providing access.

Volunteer engagement, work placement and internships were transformed so they could support our online activities, helping to develop digital-born exhibitions such as part of our Multaka project, working with forced migrants and volunteers in and around Oxfordshire. Work placements and interns helped deliver audience research and evaluations that will guide our future strategies for digital, as well as set-up meetings to start critically rethinking our current collection development policies, and podcasts to ensure our learning and thinking was shared with more museums in the sector.

“ One of the best webinars on museums I have been to. Wonderful work engaging with global artists and challenging curatorial practice. ”

Radical Hope Webinar feedback

In the background a huge amount of work was happening to improve the care given to our collections. On-site the joint Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) collections move team packed close to 100,000 musical instruments and stone tools. While working from their homes, our collections team cleaned close to 750,000 records to move all of our data to a new database system. All the while, underneath and in front of the museum lawn, lots of changes were happening with major construction works developing a new Collection Teaching and Research Centre that, from 2023, will enable us to provide the care and access these unique collections deserve.



During the pandemic, we worked closely with our colleagues at the Oxford University of Natural History Museum, as we embedded our shop and created joined-up teams to manage ticketed pre-booked entry in COVID-19-safe ways. On-site we also opened three new exhibitions, and installed new displays in the main galleries, including over 200 drawers that have been completely transformed.

Our online programming reached an unprecedented international and national audience. There were months when the museum's work was being reported by national and international press almost on a daily basis. From November 2020, we started the Radical Hope, Critical Change webinar series that drew communities locally and globally with participants from dozens of towns from across the UK (over 120!) and dozens of countries across the globe (over 74).

Having had to cancel, in March 2020, the large international conference to launch our EU-funded Taking Care project, we were glad to host it online in April 2021. Originally set to bring over 100 partners from the EU and nationally to Oxford to reflect on Matters of Care: Museum Futures in Times of Planetary Precarity, the six-week online programme brought in over 2,000 viewers from across the globe to join the conversations.

Thanks to the marvellous work of Ashley Coutu and Thandi Wilson, it turned out to be one of the highlights of the year, alongside other important online conferences that are part of the Rethinking Restitution project led by Dan Hicks, Sarah Mallet and Meghan O'Brien Backhouse.

All this, while large parts of our team were on furlough and the museum was closed for 34 out of 52 weeks and only had 22–30% of its usual visitors, while also undergoing an organisational review of our commercial and visitor services, library and exhibitions and programming teams.

Next year our focus will be on bringing our team back into the museum to take the best of what we learned and agree new ways of working, while taking much time to ensure staff well-being is our top priority. It has been an exhilarating but also exhausting year that requires time to digest and learn from; we will also be focusing on delivering a new five-year strategic plan that outlines our priorities and point of view. We will continue to work towards becoming a place where everyone feels welcome to share stories that are of relevance to understand our pasts, work in this shared present and reimagine our futures together.

Dr Laura Van Broekhoven
Director

From the Pro-Vice-Chancellor



The Pitt Rivers Museum is for many an iconic museum, a museum within a museum, and there is no doubt that walking around the exhibitions is a wonderful museum experience. Projects such as What's in our Drawers? are continually adding to that experience, transforming the exhibition of large numbers of collections, making them far more accessible and beautifully displayed.

The Oxford English Dictionary's definition of a museum is: *'A building or institution in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are preserved and exhibited. Also: the collection of objects held by such an institution.'*

While the PRM undoubtedly meets this definition fully, this annual report might indicate the need to expand on that definition and to modernise it.

Focusing still on the physical museum and the preservation and exhibition of the objects, the PRM achieves much more than this definition might suggest. We learn through Labelling Matters and Beyond the Binary and their co-curation how culture has evolved; we begin to appreciate the diversity of views and of understanding from different communities' new and varied interpretations. Together with the Radical Hope, Critical Change webinars the PRM can be seen as a meeting place of intellectual openness and knowledge co-creation.

As can be seen by the extraordinary digital access figures, this year colleagues at the museum have pivoted into the digital world, expanding their reach and developing far-reaching and diverse audiences. Not only have they taken exhibitions and engagement activities to new audiences, they have also succeeded in bringing communities virtually into the museum.

An exemplar of this is the Talking Threads project. Building on the extensive textile collections, the team have used high-definition communications technology and digital microscopy to carry out virtual sessions with Pacific Northwest Coast weavers and scholars from the Salish, Haida and Kwakwaka'wakw nations, allowing collaborative research and bringing in diverse contextual interests and knowledge. This is just one example of ways in which the museum works with originating communities, be they local or global.

This short introduction alone illustrates how successfully the Director and the PRM team are delivering on their mission with global audiences to promote 'the cross-disciplinary study of humanity through material culture', and how the museum has grown beyond its physical bounds and the 'traditional' definition of the museum.

In a year that has been difficult for all, they have achieved a great deal and moreover have done so with a positivity and creativity that is an exemplar to us all – thank you, and congratulations.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "A. Trefethen".

Professor Anne Trefethen
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for People and Gardens,
Libraries and Museums (GLAM),
University of Oxford



“... the team have used high-definition communications technology and digital microscopy to carry out virtual sessions ... just one example of ways in which the museum works with originating communities, be they local or global.”

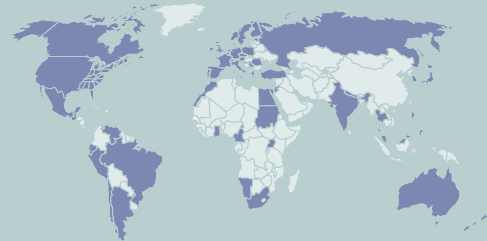
Above: Misa Tamura preparing for a virtual session with NW Coast weavers as part of the Talking Threads project

The year's highlights



Radical Hope, Critical Change webinars

Since November 2020 the public engagement and programming team has been running a successful webinar series that has drawn participation from across the UK (more than 120 towns) and globally (over 75 countries).



Map above showing live-viewers' locations for the webinar series Radical Hope, Critical Change

Website and social media

The Pitt Rivers is developing a more strategic social media programme, in order to grow our global audiences and ensure that visitors stay connected with the huge range of work and activities taking place in the museum. This helps us towards building community, collaboration, curiosity and creativity alongside inclusivity and connectivity.

Working with the rich wealth of visual and written content around the museum collections, research, events, and exhibitions, this year our social media engagement showed a significant rise of interest in online content (162% up); an overall increase in engagement with our website content, with a spike in interest of nearly 400% in our 'micro-sites'; and 100% growth in interest in our blogs and social media content.

Pitt Rivers Museum press coverage of Critical Change programme

News about the programme of critical changes the museum implemented over the summer of 2020 was reported in over 450 media outlets worldwide. The Meltwater Media Monitoring dashboard tool showed that news about critical changes had a potential reach of 6.86 billion people globally, with 97% positive or neutral customer sentiment.

The Critical Change programme was reviewed as 'brilliant and gutsy' by online audiences, with 96% positive reactions, but also sparked some polarised debates. We ensured we used the feedback to better understand the correspondence and online comments we received through sentiment analysis and social network analysis by Angela Billings from Goldsmith's, University of London and Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology (VMMA) student Brittany Ellis.

We also ensured on-site and focus-group audience evaluation took place to further inform changes we will implement to our interpretations and displays.

Many commented on the brilliant work of our Media and Marketing Officer Louise Hancock and we are thoroughly grateful for the support and guidance of GLAM Head of Communications and Marketing Suzanne de la Rosa.



Exhibitions on-site and online

The Pitt Rivers Museum's ambitious and highly regarded exhibitions programme has been described as bold, moving and empowering. All exhibitions foreground co-curation, inclusivity and plurality, and promote creativity in all its diversity. In September 2020 we successfully opened six new interventions as part of the Labelling Matters and Radical Hope projects. QR codes helped take advantage of the potential for digital layering of polyvocal interpretations around objects on display. International artists and museum project collaborators feature in short video edits of interviews and artworks, bringing new voices and interpretations to the displays to activate collections with audiences. In June, coinciding with Pride, we opened *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power*, launched two online 'digital-born' co-curated exhibitions, and archived 55 exhibitions digitally, many drawing visitors globally.

New collections management – and digital assets management systems (CMS/DAMS)

Working under extraordinarily challenging circumstances, without access to our live database systems, the CMS/DAMS project team cleaned over 750,000 records, and created over 44,000 new records, including 18,000 on a new database for manuscript collections. 1,300 newly researched and corrected cultural terms have also been incorporated.

What's in our Drawers?

Taking advantage of the lockdown closures and thanks to generous funding from the Clothworkers' Foundation, our conservation team refurbished over 200 drawers in the museum's iconic Court. The result was a visually stunning transformation that not only drastically improved access to thousands of objects on display, but also ensured objects were no longer being damaged by being stored irresponsibly. In the longer term, the 4,500 new digital images created will be added to our collections' online databases. On the cover of this year's annual report, you can see the stunning amount of work Clothworkers' intern Rebecca Plumbe was able to achieve!



Talking Threads

Talking Threads Project Officers Misa Tamura and Joanna Cole used specialist digital microscopes and digital SLRs to work with weavers and elders from Nagaland, Palestine, and the Northwest Coast of America to add new content to the textiles and unlock their meanings for contemporary weavers and textile specialists. This sort of hybrid access ensured we could still work internationally while travel was impossible, including aspects of weave structure and construction. In the long run, we will continue to use these methods as they enable us to run live virtual sessions with communities abroad, connect meaningfully, make database entries more accurate and adapt our practices of care and documentation to make sure they are in line with community wishes.

Highlighted projects

CMS/DAMS

In the first half of the reporting year, data cleaning continued, with both project and some core collections staff aligning the spellings of named individuals and cultural groups and standardising dates across our existing databases.

Following a successful test migration, work began in April on the final migration of our 13 individual collections Filemaker databases. This led to the successful creation of a new single collections management system (CMS) containing 513,980 object records. 28,740 new conservation records were created in the new conservation module alongside our existing 1,666 loan condition reports. 22,517 person records and 3,026 cultural group records were created and linked to their correct object module references. The new system has also centralised our defined vocabularies in many fields, ensuring that the information we hold on objects will be more easily searchable in future.

As of July 2021, the CMS held 251,032 object collection records, representing 325,335 individual objects; 231,299 photograph collection records, representing 364,606 individual items; 3,034 sound collection records; and 18,782 manuscript collection records.

The project is now entering its final testing phase. All areas of the database apart from thumbnail images and object locations are available for core collections and conservation department staff to test. These two outstanding aspects are due for completion in autumn 2021.

The CMS/DAMS project continued with the related development of a new digital asset management system (DAMS). In the same way that the CMS holds metadata about the museum's physical collections, the DAMS will hold the related digital assets – mainly digital image files, but also video, sound, 3D photogrammetry files, etc – and the associated metadata for these.

Integration between the two systems will enable users of the CMS to see any related image files, alongside the descriptive details of an object; and improvements to metadata in the CMS will be reflected and facilitate search across the DAMS. Once complete, the two interconnected systems should bring about a major improvement for the museum in the management of both its collections data and digital assets, putting the museum in a strong position for ongoing changes in the sector over the next decade and more.

During the course of the year, the DAMS project team set about specifying the numerous resource types required, working with software provider Montala and business analysts from the University's IT Services. Setting up the resource types which will be required by users – whether that is the conservation team, for example, or those cataloguing object collections – enables the system to function as the museum needs.

At the same time, the team also began bringing in digital assets from existing on-site physical servers to the cloud-based ResourceSpace platform, with a major goal in the spring being the successful upload of 197,987 digital assets for the historic photograph collections. There remains much work still to be done (testing, integration, further batch uploads), but the pandemic has already demonstrated the future benefits of the cloud-based management system.

Beyond the Binary

The *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power* exhibition, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), finally opened on 5 June 2021. Visitors immediately flocked to the exhibition – including interventions in the main gallery spaces – to explore and connect with its themes. As the *Beyond the Binary* project team hoped, the exhibition became a site of connections, solidarity and activism. The space did not simply represent lived experiences and the fight for queer equity and power, but through its interactive points it also became a site of action. Visitors were heard playing Patrick Wolf's Section 28 Harmonium, the sounds of video in the space rose as people opened the door of the life-sized 'Trans phone box', entered and watched the film footage inside, and school children and adults alike enjoyed a sense of anarchy as they scribbled on the feedback toilet wall.

Through their engagement with the exhibits, visitors activated the fight for visibility and social justice in the space and connected in meaningful ways with the voices of project partners whose words populated the walls. The phone box and the Stonewall Hopes for the Future feedback wall were layered with messages from visitors: 'You are valid'; 'You are always enough'; 'You deserve unconditional love. It's ok to struggle, the world can seem dark, one day you can find both your place and the sun'; 'Engineers Against Transphobia'; and 'TRANS WOMEN ARE WOMEN'.



Above: Photographing visitor feedback in the *Beyond the Binary* exhibition

An ambitious programme of events marked the launch month of the *Beyond the Binary* exhibition. All events were co-produced with project partners and covered themes ranging from disability and LGBTQIA+ community access in heritage spaces, to queer activism in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Virtual events were well-attended through live streams and continued to be accessed in significant numbers through YouTube recordings. The National Lottery Heritage Fund enabled these events to happen and supplementary support from TORCH bolstered activity.

This year saw the end of funded team member Hannah Bruce's contract and Jozie Kettle's return from maternity leave, with Jess Croll-Knight finishing as maternity cover. Cameron Wallis took up a short-term post to support social media after initially joining the team as an intern as part of their Undergraduate Archaeology degree (Cardiff) in 2019 and then as a *Beyond the Binary* community curator. The work continued to find support from the wider museum team, especially Andy McLellan.

The project ethos of collaboration, questioning and transparency adapted to the move to digital, and through webinars and social media, audience engagement with the project remained strong. While in-person workshops were on hold, through social media the public continued to shape the project, directing the titles of books, zines and journals to be purchased for the exhibition's library space and by submitting artwork for a zine. Sector interest in the project continued to grow, with team members meeting virtually with sector colleagues to consult. Extensive training to familiarise people with the themes of the exhibition and queer lived experiences, terminology and the Equality Act was also delivered at workshops for all staff at the museum, facilitated by the Kite Trust.

What's in our Drawers?



As many visitors to the Pitt Rivers Museum have discovered, you will certainly not be short of things to see. Since October 2019 the What's in our Drawers? project, funded by the Clothworkers' Foundation, has worked to completely transform the 263 publicly accessible display drawers located in the Court and Lower Gallery. Not only has this allowed another exciting dimension of the collection to be made accessible, it has also vastly improved collections care for the hundreds of objects housed in these drawers.

For a number of years the drawers had been used as 'overspill' to house objects from the collection. With objects accumulating in these spaces over time, the drawers had become overcrowded, resulting in damage to the collection. It was also increasingly difficult to monitor the collection for pest activity, as well as making object retrieval challenging. Not only did these problems impact collections care, it also made it difficult for visitors to engage with the drawers as objects were covered by packing material, stacked on top of one another, and lacking in contextual information.



Above: Detail of an overcrowded drawer before conservation work

Right: Rebecca Plumbe using the laser cutter

Opposite: View of the Court showing some of the many transformed drawers

To address these issues, the project sought to utilise laser cutting technology to create custom housings made from an inert conservation grade material (Plastazote). To do this, first the contents of each drawer needed to be rationalised as not everything would be able to go back on display. With objects displayed by type, curation was not a straightforward process, especially when dealing with a wide range of materials that often reflected one kind of item. Many objects also had complicated histories and labels that included racist and colonial terminology. Therefore, it was important to consider how object stories could be told in a more sensitive and representative way.

After objects were selected for redisplay, a digital outline of the new drawer layout was created using Adobe Illustrator. Here a photograph of the objects, positioned in their new layout and shown from above, was imported into Illustrator and scaled to real size. An outline was then drawn around each object to create vector paths for laser cutting. The finished digital layouts could then be programmed and laser cut to produce the new Plastazote housings. The resulting housings could be easily slotted into each drawer to provide a cushioning buffer against the actions of being opened and closed when the drawers are accessed by visitors, as well as giving the appearance of an intentionally curated display.



Conservation work to enable redisplay of some objects was carried out alongside this process. Treatment ranged from re-bonding broken ceramic objects, to humidifying textiles, carrying out tear repairs on paper items, and creating support fills on votive biscuits, amongst other interventions. Mounts and padded boards were also made to support objects going back on display. This was a wonderful opportunity to stabilise material and increase the number of objects that could be made accessible to the public.

With a large proportion of objects coming out of the drawers, it was inevitable that some would need to be put into storage. Whilst this was a shame, it was a great opportunity for the conservation team to photograph, condition-assess, and update locations for the objects – something that had not been done on a large scale with the drawers before. Even though some objects were put into storage, in some ways this has increased their accessibility. Rather than having to rifle through a crowded drawer, an object's location can be found, a photo of the object identified, and the right box retrieved.

This project was also presented in webinars hosted by the Institute of Conservation's Ethnography Group and the Pitt Rivers Museum's education team, supported by TORCH, to share knowledge and raise awareness amongst conservation, museum and public audiences. Due to interest from other museums, a downloadable document about the process of creating digital files for laser cutting was produced and made available via the museum's website.

over **200** drawers completed

The work carried out on the drawers has had a significant impact on a hidden space in the museum, opening up opportunities for visitors, visitor services staff and educational outreach to engage with these collections in a more meaningful way, both now and in the future, and it is hoped that the project's legacy will continue to be felt for many years to come.



Above: Objects are redisplayed in new Plastazote housings before returning to the galleries



Art Fund New Collecting

In 2020 the Pitt Rivers Museum was granted the Art Fund New Collecting Award with the aim of collecting/commissioning contemporary objects from artists and makers from four specific cultural groups: Haida, Ainu, Hawaiian and Edo. The newly acquired objects would act simultaneously as artefacts and new forms of interpretation by speaking directly to the existing collection. The project attempts to decentre the Eurocentrism within the Pitt Rivers by collecting objects that explore self-determination and self-representation. Furthermore, the project seeks to create a more collaborative and equitable collecting practice, exploring the tensions between the new practices and existing policies and legalities, and how embedded institutional processes and structures hinder true collaborative and equitable work, specifically between the museum and artists from historically under-represented communities.



Above: Viewing Solomon Enos' series of 16 paintings based on the Tale of Hi'iaka

Right: Doll's jillayeh (coat) from Palestine (1967.28.11)

Weaving Connections

Jenny Balfour-Paul lived, travelled and collected in the Middle East and North and West Africa from the 1970s to the 1990s. In 2016 she offered a collection of material which she described as 'Textiles from the Arab World' to the Pitt Rivers Museum, which shortly became a focal point for a programme called Multaka Oxford. Multaka, meaning 'meeting point' in Arabic, explores different ways of engaging with heritage while developing opportunities for intercultural dialogue. The online exhibition *Weaving Connections* interprets highlights from this collection from the perspectives of Multaka volunteers, the collector and Pitt Rivers Museum curators.

From textiles to ceramics and silverwork to photography, *Weaving Connections* celebrates excellence in design and technical skill from Egypt, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Senegal, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen. Learn about how people made, used and wore these items and discover how the exhibition brings contemporary relevance, cross-cultural connections and personal stories into the foreground.

During the pandemic, the usual ways of interacting with each other and with collections rapidly changed. New Multaka digital research roles, facilitated remotely, fed into the final exhibition text. *Weaving Connections* also includes some wording from the earlier Multaka Connecting Threads display (April 2019–February 2020). All research from Multaka Oxford will be added to the Pitt Rivers Museum collections databases.





Talking Threads

The Talking Threads project focuses on three areas of the museum's extensive textile collections: textiles from Nagaland in Northeast India; clothing and ceremonial textiles from the Northwest Coast of America; and textiles and clothing from Palestine.

The aim of the project is to develop a cultural approach to conservation and research, which aims to understand and provide what originating communities want to see or understand in our collections and their documentation. For each of the key collections we will focus on, we hope to establish whether it would be useful to see textiles photographed on a mannequin, to read online information about construction details, to see microscopic details of weave structure, and to understand motifs and the local name for these or the importance and use of colours in particular cultures, as well as how textiles should be handled according to cultural protocols.

Many of the textiles were collected in colonial contexts, such as the Naga collections which were largely acquired between 1915 and 1947. We do not intend to destroy historical legacies, but to activate them to enable rediscovery of material cultural heritage and self-identification. Each object in the museum has multi-faceted stories to tell, and we feel passionately that more voices should be mobilised to tell these.

This project supports our commitment to examine the colonial past of collections and to find collaborative pathways for future research that we believe will result in more nuanced, detailed and egalitarian information about the objects in the museum's collections. Textiles and clothing are key markers for identity and this project will offer access to images of collections for source communities for whom they remain markers for particular communities or tribes.

Opposite: Joanna Cole preparing objects for viewing as part of the Talking Threads project

Collections specialist Joanna Cole and textile conservator Misa Tamura started work in December 2020. Initially, due to COVID-19 lockdowns, they were unable to physically access the textile collections, but were able to scope the extent of the collections remotely using the Pitt Rivers online databases. Once on-site, Joanna and Misa began cataloguing and photographing selected groups of textiles, while also reaching out to originating communities to ask for help with the documentation and research. Planning and facilitating virtual research visits with communities has formed a core part of the project team's activity.

The use of video communication technology and provision of high-quality DSLR cameras and a digital microscope enabled the team to cater for the needs of participants with diverse contextual interests.

Detailed, microscopic visual examination was carried out during five virtual sessions with Pacific Northwest Coast weavers and scholars from the Salish, Haida and Kwakwaka'wakw nations. Although these virtual sessions cannot fully simulate the sensory and emotional experience of physical visits, the advantages include the ability to examine microscopic details collectively and provide screenshots for their records.

A meeting with curators and conservators from the Palestinian Heritage Museum in Jerusalem was very productive and collaborative as we were able to view one another's textiles and amulets collections and discuss motifs and embroidery techniques.



The project was also successful in interviewing a Lotha Naga weaver/designer, some of whose work was acquired by the museum in 2006. Viewing these pieces together catalysed conversations about the artist's practice and inspiration, and how her work reflects traditional values. This vital contextual information has been captured in the museum documentation. Communications and interaction with Naga groups and individuals were made possible by Dr Vibha Joshi, the project's consultant anthropologist, playing a vital role as intermediary.

For all engagement sessions, particular areas of interest to the communities were documented and shared with them. The information from the sessions which communities are happy to be made publicly available has been added to the Pitt Rivers database.

Being acutely aware of the global digital divide, the project also attempted interactions with communities in platforms other than video communication. Much of the interaction with the Ao Naga women's association, Watsü Mungdang, was made using WhatsApp. Sending high-quality photographs of the textiles from our cataloguing work still proved the most desirable and effective way of digitally restituting knowledge for many of the Naga communities. This fact justifies the necessity of high-quality, professional documentation, cataloguing and digitisation as an integral part of collaboration and engagement with originating communities.

Over 100 textile and clothing items from the three areas have been photographed, catalogued and condition-assessed. As well as high-quality overall images, detailed visual examination of particular motifs and designs and microscopic images of weave structures and embroidery techniques have been captured in over 1,500 photographs.

Most of these have been shared with community members and weavers and all will be uploaded to our new CMS database. The team are currently working through the cataloguing and photography of large groups of Zeme, Ao and Lotha textiles, as well as the Mercy Watson collection of clothing from Palestine, which was donated to the museum in 1967 but has never been documented or photographed.

The project has maintained a public outreach and knowledge-sharing programme throughout, successfully adapting to changing guidelines and restrictions due to COVID-19. The project has an active presence on social media, with Instagram in particular proving a useful tool for engaging our key audience demographic of weavers, designers and textile artists, many of them practising in the focal regions of the project.

Findings from the project have been shared with colleagues both internal and external to the museum. Misa delivered a paper on the use of the multi-camera video communication method to engage with originating communities at the Accredited Conservator-Restorers' Annual Conference by the Institute of Conservation in June 2021.



Above: Misa Tamura preparing for a virtual session with NW Coast weavers

International Connections

The map below shows countries highlighted in blue which the museum is building or has partnerships with, including some of the projects highlighted in this section of the report.

Weaving Connections

The online exhibition Weaving Connections celebrates excellence in design and technical skill from Egypt, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Senegal, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen. Highlights from the Jenny Balfour-Paul collection are interpreted with perspectives from the collector, curators and Multaka Oxford volunteers, with the latter also providing footage of working water wheels in Syria for the exhibition.

Locations: Syria, Oxford

Talking Threads

This project focuses on three areas of the museum's extensive textile collections from Nagaland, the Arab world and from the NW Coast of the US. Talking Threads aims to develop a cultural approach to conservation and research, increasing understanding and provision for what originating communities want to see or understand in our collections and their documentation.

Locations: India, Middle East, USA, Oxford



Art Fund New Collecting Award

The PRM is working with the Entomology Department at the Bishop Museum in Hawai'i to bring to life the endemic Hawaiian insect species featured in artworks by Solomon Enos, that respond to the Tale of Hi'iaka, and that have been commissioned through the PRM's Art Fund New Collecting Awards.

Locations: Hawai'i, Oxford

North America

Canada
Hawai'i
United States of America

South America

Brazil
Ecuador
Nicaragua
Saint Lucia

Africa

Botswana
Egypt
Ghana
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Mali
Mauritania
Morocco
Namibia
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal
South Africa
South Sudan
Tanzania
Tunisia
Zimbabwe

Europe

EU (all)
Russia
United Kingdom

Middle East

Oman
Palestine
Syria
Turkey
Yemen

Asia

China
India
Japan
Taiwan
Tibet

Oceania

Australia
New Zealand



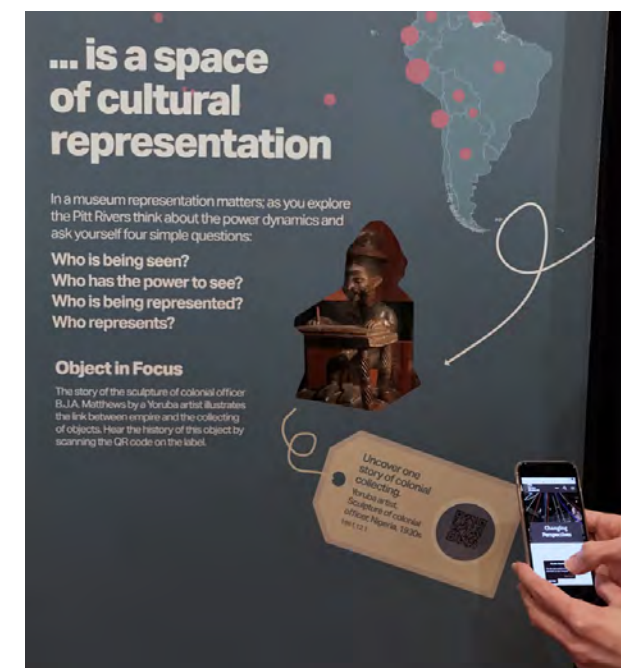
Displays and exhibitions

Permanent displays and interventions

When we reopened our doors to the public on 22 September 2020, we made changes to some of the museum's more contentious displays. These changes are part of a comprehensive programme of work to deeply engage with the museum's colonial legacy. From 2017–20 a comprehensive internal review of displays was done from an ethical, interpretation and conservation perspective. Displays with problematic case labels, using derogatory language or reinforcing negative stereotypes, were identified as requiring urgent attention. Consequently, as a first intervention, additional information was installed within existing displays. A new introductory case offers insights into the way the museum formed its collections and how it today relates to its legacy. It also highlights the important role women played in the formation of the collection.

Throughout the museum we have installed new interpretation graphics that offer more comprehensive readings and provide visitors with tools to analyse the displays. Corresponding films and podcasts, accessible through QR codes, bring the displays to life with more engaging, moving and multi-faceted stories.

Where the Shuar tsantsas and other human remains were displayed, in a case called Treatment of Dead Enemies, we have installed graphics and text that explain in more detail how these human remains were brought into the museum. The reasons why they were taken off display are outlined, as well as the museum's current engagement with the human remains it stewards (2,800 items). We have made a printed booklet that accompanies the content of the new displays at the museum, and further information is also available online: www.prm.ox.ac.uk/critical-changes



Above: Detail of graphic on new introduction case installed in the Museum Court September 2020

Opposite: Pitt Rivers Museum Court



Special exhibitions and displays

Traces of The Past: Reflections on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda*

29 June 2019–17 May 2020
(Extended to 26 September 2021)

Case Installation (Second Floor)
www.prm.ox.ac.uk/event/traces-of-the-past

This temporary display continued to provide a space of remembrance for those who perished during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. The result of a partnership with museum staff and researcher Dr Julia Viebach, a display was curated by survivors to share their stories of trauma, resilience and hope through objects they lent to the museum. This included a film installation *Ejo Hazaza (A Better Tomorrow)* through which individuals talked about the significance of the objects on display for their experiences of loss, survival and remaking worlds.

Memoirs In My Suitcase*

10 December 2019–31 May 2020
(Extended to 20 September 2021)

Archive Case (First Floor)
www.prm.ox.ac.uk/event/memoirs-in-my-suitcase

This exhibition was the result of a collaboration with external curators ALART, DiasporaTürk and Emre Eren Korkmaz, with support from Philip Grover. Organised in collaboration with DiasporaTürk, Turkey, it tells the story of guest workers who set out for Germany with their suitcases from Sirkeci Railway Station, Istanbul in the 1960s. These people led the way for the German Turkish diaspora, which today numbers 6.5 million people.

*temporary displays and exhibitions that were included in the Annual Report 2019/20 and included here as extended due to the pandemic.

Blow-Up in Bissau: Photography and Museum Revival in West Africa*

17 December 2019–3 May 2020
(Extended to 22 August 2021)

Long Gallery
www.prm.ox.ac.uk/event/blow-up-in-bissau

During the civil war of 1998–9 the National Ethnographic Museum of Guinea-Bissau was occupied by Senegalese troops who had joined government forces, resulting in damage and loss to the museum and its collections. Not everything was destroyed, however; 450 sheets of contact prints survived, documenting the collections the museum, which opened in 1988, once housed in the country's capital Bissau, and the ethnographic work its staff undertook in order to found their museum.

Blow-up in Bissau displayed a selection of these contact-print images, reprinted in the form of graphic displays. Images were organised thematically (weaving, livelihoods, religion, historical places, games, etc) with texts for each theme on thirteen roll-up banners, and with objects displayed on plinths nearby. In addition, the exhibition included images taken in Guinea in 1987 by Dr Malcolm McLeod, Keeper of the African Collection of the British Museum at the time, who spent long periods in Bissau collaborating with the makers of the museum in the 1980s.

This exhibition was the result of a collaborative project with external curators Ramon Sarró and Ana Temudo, working closely with Christopher Morton. Designed by Creative Jay, the exhibition was the result of research by Albano Mendes, Ramon Sarró and Ana Temudo. The contact prints, plus other images, were reproduced with the kind permission of the National Ethnographic Museum of Guinea-Bissau. With additional content courtesy of Malcolm McLeod, Roger Canals and National TV of Guinea-Bissau.

Matt Smith: Losing Venus*

4 March 2020–29 November 2020
(Extended to 6 March 2022)

Installation in Court and First Floor
www.prm.ox.ac.uk/event/losing-venus

Losing Venus, consisting of multiple installations by artist Matt Smith, highlights the colonial impact on LGBTQIA+ lives across the British Empire and seeks to make queer lives physically manifest within the museum. From 1860 onwards, the British Empire criminalised male-to-male relations, imposing lengthy prison sentences; the legacy of these legal codes lives on.

Of the 72 countries in the world with anti-gay laws, 38 of them were once subject to British colonial rule. As a response to these colonialist gender laws, *Losing Venus* seeks to place contemporary discrimination, which is still affecting the lives of many around the world, at the heart of one of the cultural centres of the country which exported it, examining its impact through the lens of sexual identity and gender fluidity.

The name *Losing Venus* is a reference to the idea of love and gender, but also references the purpose of Captain Cook's first voyage: to measure the transit of the planet Venus. The installation comprises four main parts located throughout the galleries.



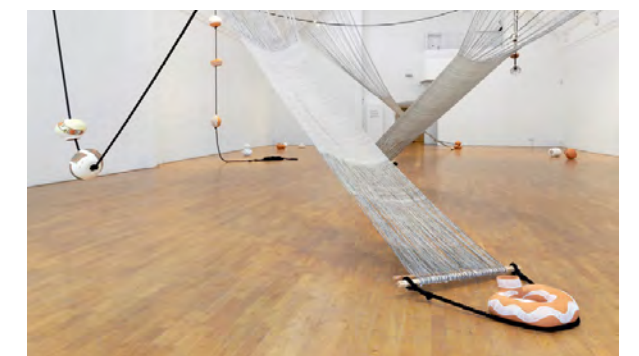
Above: Detail of 'Cyprus' from *The Prints, Losing Venus*, by Matt Smith. © Matt Smith

Mariana Castillo Deball: Between Making and Knowing Something (External exhibition in collaboration with Modern Art Oxford)

2 October 2020–3 January 2021
(Extended to 18 April 2021)

Modern Art Oxford
www.modernartoxford.org.uk/whats-on/mariana-castillo-deball-between-making-and-knowing-something

Through a collage-like installation featuring pottery, photography and textiles, Mexican-born artist Mariana Castillo Deball focused on sharing the stories of a number of little-known female anthropologists and indigenous storytellers and makers. To do this, the artist recreated historical artefacts and reconfigured display cases to expose how museum collections both conceal and reveal historical narratives and shape our understanding of the world. *Between Making and Knowing Something* was born out of Deball's ongoing research into museums, the observational science of people and cultures (ethnography), archaeology and photographic archives. The exhibition particularly explored objects and archives held in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and the Smithsonian Museum National Collections in Washington DC. The artist/curator was inspired by the Pitt Rivers Museum's photograph collections, particularly the Elsie McDougall and Makereti collections.



Above: View of the exhibition 'Mariana Castillo Deball: Between Making and Knowing Something' held at Modern Art Oxford. © Ben Westoby



Dwelling: In This Space We Breathe by Khadija Saye

27 July 2021–31 August 2022

Installation (Second Floor)

www.prm.ox.ac.uk/event/khadija-saye

We exhibited a series of nine silk-screen prints by artist Khadija Saye (1992–2017) exploring her fascination with the 'migration of traditional Gambian spiritual practices', which formed a part of her childhood experience growing up in London with Gambian parents. In the images, Saye uses ritual objects such as amulets, beads and horns to explore her connection to these spiritual practices as a member of the African diaspora, as well as how 'trauma is experienced in the black experience'. The series also explores what Saye calls 'the deep-rooted urge to find solace in a higher power' in differing cultures. Saye herself was of mixed religious heritage, both Christian and Muslim. Tragically, both Saye and her mother Mary Ajaoi Augustus Mendy died in the Grenfell Tower fire of 14 June 2017. Later that year, Saye's photographs were exhibited in the Diaspora Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale, and she was widely regarded as an artist of great promise.

Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power

1 June 2021–8 March 2022

Special Exhibition Gallery (Ground Floor)

and gallery interventions (all floors)

www.prm.ox.ac.uk/event/beyond-the-binary

This was a co-curated exhibition about queer lived experiences that gave voices to members of the LGBTQIA+ communities, connecting their voices to those of visitors. The material selected had queer origins, could be read as queer, or facilitated the sharing of queer stories. Alternative understandings from a wide range of people highlighted human histories that have been under-represented as a result of intolerance and oppression. The aim of this exhibition was to uncover and question binaries, or fixed oppositions, that have been imposed on society and how they affect people's lives and identities.

Celebrating the strength and agency of LGBTQIA+ communities, *Beyond the Binary* contests any notion that LGBTQIA+ lives are a western invention, a new trend, or that queer people do not have history. The exhibition hosted material from across the globe and from many historical periods, including items from the ancient world. Objects and images from the existing collections were displayed and discussed, alongside loaned and newly collected contemporary artworks and protest ephemera. The exhibition also included interventions within the museum's main galleries. Community partners chose objects that share something about LGBTQIA+ histories, identities and lived experiences.

Left: Silkscreen print from *Dwelling: In This Space We Breathe*. Khadija Saye
© Estate of Khadija Saye. 2021.6.8

Opposite: Museum staff preparing the installation on the Second Floor



Online exhibitions

Photography and Women

16 October 2020–16 November 2020
(In collaboration with Photo Oxford Festival)

Online exhibition
www.prm.ox.ac.uk/event/photography-and-women

This exhibition was part of the Photo Oxford Festival 2020, which was on the theme of Women and Photography: Ways of Seeing and Being Seen. Staff and researchers connected with the Pitt Rivers Museum looked afresh at the significant collection of around 300,000 historic and contemporary photographs to select images that for them resonated strongly with the festival theme.

Working mostly from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the museum's online database was an invaluable resource in the selection process, as 65% of the collection is accessible online in digital format.

The exhibition includes images from Asia, Africa, the Americas, Oceania and Europe, including the UK.



Above: Palestinian women washing finds at an archaeological excavation. Photograph by Dorothy Garrod. Wady el Mughara, Israel. 1932.
© Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. 1998.294.52

Into Motherhood: Photographs by Alegra Ally

16 October 2020–16 November 2020
(In collaboration with Photo Oxford Festival)

Online exhibition
www.photooxford.org/2020-21/2021-festival/online-exhibitions/into-motherhood

In collaboration with the Photo Oxford Festival, this online exhibition presents a selection of photographs by anthropologist Alegra Ally, whose work explores the themes of childbirth and motherhood in indigenous cultures across three continents. Ally describes the background and context for several of her recent projects, alongside portfolios of photographic work from Namibia, Papua New Guinea and Russia.



Above: Nenets mother and child dressed for the cold. Photograph by Alegra Ally. Yamal Peninsula, Russia. 2016.
© Alegra Ally

Weaving Connections: Local Perspectives on collections from the Middle East, North and West Africa

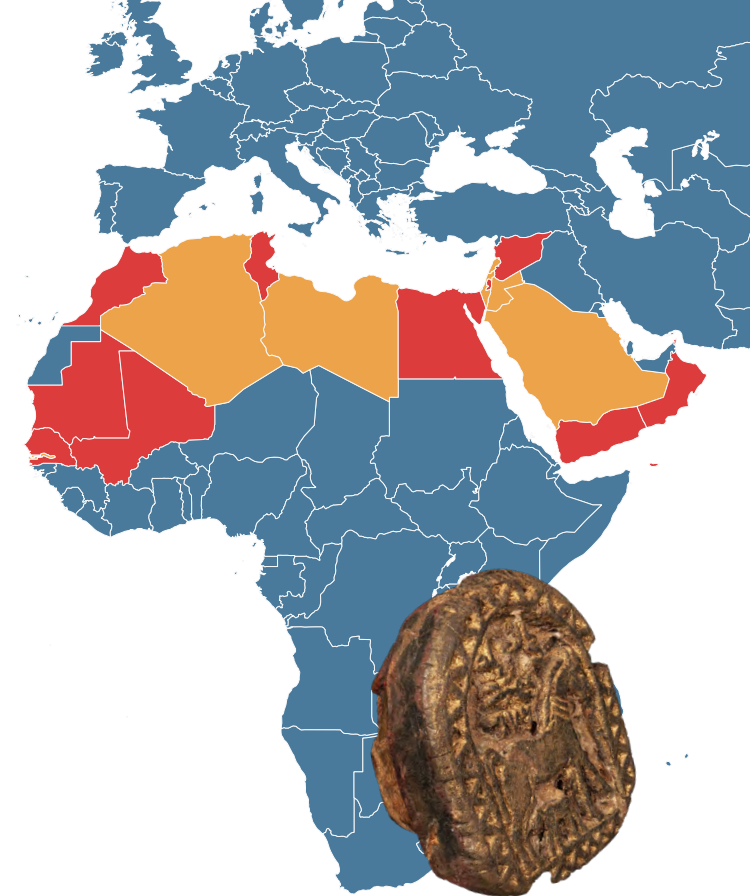
12 January 2021–10 January 2022

Online exhibition
www.prm.ox.ac.uk/event/weaving-connections

In 2016 Jenny Balfour-Paul, who lived, travelled and collected in the Middle East and North and West Africa from the 1970s to the 1990s, offered the museum a collection of material described as 'Textiles from the Arab World'. This collection became a focal point for a programme called Multaka Oxford. Multaka, meaning 'meeting point' in Arabic, explores different ways of engaging with heritage, while developing opportunities for intercultural dialogue.

Weaving Connections highlights the wealth of stories interwoven within the Jenny Balfour-Paul collection, which includes ceramics, silverwork and photography as well as textiles. Interpretations are written by Multaka volunteers, the collector and museum curators, with an emphasis on contemporary relevance, cross-cultural connections and personal stories. In addition, the exhibition celebrates the design and technical skill of makers from Egypt, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Senegal, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

Right: Images of items from the Jenny Balfour-Paul collections available to explore in the *Weaving Connections* online exhibition



Museum and community partnerships

Delivery of public engagement activity continued to be affected by COVID-19, with schools and the museum closed at different times and some public engagement staff furloughed. Teaching in the museum did take place in October and November 2020 and again from April 2021. Online events and taught sessions took place throughout the year. There was no family programming at the museum.

“... The Ancient Egypt session was fantastic. We chatted as a class and the children really enjoyed being walked around the museum as they felt this is the aspect of school trips they have been missing most – it gave the feel of being inside the museum. The content was perfect and they all managed to learn something new.”

Feedback from school teacher

Primary school activities

Although live teaching in the museum was significantly impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 situation, primary schools did begin to return to the museum for self-guided visits and taught sessions in October and November 2020 and in much larger numbers after Easter 2021. Taught sessions were adapted to reflect key changes to the museum displays, such as the closing of the mummy case, which prompted pupils to discuss the choices museums make and why. Primary school pupils and teachers buzzed with excitement to be back in museums, and were really appreciative of taught sessions which had been adapted to enable social distancing.

The primary programme continued to be delivered with the support of volunteer guides. There were monthly online meetings to engage the existing team of 11 primary school guides, and COVID-19 inductions for those who wanted to return to on-site volunteering. A new recruitment and training programme for primary school guides was implemented in June 2020 with the support of the volunteering team. This led to the recruitment of seven potential new guides which will help to replace the existing guides who have subsequently decided not to return.

In autumn 2020 online sessions were developed and piloted in response to individual teacher queries. This led to the development of two virtual sessions for the most popular topics: The Maya, and Ancient Egypt. With the help of a professional Zoom licence, seven online primary sessions were delivered to nine classes involving 210 KS2 pupils between October 2020 and March 2021.



We developed online sessions with different formats. The Ancient Egypt sessions involved an interactive guided tour of artefacts around the museum whilst the Maya session involved playing a game: identifying mystery objects physically held up to the desktop camera. Pupils also had answers given to questions which they had sent in prior to the session. This mode of delivery enabled a closer working relationship with the class than the typical stand-alone museum visit, as they felt their pre-prepared questions had been given careful thought.

“ They thought it was great fun and really enjoyed it – they have said it was exciting doing something different and they enjoyed seeing the Mayan objects. ”

Feedback from school teacher

Online sessions and resources were also developed to feed into planned projects and teacher training. The Pitt Rivers helped to deliver the Story Makers project from October to December 2020: a creative arts project developed by arts psychotherapist Helen Edwards and Fusion Arts with funding from the BBC's Children in Need. Working with one class of 30 Year 4 pupils from Rosehill Primary School, creative opportunities were offered as the ecology of trees was explored. Pitt Rivers learning staff took out a range of wooden artefacts to be handled in the classroom, whilst a subsequent live virtual tour of the museum enabled pupils to see wooden artefacts in the Pitt Rivers.

During the virtual session pupils showed some of the artwork they had been creating in the classroom; they enjoyed the idea of appearing virtually in the museum with their creative work. This hybrid model highlighted the benefits of virtual sessions in project work and how it can foster and sustain relationships. It also enabled a swift visit to the museum without all the trouble and expense of organising a visit.

“Thank you so much. The children loved the tour and were fascinated by all the boats.”

Feedback from school teacher

The Pitt Rivers also took part in an Oxford Brookes research project designed to examine ways of assessing KS2 pupils' learning in museum spaces. This involved recording a guided tour of a specific area of the museum and explaining how it supported learning. An area rich in Inuit clothing was selected and a Zoom recording made of a PowerPoint with accompanying voiceover. The video was shared with other Oxford Brookes staff and was also used to introduce the Cultural Learning Module for third-year BA Primary Teacher Education students. This demonstrates how teacher training and research projects can be supported with virtual resources created by the museum and not just through physical visits.

“They loved showing you their work and they positively glowed. It was great. We were immersed.”

Feedback from Story Makers lead practitioner

The formal learning webpages were redeveloped from April to July 2021 with the support of Tim Myatt, Digital Collections Manager. This enabled a more user-friendly system for primary teachers where they can navigate by key stage, and access information on webpages which come up on search engines, rather than just viewing information on PDFs. It also means that learning resources developed to support future sessions can be uploaded onto the relevant new webpages. In addition, it has enabled the promotion of the new secondary programme which supports the museum's work on decoloniality.

There is ongoing involvement in the Maasai Living Cultures project, where the learning team is working with community members to develop learning resources and sessions. This has involved collaboration with the Horniman Museum who have worked on similar projects.

Right: Becca McVean presenting online teaching sessions in the museum





Secondary school activities

Live teaching did take place in the museum in October and November 2020 and again after March 2021. However the majority of development took place around online teaching. Online secondary sessions were designed as both a replacement for existing sessions that were very popular and a format to test some sessions in our new decolonial schools offer. Each session was bespoke and grew out of consultation with teachers and in response to demand. Together with the teachers, we trialled different formats to investigate which worked best. Some sessions were delivered digitally to the classroom, others to students' homes, dependent on the lockdown level at the time. Sessions were always hosted by the teacher for safeguarding purposes.

“To receive a live-stream, one-to-one guided tour around the exhibition was so special. You gave each pupil the opportunity to engage with primary research in a way that is impossible with the current climate, with your innovative online approach.”

Feedback from school teacher

Most art-focused session delivery (eight sessions, working with 189 students) took place in the galleries, using a tablet and online platforms. The aim was to showcase exhibits that had been installed during lockdown, such as Matt Smith's contemporary art installation *Losing Venus*. Students studying art relished the opportunity to observe an artist's responses to coloniality and its relationship to LGBTQIA+ history.

New gallery interventions installed during lockdown also featured in the live sessions from the galleries, with teachers keen to challenge students' perceptions about museums as neutral spaces in response to the Black Lives Matter events that took place over the summer of 2020. Sessions also featured PowerPoint presentation slides mixed in with real objects on display, to give students access to the work of artists such as Nyema Droma and Christian Thompson, whose work focuses on self-representation. Delivering sessions online enabled us to access a much wider geographic area, including one session in Singapore.

Equally popular were sessions based around The Theory of Knowledge (eight separate sessions, working with over 250 students). These were delivered in response to a particular curriculum need and the focus was decoloniality and cultural appropriation, very much in demand by teachers. It provoked in-depth discussions by students from KS3 to KS5, although the initial focus had been on students aged over 16. Discussions online with students during sessions were always supported by the teacher, who would select students to answer questions or read out questions from the chat.

Some students preferred to answer questions via audio, others were happy to be on camera, while certain schools had a 'no camera' or a 'chat only' policy for questions. It was necessary to meet with teachers, often just before the start of the session, to agree the online strategy, mirroring what often happens in a 'real life' gallery session, when session leaders chat briefly with teachers to agree parameters and aims before the session begins.

The evidence suggests that online sessions extend the museum's reach and allow access to its collections not just countrywide but worldwide. It is clear that some session content lends itself better to an online format, while some favours another. Class dynamics play an important part in the success of a session and this relies heavily on good communication with the teacher, time spent on setup and good Wi-Fi. Many schools are determined to stick with the online sessions they received and are keen to rebook these sessions for next year.

“It was really awesome; exactly what our students needed. Lots of information and facts and knowledge from an expert. The content and delivery were perfect for the level of thinking we are asking them to explore.”

Feedback from Lynn Hall,
Oxford City College

There are, however, several schools who participated in online sessions who are interested in a mixed delivery, with online sessions acting as a pre-visit lesson to enable students to make the most of their trip and arrive at the museum ready to analyse displays, look for self-representation and listen to all voices.

“We, as teachers, have been able to engage with artefacts, histories and perspectives which are largely absent from mainstream educational resources.”

Feedback from school teacher

The Pitt Rivers Museum Secondary School Officer and the Families and Communities Officer have been working alongside Oxford University students, Pitt Rivers Museum staff and local secondary school teachers to develop a new decolonised history curriculum explored through the collections cared for at the museum. Developed during the pandemic, the collaboration has been online, adapting work to engage with the collections to meet hybrid accessibility needs in schools, arising from the pandemic. With Zaiba Patel and Ben Taberer from Cherwell School, the Secondary School Officer was able to pilot seven on-site outreach lessons to support Year 7 and 8 students by broadening their understanding of how objects can tell stories about the ways in which the museum has been a product of colonialism.

Secondary school activities

We have worked in partnership with the University Internship programme, resulting in five micro-interns and two paid summer internships to further develop this work, bringing in student perspectives while also providing paid experience during a time when employment opportunities for young people have been restricted. The micro-interns Susmita Dave, Vivian Abrokwah, Peter Miller, Aniya Selvadurai, and Madeleine Wright completed their experiences online through Microsoft Teams.

“ I think what you said to my class about voice appropriation really made me think – how much had I appropriated voices without even thinking about it? Getting to meet a diversity of historians and moving away from history as just being written and introducing the students to material culture and oral histories has been so valuable. ”

Feedback from school teacher

After many false starts due to COVID-19 the 2021 Kick Arts programme in partnership with OYAP Trust took place at the museum. Six young people and two young leaders took part in the project, which works with teenagers who are not engaging with school. This year there was a strong LGBTQIA+ theme running through the art that the students created in response to the museum. All participants completed the ACE Bronze Arts Award. The Artist Teacher Scheme, an MA course at Oxford Brookes that runs in partnership with the Pitt Rivers, took place over the summer. Last year it was delivered purely online; this year we delivered it as a hybrid model, with some students attending virtually while others came to the museum in person.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the Secondary School Officer was able to deliver our acclaimed yearly Arts Award programme with Iffley Academy. It is an innovative partnership that places cultural learning opportunities at the heart of the curriculum for children and young people with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Through a mix of in-person and online delivery, pupils were able to complete their art projects, supported and inspired by outreach workshops and a visit to the museum galleries. The Secondary School Officer foregrounded the voices of Aboriginal artists and introduced discussions about colonial histories connected to Aboriginal objects in the museum.

Right: Melanie Rowntree presenting online teaching sessions in the museum



Community partnerships

During this period community engagement in person was very limited and most community delivery was focused on the Radical Hope webinar series. The team continued to work with the Oxford Windrush group and late August saw the launch of the Digging Crates music project.

Digging Crates continues a process of decolonising the on-site musical instrument collection with local and global musicians and researchers that centres around self-representation, brings contemporary musical stories to life and creates space for musical collaboration. In collaboration with the Urban Music Foundation and Inner Peace Records, Digging Crates expresses the story and effects of colonisation on global and local African and African-Caribbean communities through newly commissioned hip-hop tracks influenced by the instrument collections cared for by the Pitt Rivers Museum.

“The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford has often made me feel really uncomfortable, but this exhibition exploring trans stories, histories and activism filled me with joy.”

Feedback from *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power*

“Exceeded expectations at every turn; powerful, important, deeply necessary.”

Feedback from *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power*

Beyond the Binary

In June events and workshops for the *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power* project, supported by the NLHF, restarted with the opening of the exhibition, reigniting exciting conversations through activities, workshops, tours and talks. Five events have been run as part of the Radical Hope, Critical Change programme, including conversations on Takatāpui and Queer Pasifika, LGBTQIA+ disability access, drag storytelling for families, LGBTQIA+ training and a zine workshop. 300 people attended the events live and 673 people have viewed the online recordings. In the first two weeks of it going live 937 people viewed the *Beyond the Binary* highlights tour on the museum's Instagram feed.

“Yesterday I went to the *Beyond the Binary* exhibition. It was incredible, I cried several times.”

Feedback from *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power*

The exhibition has received over 3,600 visitors since it opened officially on 1 June, despite COVID-19 restrictions. Feedback and interactions with the themes of the exhibition and the Pitt Rivers' work to platform queer lived experiences have been constant and overwhelmingly positive.

Right: *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power* exhibition

“I had happy goosebumps the whole exhibition – this is what co-curation is all about and I feel love.”

Feedback from *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power*



Below: Ashley Coutu examining glass beads as part of a project looking at archaeological items from East Africa, to feature in a forthcoming display

Higher education teaching and research

Research community update

The museum continued this year to be an important hub for object- and image-centred research and teaching within the University of Oxford, despite most activities moving online. Research staff were faced with significant challenges in continuing with their research and projects, with access to collections, archives and libraries restricted. However, innovative solutions were often found, and new ways of working embraced, to enable most projects to continue. The Visiting Researchers programme, supported by Research England, began again in October in a limited way, with virtual research visits being encouraged where possible, enabling researchers to see objects and ask questions about them without the need of a physical visit.

In teaching, the MSc/MPhil degrees in Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology continued to teach several sessions in the museum, and the use of the lecture room enabled students to get close to objects whilst maintaining social distancing guidelines. Staff also contributed to courses across the University and beyond throughout the year, frequently using the museum's online collections to do so.

In research, the museum attracted further funding to work on the colonial legacies of its collections, the highlight in this period being the successful €1.5m application to Volkswagenstiftung for the four-year Reconnecting Objects: Epistemic Plurality and Transformative Practices in and Beyond Museums project, led by Professor Dan Hicks, which was announced in June. Particular success was found in the museum's focus on creating opportunities for early-career researchers, with two applications being successful, to the Carlsberg Foundation Visiting Fellowship programme (Dr Vibe Nielsen, started January 2020) and to the Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship scheme (Dr Emily Stephenson, starting next year).

Staff also continued to pursue research and present findings at international online conferences as well as publishing books and papers (see appendix G). The museum's diverse range of Research Affiliates were also highly active this year, contributing to a variety of the museum's activities and acting as an important consultative group for its research and curatorial strategy.

The museum's research team, including curatorial and teaching staff as well as doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers, grew this year to nineteen members. This was partly as a result of the museum's success in applying for Collaborative Doctoral Studentships as well as external funding for research projects. The museum's research community, consisting of Honorary Research Associates (33) and Associate Researchers (11), continued to be active and engaged, forming an important consultative group on the museum's research and curatorial strategy. Particular highlights this year include their participation in the online exhibition *Women and Photography* (curated by Dr Christopher Morton), and Professor Chris Dorsett's donation and cataloguing of his collection of photographs relating to the ground-breaking series of art interventions he organised in the museum in the 1990s.

Dr Christopher Morton spent much of the year acting as institutional sponsor for the major CMS/DAMS project that is transforming the museum's collections and digital asset management systems. In addition, he saw several publications through press, and began remote research on an 1860s photographic album in the museum's collection. In August he began a new research collaboration with Dr Adeyemi Akande of the University of Lagos, on early Nigerian photography. Dr Akande's visit was sponsored by the AfOx Initiative.



Due to the impact of the pandemic, in the 2020–21 academic year even more of Professor Clare Harris' time than usual had to be devoted to her teaching, administrative, mentoring and leadership roles in the University and for the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography in particular. Her work for the Pitt Rivers primarily focused on developing projects for the future and on continuing to serve on committees, including leading the Curating the Contemporary working group. Research activities related to the Pitt Rivers and its collections included: working with Thupten Kelsang on his Decolonising Tibetan Collections doctoral project, which features material from the PRM (along with other museums) and involves extensive collaboration with Tibetans around the world.

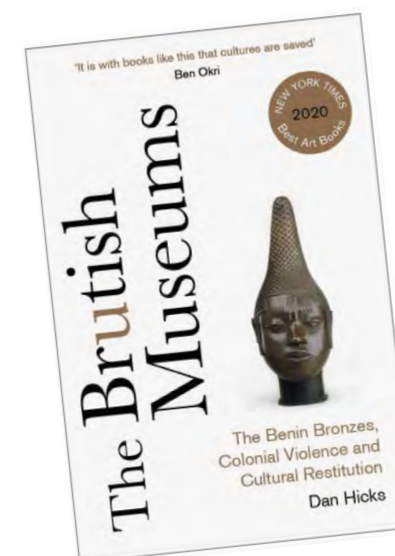
Professor Harris has also been closely involved with the development of an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) grant proposal devised by Dr Arkotong Longkumer of Edinburgh University, to undertake a kind of digital repatriation of the Pitt Rivers' small but hugely important collection of material associated with the Naga prophetess Gaidinliu back to communities in India. Clare will be co-investigator on this project and curator of an exhibition about it at the museum.

Since the 2019 PRM *Performing Tibetan Identities* exhibition, co-curated by Professor Harris and the Tibetan artist Nyema Droma, was selected as an impact case study for the government's Research Excellence Framework, a good deal of Professor Harris' time was spent on preparing the documentation to be submitted for this process. She also continued to support residencies for artists and the development of exhibitions at the museum from them. Her personal research on Tibetan and Himalayan visual/material culture also continued but via digital and online formats, since fieldwork and in-person collaborations were precluded by the pandemic.



Above: View of the *Tibetan Identities* installation in the museum

During the 2020–21 academic year, Professor Dan Hicks continued in his roles as Director of the £1.4m Arts and Humanities Research Council Oxford GLAM Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme, as co-PI of the £600,000 Open Society Foundations projects *Devolving Restitution and Action for Restitution to Africa* (with Professor Ciraj Rassool of the University of the Western Cape; Professor Monica Hanna of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport, Aswan; and Professor Kodzo Gavua of the University of Ghana), and as co-PI (with Professor Bénédicte Savoy, Technische Universität, Berlin) of the £725,000 project *The Restitution of Knowledge*, funded by the AHRC and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Dr Mary-Ann Middelkoop (in Oxford) and Dr Yann LeGall (in Berlin) were appointed as the Project Researchers, and Mary-Ann started work on it in January 2021. The first of six events for the *Devolving Restitution* project was hosted virtually by the Pitt Rivers, and can be watched online here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pU0zp511n2U



Additionally, with his colleagues Professor Ciraj Rassool (University of the Western Cape), Dr Malick Ndiaye (Cheikh Anta Diop University), Professor Albert Gouaffo (University of Dschang) and Professor Bénédicte Savoy (Technische Universität, Berlin), Professor Hicks was also awarded a €1,500,000 grant from the Volkswagenstiftung for the project *Re-connecting Objects: Epistemic Plurality and Transformative Practices in and Beyond Museums*. This project runs from 1 October 2021 for three and a half years, and culminates in exhibitions in Dakar and Oxford.

Professor Hicks published a book *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* with Pluto Press in November 2020. He also wrote widely during the year for *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *Art Review*, *Elephant Magazine*, and other publications. He regularly appeared on TV, radio and podcasts talking about *The Brutish Museums*, and during lockdown carried out a 50-date virtual book tour, including events hosted in Lagos, New York, San Francisco, Berlin, Paris, Aarhus, Brussels, Frankfurt and Lisbon. This included a high-profile online discussion hosted by MC Hammer on Clubhouse in March 2021, which was written up by Times Higher Education as a major crossover event in the public communication of anthropology and archaeology. As venues started to open up again, in July 2021 he did his first in-person public talk at the Chisenhale Gallery in London – a conversation with the artist Abbas Akhavan about his exhibition *Curtain Call: Variations on a Folly*. Professor Hicks also continued his teaching, supervisory and examining roles for undergraduate, masters and doctoral students in Archaeology and Anthropology.

Dr Sarah Mallet was on maternity leave for six months following the birth of her daughter Lucie. She then returned to her work on the Devolving Restitution project.

Dr Ashley Coutu spent much time this year working with Professor Shadreck Chirikure and Dr Victoria Sainsbury in the School of Archaeology on the John Fell Fund project Laser Focused: Craft Production and Trade Networks of Ancient Zimbabwe Revealed through Archaeological Science of Museum Collections. Due to the pandemic, the project was postponed until everyone could get back into the museum to work on the archaeological collections from the sites of Khami and Great Zimbabwe, which are UNESCO world heritage sites preserving stone-walled cities of the Zimbabwe culture (900–1900AD).

Along with laser ablation of the glass beads (with Earth Sciences at Oxford) to determine the origin of the beads from Indian Ocean trade into southern Africa, and x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis of the metal objects (with the new XRF machine in the Ashmolean) to understand ancient Zimbabwean metal working techniques and internal African trade networks, a new display of these objects will open in the Pitt Rivers in 2021.



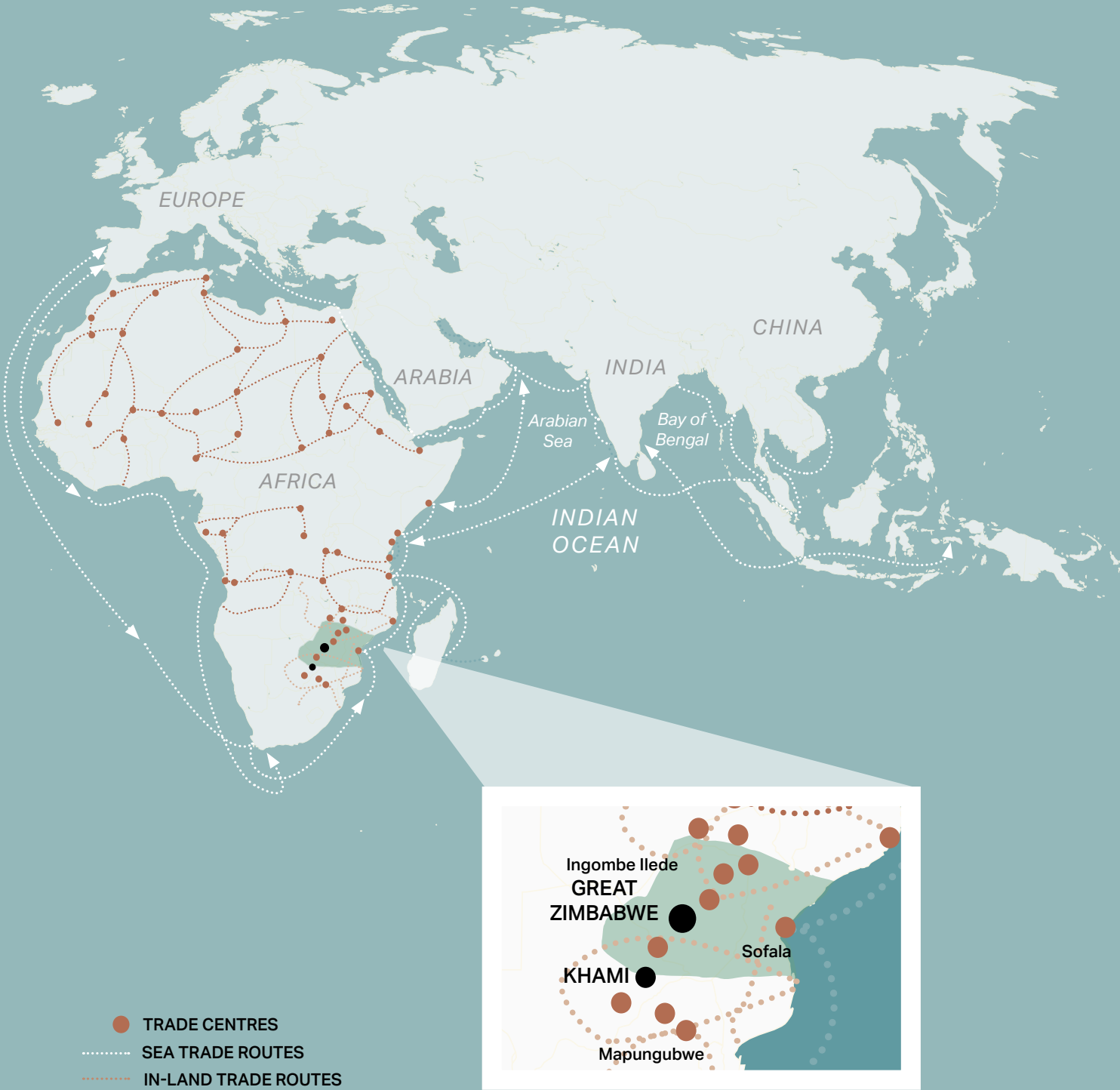
Above: Analysis of the archaeological collections from the sites of Khami and Great Zimbabwe

Dr Coutu also developed methods of non-destructive sampling for museum objects to distinguish between mammoth, elephant, and hippo ivories – as it is currently legal to trade in mammoth ivory – with Daud Ngasa, an MSc student in forensics at Cranfield University and Forensic Scientist at the Tanzania Forensic Laboratory.

Dr Vibe Nielsen joined the museum as a Carlsberg Foundation Visiting Fellow in January. Although forced to work from home in Copenhagen after starting, she nonetheless made preparations for fieldwork at the Pitt Rivers and Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. In addition, Dr Nielsen completed a two-month Visiting Fellowship at Accademia di Danimarca in Rome in June and July 2021.

Dr Mary-Ann Middelkoop, primary researcher for the AHRC/DFG-funded project The Restitution of Knowledge: Artefacts as Archives in the (Post) Colonial Museum, 1850–1939, conducted research at the Pitt Rivers, the archives and African collections of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge, the Royal Archives in Windsor and the York Army Museum, which holds the papers of the West Yorkshire Regiment. Dr Middelkoop also co-convened the workshop series Thinking Provenance, Thinking Restitution, a collaboration between the University of Cambridge and Bonn University, funded by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst. Six online workshops took place between December and May.

Right: View of installation in progress of the new display of archaeological collections from the sites of Khami and Great Zimbabwe



Dr Laura Van Broekhoven had a busy year. Aside from leading the museum through the current health crisis, she was invited to participate and speak at a wide range of universities and sector body conferences around the world. On 5 August 2020 the PRM launched the full-length documentary *Decolonising Cultural Spaces: Maasai Living Cultures* (<https://youtu.be/3midDMjvL0>) which attracted 5,000 viewers from 35 different countries. Dr Van Broekhoven participated on 15 October in the BBC #museumpassion alongside the Wellcome Collection Director Melanie Keen and Birmingham Museums and Galleries CEOs Zac Mensah and Sara Wajid, to talk about 'Who Wants to be a Museum Director Today?', drawing a large national audience, as did her participation at the Museum Association's Museum Conference on 4 November 2020, with 463 participants and over 780 views. Manchester Museum's Director Esme Ward, Hunterian Director Steph Scholten and Aberdeen University Museum Curator Neil Curtis discussed repatriation efforts and dialogues in their respective museums. Dr Van Broekhoven's presentation was titled: 'Radical Hope and Critical Change: Human Remains at the Pitt Rivers Museum.' (<https://bit.ly/3kxUbXP>)



Above: Dr Van Broekhoven on the BBC in October 2020

Other keynote presentations included at the Dutch Museum Association, Museum Vereniging, on the Ethical Code on 15 March, and on 10 March she was asked to speak at the 2021 Museums and Galleries Panel of the History Matters Conference, organised by Policy Exchange (1,194 views). An International Council of Museums conference *Decolonizing as a Verb: Reinterpreting Collections and Collecting: Getting Practical* had Laura on a panel with Bongani Ndhlovu, Randie Macdonald (of the Museum of Man in San Diego), Flower Manase (from the National Museums in Tanzania) and Jérémie McGowan (independent curator from Denmark) with over 220 participants signed up from a wide range of countries globally. (<https://youtu.be/HAT9kX-uRz8>)

More intimate and small-scale events included her participation in the 2021 Oxford Cultural Leadership course, teaching a group of approximately 30, delivering a keynote speech on 'Brave Leadership' with Museum of Colour Director Samenua Sessher. On 18 May Dr Van Broekhoven was invited to give a departmental seminar for Leicester Museum Studies graduate students on 'Curating Change: Colonial Complicities and Entangled Entitlements at the Pitt Rivers Museum.' She spoke on decoloniality for the VMMA seminar, and on 22 January spoke at the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography departmental seminar on 'Developing a Praxis of Decoloniality' with over 140 participants. She also delivered lectures to teams in Rwanda, Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium.

Other research engagement activities included participation with the Art Fund's film *Stories from the Pitt Rivers Museum* with Josie Long. (<https://youtu.be/Lxm4aUtDR2s>) She chaired several conference panels, including in conversation with Wayne Modest as part of the *Matters of Care: Museum Futures in Times of Planetary Precarity* conference in April. Several webinars of the Radical Hope series saw Dr Van Broekhoven's participation, including some very popular ones such as the 'Emotion of Removal' alongside Angela Billings, from Goldsmith's, University of London. (https://youtu.be/_riCZ4seTzM)

Other webinars included the first in the series on 'Radical Hope and Human Remains', attracting a live audience of over 450 people, and 930 views for the YouTube video. (<https://youtu.be/7hAG8WqTSRs>)

Dr Van Broekhoven also curated and chaired the Radical Hope webinar conversation on 'Repatriation as a Pathway to Redress', which included notable international participants. (<https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/event/repatriation-as-a-pathway-to-redress-and-reconciliation-0>)



Above: Viewing Solomon Enos' series of 16 paintings based on the Tale of Hi'iaka, the first artworks to arrive at the Museum resulting from the Art Fund New Collecting Award



Marenka Thompson-Odlum spent much of this year working on the Art Fund New Collecting Award, aimed at collecting/commissioning contemporary objects from four specific cultural groups: Haida, Ainu, Hawaiian and Edo. The newly acquired objects would act simultaneously as artefacts and new forms of interpretation by speaking directly to the existing collection. The project attempts to decentre the Eurocentrism within the Pitt Rivers by collecting objects that explore self-determination and self-representation.

Due to the pandemic, many of the artist interactions and much of the research have had to be done virtually. However, despite the challenges, Marenka managed to commission nine works thus far, including Hawaiian quilts and an Ainu tonkori, while working with artists and community groups to discuss the display, interpretation, care and use of these pieces. Marenka has documented the commissioning process as part of her research on better museums practice.

As Research Associate on the Labelling Matters project, Marenka has also been working (remotely and in person) with a cohort of five interns from various institutions to think more critically about labelling and also the language used in the Pitt Rivers collections development policy. Marenka has worked with Jip Borm (Leiden University), Megan Mahon (University of Toronto), Bessie Woodhouse (University of Glasgow), Alexis Forer and Guopeng Chen (University of Oxford) to deconstruct the collections policy, and recorded a podcast on the subject which included interviews with artists, community leaders, heritage sector workers and researchers from around the world.

Public engagement with research

The year saw public engagement with research continue to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions and flourish through the webinar format. With the museum closed to the public or visitor numbers much limited, relationships with existing research partners strengthened through the use of digital channels and new connections were made. Continuing our celebrated model of linking researchers, communities and the collection to challenge hierarchies and create experimental spaces for all present to speak and share knowledge, virtual panels of speakers came together to debate critical issues such as climate change, decolonisation and queer activism. At the heart of each well-attended event were aspects of cutting-edge research and engagement taking place at the museum.

Discollecting the Pitt Rivers Museum attracted almost 500 visitors to the live stream and has been viewed by over 1,800 people online since; Radical Hope and Critical Changes to Displays at the Pitt Rivers Museum has had almost 1,000 views online; and the month of live online activities that marked the opening of the *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power* exhibition attracted high numbers of visitors to the live stream and the videos have been watched hundreds of times online since. The webinar format has allowed us to extend our global reach and the number of people accessing event content. Audience interaction has exceeded expectations, with visitors and panellists using online event chat and Q&A functions to ask challenging and thoughtful questions, reflect on the work of the museum and the work of our partners, and share their own research and experiences. The webinar format has been such a success that we will continue webinar programming post COVID-19.

Public engagement with research display work has been a key component of activity in this period. Due to restrictions, the research-led displays *Traces of the Past: Reflections on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda*, *Memoirs in My Suitcase* and *Blow-Up in Bissau* all had their runs extended. The major exhibition *Beyond the Binary: Gender, Sexuality, Power* finally opened and development work for *Messy Futures* continued.

The last few years have seen a significant investment of time and funding put into raising the profile of public engagement with research at the museum and the last year has shown how successfully this has embedded across the organisation. Public engagement with research activity is increasingly realised as a natural and celebrated component of all colleagues' work, with the Pitt Rivers as a natural home for cutting-edge public engagement with research partnerships. As the activity of the last year shows, researchers, the wider Pitt Rivers team, creatives and people with lived experience continue to co-produce sector-leading initiatives; from education staff working with Oxford University researchers to redefine decolonial curriculums, to our visitor services team connecting with queer theory through training workshops, public engagement with research is increasingly underpinning the work of the museum.

Student collaboration

As part of the secondary school Decolonising the Curriculum programme the public engagement team has worked with students through a range of co-production and internship opportunities.

Decolonising the Curriculum is developing new formal learning programming for secondary school students that reinterprets the teachings of empire and colonialism within the existing history curriculum. This co-productive programme is working with local schools, educational publishers and University of Oxford students.

This year we worked with postgraduate students through the Decolonising steering group, and first- and second-years through five micro-internships, with two paid postgraduate summer internships. These internships have been created to develop a new career pathway into the museum sector for young people who may not have considered a career in culture. Students were selected for their lived experience or deep knowledge of South Asian and African histories, enabling them to reinterpret and bring new stories to the collections linked to the curriculum. This included researching and reflecting on the First Indian War of Independence in 1857, and time for students to select objects linked to their personal heritages or colonial stories they were keen to interrogate.

Internship programme

The Labelling Matters project has been working (remotely and in person) with a cohort of five interns from various institutions to think more critically about our labelling and also the language used in the Pitt Rivers collections development policy. Jip Borm (Leiden University), Megan Mahon (University of Toronto), Bessie Woodhouse (University of Glasgow), Alexis Forer and Guopeng Chen (University of Oxford) have worked together to deconstruct the collections policy and highlight how the language still upholds coloniality and does not reflect the decolonial vision and inclusive practice of the museum. The interns presented their findings to Pitt Rivers' staff members during a 90 minute workshop and have also recorded a podcast on the subject and interviewed artists, community leaders, heritage sector workers and researchers from around the world.

Balfour Library

The Balfour Library remained closed for general access during the year due to COVID-19 restrictions. However it continued to support readers by scanning material and supplying books via the museum reception using 'click and collect' and Bodleian Libraries return hubs. Library staff were furloughed or part-furloughed, with a limited on-site presence on one or two mornings per week.

Extended loan periods, temporary additional access to e-books and limited access had an obvious effect on borrowing, with 1,168 loans and renewals and 277 original loans.

Following a review of the library's activities and required staffing levels, Giorgio Garippa, the Library Assistant, left to join Bodleian Libraries, while Mark Dickerson was given additional responsibility for archive (manuscript) collections.

Collections and their care

Object collections

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the work of the team, with several members furloughed until March 2021. Since then, Faye Belsey has been the section's primary on-site presence and has been working tirelessly to clear the backlog of tasks which had piled up during closure, furlough, and lack of access to collections and a live database. She has been working on new acquisitions and tackling problems thrown up by other projects, including the music and stone tool and weapon move projects.

Work has been ongoing in preparation for the new Collections Teaching and Research Centre (CTRC) on the site of the old Radcliffe Science Library/Reuben College and extending under the lawn at the front of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Representatives from the four University museums attend regular meetings to plan a flexible and functional store which will enable us to transform access to our stored collections. Collections previously held at the Old Power Station will be stored on one level and textile collections will be kept on another. The new store will provide fragile collections with appropriate storage for the first time. Whilst the new store at Swindon is in the early discussion stages, work on-site for the CTRC is progressing with initial focus on the removal of asbestos, and waterproofing.

In August 2020 four members of the GLAM collections move team were able to resume operations on the Pitt Rivers Museum stone tool and weapon collections at the Green Shed temporary store in Osney Mead. The objects were packed appropriately for long-term storage. In winter the work stopped due to cold working conditions at the Green Shed, however a larger team returned in the early summer to complete the task and by 28 July 2021 88,000 stone tools and weapons had been fully repacked and labelled. These collections remain at

the Green Shed and will do so until they can be moved to the new store. The collections and conservation team were also assisted by members of the GLAM collections move team when all the paddles on the Lower Gallery were removed to allow access for lighting work. The cross-sectional team worked to bring down, clean and redisplay the 500 paddles safely.

Several members of the collections team were again involved in the data cleaning required prior to migration to a new collections management system. Areas of the documentation that the team worked on include cultural groups and donors and associated people. In July 2021 the team began to attend training sessions on the system and are beginning to use it in their daily work. More training is planned for the rest of the year. The new system brings with it many possibilities for improving and changing the way that we document collections. Alongside her work on the development of the collections management system Alicia Bell spent significant time extracting sets of data from the database to support research and specific projects. Sian Mundell's work over the last year has been focused almost exclusively on the detailed preparation of the new collections management system.

There have been various requests for collections data for research. In September 2020 the percentage of human remains on display from each country was calculated and shared publicly. In July 2021 data from across the Pitt Rivers collections was contributed to the international Digital Benin project. In June 2021, data from arrowheads in the collection was used as part of the GLAM Data Challenge 'hackathon' event. The data was analysed and manipulated by colleagues from across the University using software such as Python, R, OpenRefine and Power BI.

*Below: Summer intern Rosie Croysdale reading Beatrice Blackwood's manuscript diary in the Visiting Research Room.
© Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford*



Work on repatriations and human remains has been slow over the past year, especially as many indigenous community members have been unable to travel. Marina de Alarcón has been working with colleagues from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Ashmolean Museum on the human remains in the GLAM collections. She also took part in a training session for human remains researchers. A list of all human remains in the collections was drawn up and is now available on the museum's website in an easily accessible format. Julia Nicholson was not furloughed and managed the team remotely whilst concentrating on the Treasured Textiles project working with Joanna Cole.

The Rethinking Relationships project finished at the end of March 2021. For the Pitt Rivers team the project had involved weekly meetings with a group of Kenyan researchers looking at a range of objects from the collections. The project highlighted the need for photography of and access to objects. The extensive outputs of the research team have been updated onto the museum's database. Discussions were wide-ranging and towards the end of the project members of the PRM public engagement team were also invited to join the meetings.



In 2020 the Curating the Contemporary group was founded. Chaired by Clare Harris, the group was tasked with coming up with a masterplan of priorities for redisplay around the museum and to be a hub for projects which may lead to or influence contemporary collecting and acquisitions from contemporary artists. The broad thrust of the group is to ensure that more contemporary material is visible in the displays and to create a plan of proactive collecting rather than relying exclusively on ad hoc donations as the museum has done in recent years.

In late spring the visiting researchers programme was able to resume and Nicholas Crowe has been able to accommodate both in-person and virtual visits to the collections. The change in working practice, however, has highlighted the need for images of all the objects in the collection and for the importance of scanning the related documents files. Excitingly the new MuseumPlus collections management system allows for the possibility of attaching scans of primary documentation to individual or group object entries.

In May 2021 the collections team focused their attentions on a security review which required valuation of material on display. They were supported in this by external experts and the review highlighted areas which the museum might wish to focus on for security improvements.

The work of the section has continued and a huge amount has been achieved in difficult conditions.

Photograph, manuscript, film and sound collections

Although COVID-19 restrictions meant that the section did not accept physical research visits for much of the year, this did resume in October 2020, and a steady stream of visiting researchers, student interns, volunteers, research affiliates and course tutors began to return. Throughout the year the section trialled virtual research visits, enabling remote researchers to examine material at a distance, and to answer specific request questions.

The section also curated or otherwise contributed material and expertise to several exhibitions in the museum, including the acquisition and display (thanks to ACE/V&A Purchase Grant funding and the Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum) of nine silk-screen prints by the artist Khadija Saye, in the Upper Gallery (July), as well as an Archive Case display by doctoral student Beth Hodgett on the photographic archive of C G S Crawford (October).

A main focus throughout the year was the ongoing preparatory work for a new Digital Asset Management System (ResourceSpace) as well as a new Collections Management System (MuseumPlus) in collaboration with colleagues across the University's museums and IT services. This will bring the photograph, film, sound and archival collections into the same database as the museum's artefacts, enabling cross-searching of collections for the first time.

Oxford University internship programme

In July the museum hosted two paid interns on the Summer Internship Programme, selected again this year from a very large number of applicants. Rosie Croysdale, studying for an MSc in Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology, researched a series of photographs and children's drawings in the Beatrice Blackwood collection relating to her 1925 visit to Alert Bay in British Columbia, Canada. Rosie also analysed and wrote a blog article on the papers of art historian Marian Wenzel, who recorded Nubian house decoration in villages in the Wadi Halfa region of Sudan before their destruction by flooding during the creation of Lake Nasser in 1964.

Aayushi Gupta, studying for an MPhil in Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology, researched and wrote blog articles on several collections of historic postcards connected with her dissertation subject. These included two albums of postcards compiled by the mysterious 'Miss Dent' during global travels made in the 1920s, and a collection of early twentieth-century commercial postcards from Burma which were produced or sold by indigenous photography studios and publishers including, notably, D A Ahuja.



Above: Summer intern Aayushi Gupta studying a collection of postcards

Conservation work

The conservation team are Jennifer Mitchell, Andrew Hughes and Jeremy Uden. Rebecca Plumbe is our Clothworkers' Conservation intern.

During 2020–21 the team continued to cope with COVID-19 restrictions, but were able to continue working in the museum, concentrating on the What's in Our Drawers? project. Funded by the Clothworkers' Foundation, this project began in October 2019 with the aim of restoring the contents of the accessible drawers in the museum. Rebecca and the conservation team are curating the drawer contents, then using the museum's laser cutter to cut conservation-grade foam to create precise cut-outs for the objects. Once any necessary conservation work has been carried out, objects not selected for display are photographed and packed for storage. The team has worked through over 6,000 objects of which 4,000 were packed for storage in 211 boxes. The rest have been redisplayed in over 200 drawers.

Misa Tamura started working with conservation on the Talking Threads textile project as textile conservator (along with collections specialist Joanna Cole) at the beginning of December 2020. The project aims to give originating communities a voice in how the museum's textile collections are researched and catalogued.

The team have also been working on cleaning objects for several photography projects.

Reed Hudson, a conservation student from University College London, worked with conservation over the summer. Her dissertation took our recent Plastic Fantastic project as a starting point to investigate the ethical issues involved in scanning and replicating museum objects, specifically musical instruments. A CT scan was obtained of a prehistoric whistle made from a reindeer toe bone, and printed it in resin. The fact that it can be played, as the original cannot, means that it opens up new avenues in engagement and future research.

In 2020–21 work continued to consolidate new temporary object storage at Upper Heyford and in Oxford. The conservation department also worked with other GLAM institutions to plan new permanent stores and to help co-ordinate storage moves. Andrew and Jeremy visited the Rotadex factory in Birmingham to approve designs for new textile storage.

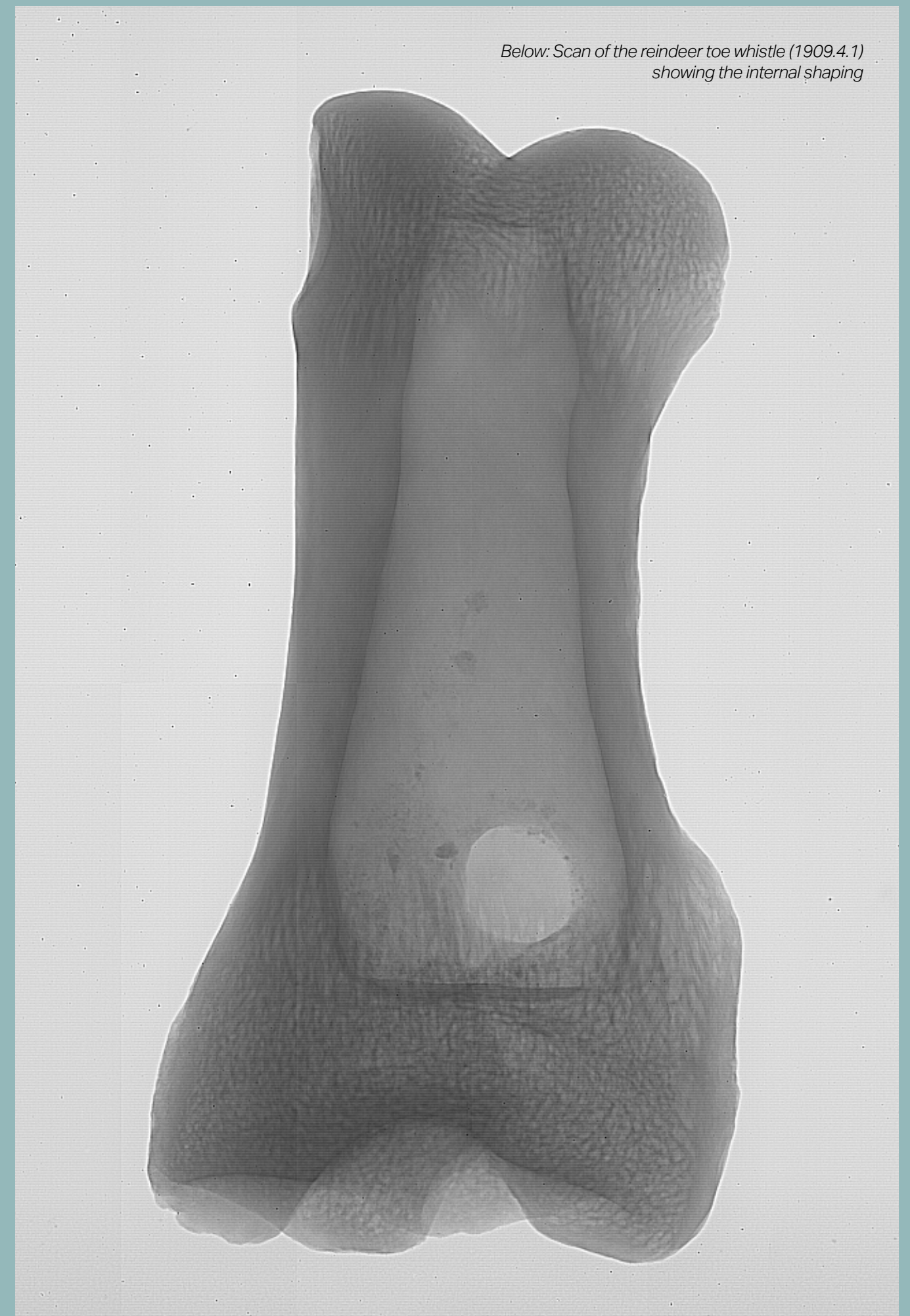
Jennifer, assisted by the rest of the team, continued to monitor insect pests in the museum, and to co-ordinate our response to pest attacks. Levels of moths in particular remained low while the museum was closed during lockdown.

The conservation team has condition-reported and packed several loans this year, including a map on sealskin to the British Museum exhibition *Arctic: Culture and Climate*. The entire loan was overseen online, which was a new experience for the Pitt Rivers conservators. The team also condition-reported and packed two Noh masks for the Ashmolean exhibition *Tokyo Stories*.



Above: Misa Tamura photographing textiles as part of the Talking Threads project

Below: Scan of the reindeer toe whistle (1909.4.1) showing the internal shaping



Social media, website and digital innovations

Digital innovations

The Pitt Rivers typically hosts hundreds of teaching sessions and research visits by scholars every year, both from the University of Oxford and other higher education institutions in the UK and beyond. The rapidly changing public health guidance this year meant that our core missions to engage learners and facilitate research needed to adapt quickly, utilising digital capabilities and ensuring that our collections remained a source of inspiration and knowledge, albeit remotely.

Key to our success in doing this has been our commitment over many years to digitise our collections, with now more than 60% of our online databases illustrated with digital images. Museum staff quickly developed a programme of virtual research visits which often involved live remote communication with a researcher, enabling them to examine material digitally via an iPad by directing museum staff, and asking questions relevant to their research about the object. Another example involved a researcher in Brazil consulting a slide collection via a lightbox and overhead camera being operated by museum staff, who then sent the images via a live communication on Microsoft Teams.

This form of research facilitation has meant that often researchers have not needed to make long-distance visits, reducing the impact on the environment as well as the pandemic. It has led to permanent changes in the way the museum will facilitate research in the future, with a more blended in-person and digital mixture defining what constitutes a research visit.

Teaching sessions in the museum have also involved a combination of in-person where possible and desirable, and digitally remote when not necessary. For instance, class presentations focused upon particular objects were all done remotely, whereas tutor-led seminars relating to the museum's displays and objects removed from display or storage for closer viewing were all done in the museum, with the sessions recorded and posted online to those students who were self-isolating or not in Oxford. The digital capture of such teaching sessions also had the benefit of allowing students to re-watch them at a later date.

Whilst some in-person research and facilitation has been severely impacted by the pandemic, such as a community visit by representatives of the San people from southern Africa, many other research connections have begun, or else adapted well to new digital ways of making connections. A good example of this has been the launch of a series of African Restitution Research projects, funded by the AHRC and Open Society Foundations, which have enabled new research connections with Nigerian and Egyptian colleagues and communities. Other connections continued online, especially those with the Maasai, which had already utilised participatory video methods as part of an ongoing research and dissemination strategy. Online conferencing also greatly enhanced the sense of personal connection and direct communication between Kenyan researchers and museum staff as part of the DCMS-funded Rethinking Relationships and Building Trust Around African Collections project.

“Just been to this amazing Pitt Rivers session about cultural work, done with integrity and humanity. Powerful words to understand the importance of decolonising museum practice and for healing humanity.”

Online event feedback from Radical Hope webinar series



Left: Andrew McLellan presenting online teaching sessions in the museum

Online conferences, webinars, events

The Radical Hope, Critical Change programme reimagined what the future might be for museums like the Pitt Rivers that have deep roots in coloniality and become spaces for healing. The programme's 21 events were attended by 3,757 people as live audience, and the event recordings have so far been viewed 4,317 times on YouTube. The events debated contemporary relevance and responsibility at this critical point in the museum's history. Led by researchers, community partners and indigenous experts, the series included topics such as the display of human remains, equitable interpretation, repatriation, LGBTQIA+ representation, inclusive curriculum building, self-representation and the power of language in museum labels. This programme of online digital events was offered free of charge but facilitators who would not otherwise be paid for being involved were awarded a fee to ensure that no one was excluded from the conversations.

“A very important conversation! Thank you for making it available.”

Webinar feedback

The bi-weekly webinars attract between 100 and 490 people each time. Audiences are mixed, with a spread of approximately one third from the local Oxford community, one third national and one third international. For the online recordings of the events only one third of the audience is from the UK while two thirds tune in from the rest of the world. Sector participation from many national, university and local authority museums has been high, with the highest numbers coming from the United Kingdom, European Union, United States, Australia and India. Feedback has been very positive both from panel members and participants.

“I absolutely loved this seminar run by Uncomfortable Oxford – such a clever use of tech to have important discussions about the colonial legacy of museums.”

Webinar feedback

Uptake of the webinars has been very positive; the chats are equally lively and enable colleagues from the sector to exchange ideas and even start partnerships. More than 65 countries have tuned in live, while other parts of the world access the events through YouTube recordings at times to suit them. The opportunity to engage with a world audience has been crucial to the success of these Radical Hope events. As we move back towards physical events in the museum, we will develop a hybrid approach that enables us to continue to reach out to an international audience while still serving our local audiences.

“Absolutely brilliant discussion this evening. Pitt Rivers are hosting some brilliant events at the moment, delving into some important topics.”

Webinar feedback

Online teaching sessions were developed for primary and secondary schools as well as for teacher training. Sessions were developed for the most popular primary school topics: the Maya and Ancient Egypt.



Hybrid sessions and resources were also developed for the Story Makers project in partnership with Fusion Arts and funded by the BBC's Children in Need. Staff went into the school with objects and delivered the museum aspect online. This hybrid model highlighted the benefits of virtual sessions in project work and how they can foster and sustain relationships.

Online secondary sessions were bespoke and grew out of consultation with teachers. They covered subject areas on art, decolonisation and the theory of knowledge. Some sessions were delivered digitally to the classroom, others to students' homes, depending on the lockdown level at the time. The evidence suggests that online sessions extend the museum's reach and allow access to its collections not just country-wide but world-wide.

More details of the digital work taking place can be found in our online report *Reimagining Digital Connections: Digital Care, Critical Change, Radical Hope*. (<https://prm.web.ox.ac.uk/files/prmdigitalreport2021web14sept2021spdf>)



Above: Screenshot from the Pitt Rivers Museum virtual tour

Social media and website

With the museum closed to visitors through much of 2020, our website and social media platforms became the main channel of communication with our audiences, enabling us to continue to inspire and engage, albeit at a distance. Despite the sudden lack of visitors and events, we stayed connected with our audiences, a much-acclaimed virtual tour allowing people to 'visit' the galleries they were missing.

“It makes for a surprisingly rich adventure – and just like a real visit, you'll probably want to come back and explore this virtual museum again and again.”

Museum Crush

In order to respond to suddenly becoming a 'virtual' museum, we adopted a more strategic approach to our social media programme, resulting in a steady growth of followers on all platforms, with Twitter numbers growing in 2020 from 36.3k to 40.5k (+11.6%), Facebook followers increasing from 14.9k to 16.6k (11.4%) and Instagram rising from 10k to over 16k (+60%). Alongside our social media channels, the PRM website enabled people from all around the world to access the collections and online events, with 167,260 users logging in from 208 countries and regions.

By continuing with this more strategically planned programme and working with the rich wealth of visual and written content around the museum collections, research, events and exhibitions, we are working to steadily increase our social media following year on year, growing our global audiences and ensuring that visitors stay connected with the huge range of work and activities taking place in the museum.

Supporting the Museum

The Friends

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, this has been another difficult year for the Friends. It was not possible to hold any awaydays, or a winter party, or to have talks in the PRM lecture theatre. The Kenneth Kirkwood Day was cancelled (but will be held in the spring of 2022, if COVID-19 rules allow). Our events programme, however, was able to function thanks to Zoom, which worked very well. The talks covered a wide range of topics: one of the highlights was Bodley's Librarian Richard Ovenden's account of the history of libraries and how they are coping with the digital world we now live in. Three of the speakers provided articles based on their talks for the Friends of the Pitt Rivers Magazine.

This year was a special one for the magazine, which reached its 100th issue. We celebrated this by inviting the Patrons, past Director Michael O'Hanlon and Friend's President Chris Gosden to contribute articles. The result was a very special issue that included a warm endorsement from the current Director. The cover showed a group of participants in the Multaka project's Connecting Threads display, illustrating the multicultural nature of the museum's work. The cover of the following issue shows a portrait of Toussaint Louverture, the first former slave to lead a successful insurrection against a white imperialist government, in Saint-Domingue (now Haiti). The associated article by Professor Sudhir Hazareesingh was based on his biography of Toussaint, the *'Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture'*, which won the 2021 Wellcome History Prize.

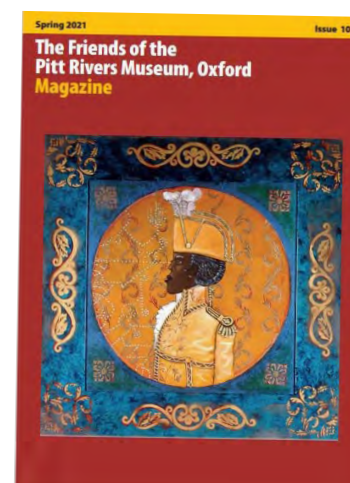
Donations to the museum this year included a grant of £6,750. This provided 50% support for the purchase of nine artworks by the artist Khadija Saye, comprising a series titled *Dwellings: in this Space We Breathe*. Khadija was one of the most promising black British artists at the time of her tragic death in the Grenfell fire of 2017. Her work explored her Gambian heritage and issues of loss, spirituality and identity.

The year ended with a fundamental change in the relationship between the Friends and the Pitt Rivers Museum. The Friends' Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Secretary all wished to stand down after many years in post, beyond the periods formally allowed by the constitution. We are very grateful to all Friends who have held these and other posts over the 47 years since our organisation was founded. Sadly, it had proved impossible to find volunteers to take over these key roles. Therefore, after a long period of discussion with the PRM about the financial, legal and administrative implications, a process was set in motion to incorporate the administration of the Friends within the structure of the PRM. An EGM was held in June 2021 that formally wound up the Friends as the independent organisation that was originally constituted in 1984. We were very fortunate that highly skilled members of the PRM staff were willing to take on the running of the Friends, which will now continue in this new context. The magazine will continue as before, as will the Friends' events, perhaps with a greater integration with the museum's events programme.

Gillian Morriss-Kay

Chair, Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum, 2014–21

Below: The Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum magazine celebrated its 100th issue



Above: Musical instruments in the museum's display

Development Advisory Board

The museum enjoys support and advice from the eight members of its Development Advisory Board, who volunteer advice, support, and advocacy in order to help the museum find new supporters, secure philanthropic and external investment, and clarify and achieve strategic development aims.

The Development Advisory Board meets at least three times a year, in between those times growing our networks, engaging with projects, and offering tailored advice on particular areas of expertise.

Current members are:

- Iliane Ogilvie Thompson (Chair)
- Dame Inga Beale
- Sophie Conran
- Alice Fox-Pitt
- Gianluca Longo
- Davina Mallinckrodt
- Ben Plummer-Powell
- Chantal Sathi

We are very grateful to the Board for giving up their time to support the museum and for their continued enthusiasm.



Development

We are incredibly grateful to the individuals, trusts and public-sector bodies who have understood and shown enthusiasm and generosity towards the sector-leading and high-quality work of the Pitt Rivers Museum in the past year. During a sometimes complex period, they have made continued care for collections, and planning for the future of collections and communities, possible. We are extremely grateful to:

- our Development Advisory Board, who support the museum in its goals through the investment of time, advice, and community-building;
- the Friends who for years have supported, and continue to support, the museum, voluntarily committing time and effort;
- the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Open Society Foundations, the Art Fund, Arts Council England, The Clothworkers' Company, the Museums Association, the Pitt-Rivers Charitable Trust, the Staples Trust, The Helen Roll Charity, Collections Trust, and the donors who during the past year have made the Kick Arts projects possible, without whose funding we could not operate, engage with the public or carry out our social impact work;
- Dr Laura Fan and Claire Barnes, who have enabled the Multaka project to continue at both the Pitt Rivers Museum and the History of Science Museum;
- individual donors, visitors to the museum, and those whose donations are enhanced by Gift Aid; and
- all those who wish to remain anonymous, but whose support is vital for accessible engagement with the museum and our public programmes.

We continue to seek support for ongoing work, from the conservation of objects to opening up collections and debate with global communities. If you would like to contribute to this work, or hear more about it, please email ea@prm.ox.ac.uk.

Museum operations

People and organisation

Our staff are the heartbeat of the museum and we are committed to fostering a positive culture which continually improves the experience, effectiveness and efficiency of all our teams.

In 2020–21, the museum employed over 70 members of staff and worked with just under 200 volunteers.

Our small administration team provides the efficient and effective day-to-day administration required by the museum, including HR, finance, planning, administration, reception and executive services. The team worked both in the museum and/or home-based as we refocused working priorities in response to museum administration during COVID-19. This involved a reduction in purchasing and a freeze on recruitment but involved increased support for safety measures and well-being of staff.

Of particular note this year, the team focused on supporting:

- the well-being of staff, particularly during COVID-19;
- the implementation of financial and HR assurances; and
- secretariat support for the Executive Board and Board of Visitors.

The superbly professional team, Antigone Thompson, Beth Joynson, Anne Atkinson and a receptionist, was joined this year by Nicole Cunningham (Divisional Finance) who replaced Irene Jones.

Health, safety and well-being

The Pitt Rivers Museum is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all staff. We do this by:

- maintaining safe systems of work; and
- supporting the physical and emotional well-being of staff.

Over the past year a range of support resources and activities was championed by the museum Well-being Group led by Ashley Coutu and Antigone Thompson, including hosting social events such as documentary film showings, a virtual pub quiz and an ice-cream social during lockdown.

During the summer, the front lawn of our museum became a site of protest for decolonisation and anti-racism movements such as Rhodes Must Fall Oxford and Black Lives Matter. As part of our response to these ongoing events, the Well-being Group organised an Anti-Racism and Decolonisation four-week training programme, which encouraged staff to listen to a series of podcasts, and then within small groups reflect and support each other through discussion of these challenging topics. The objectives of the training were to increase staff awareness of racism in the workplace and the museum sector, to improve inclusive engagement and presentation of different cultures to diverse museum audiences, and to reconnect staff with each other in supportive virtual spaces. This led to further training sessions for staff with external facilitators on topics such as engaging diverse audiences, empathetic conversations with visitors, and repatriation and redress.

Visitor services

The visitor services team is the welcoming face of the museum and an integral part of visitor experience and the museum's giving programme. As well as offering advice and information on the collections, access, wayfinding, events and activities, the team are responsible for maintaining a safe environment for visitors.

When the museum was closed, the team, led this year by Fernando Calzada and George Kwaider, were on furlough but were quick and resilient in supporting services as the museum opened at points throughout the year. The PRM visitor services team worked closely with their opposite numbers at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History to provide a seamless service to visitors, providing social distancing measures and a timed joint access ticket system.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to being an inclusive culture that promotes equality of opportunity, values diversity and kindness and provides an environment where all our staff are respected. We are strengthening our recruitment practice to enable all people to work with us and working hard to implement our accessibility plan.

Retail

To support COVID-19 safety measures for visitors the Pitt Rivers Museum shop, headed up wonderfully by Scarlett Grant, joined with the Oxford University Museum of Natural History to provide 'a one-stop shop' for visitors. This was very much welcomed by visitors and although income was much reduced due to lower visitor numbers, we enabled visitors to purchase guidebooks and a small range of museum goods as part of their visit. The museum also trialled a click and collect system which proved to be very popular.

Below: Items for sale in the joint museum shop



Events and weddings

Having had to pause our events and hire of the museum for much of the year, the museum is very much looking forward to providing a unique venue with the hire of our event spaces when possible, including weddings for the first time in 2022!

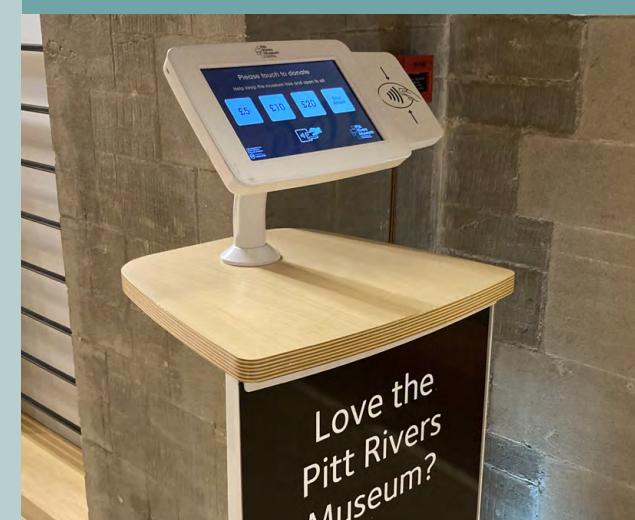
Below: Entry to the Pitt Rivers Museum



Donations

We are very grateful that visitors and our supporters continued to assist the work of the museum through online donations either as one-off gifts or as part of the digital ticket scheme. This provided much-needed support during periods when visitor capacity had to be reduced to maintain COVID-19 safety measures.

Below: Contactless donation point in the museum



Organisational changes

The museum undertook some key changes during 2020-21 in response to changing business needs and to realign the organisational structure to better support delivery of its strategy. This involved the development of a new exhibitions team, amending the role of Head of Operations to Head of Facility Management, discontinuing the role of the Commercial Manager and developing a new events role. The museum is grateful for all the work of operational staff who left during the year including Chris Wilkinson, Yvonne Cawkwell, Adrian Vizor and Jon Eccles.

Facility management and safety

The Pitt Rivers Museum is one of the most unique museums in the world and is housed in a beautiful Grade I Victorian listed building. Building and maintenance is overseen commendably by Head of Facility Management John Simmons, who also acts as the museum's Departmental Safety Officer. Much of the work of the year focused on maintaining the building during closures and implementing on-site safe working conditions for staff when restrictions allowed. This support and oversight enabled the museum to function smoothly and respond quickly to changes and restrictions.

Appendices

A. Pitt Rivers Museum Board of Visitors as of August 2020

Sir Jonathan Phillips (Chair), Warden, Keble College, University of Oxford

Professor Elizabeth Ewart, Head of Department, School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford

Professor Helena Hamerow, Professor of Early Medieval Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford

Professor Paul Smith, Director, Museum of Natural History, University of Oxford

The Proctors and the Assessor, University of Oxford

Professor Anne Trefethen, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for People and Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM), University of Oxford

Professor Nandini Gooptu, Associate Professor of South Asian Studies, Department of International Development, University of Oxford

Professor Paul Basu, Professor of Anthropology, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Ms Sara Wajid MBE, Co-CEO, Birmingham Museums

Professor Nicholas (Nick) Thomas, Director, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge

Ms Hannah Eastman, Student Representative, University of Oxford

Professor Trish Greenhalgh OBE, Professor of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford

Professor Andrew Briggs, Professor of Nanomaterials, University of Oxford

Ms Melanie Keen, Director, Wellcome Collection

Ms Iliane Ogilvie Thompson, Chair – Development Advisory Board, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

In attendance:

Dr Laura Van Broekhoven (Secretary), Director, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

Ms Beth Joynson (Minutes Secretary), Executive Assistant, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

Professor Dan Hicks, Lecturer-Curator, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

B. Museum staff by section

(Part-time staff are indicated by * and staff on fixed-term contracts by +)

Director

Laura Van Broekhoven

Administration

Karrine Sanders, Head of Administration, Planning and Finance

Antigone Thompson, Deputy Administrator

Beth Joynson, Executive Assistant

Anon, Receptionist *

Suzanne Attree – Senior Development Executive

Balfour Library

Mark Dickerson, Librarian

Giorgio Garippa, Library Assistant (until January 2021)

Collections

Julia Nicholson, Curator and Joint Head of Object Collections *

Marina de Alarcón, Curator and Joint Head of Object Collections *

Faye Belsey, Deputy Head of Object Collections *

Zena McGreevy, Exhibition and Special Projects Officer

Siân Mundell, Collections Database Officer *

Thandiwe Wilson, Project Officer – Living Cultures and Taking Care *+

Nicholas Crowe, Assistant Curator – Visiting Researchers

Joanna Cole, Project Assistant – Multaka Oxford+ (until November 2020), Collections Specialist – Talking Threads Textile project+ (appointed December 2020)

Philip Grover, Assistant Curator of Photograph and Manuscript Collections

Collections Move Project Team

Harry Phythian-Adams, GLAM Collections Move Project Manager + (until March 2021), GLAM Collections Move Programme Manager + (appointed March 2021)

Rosalind Hughes, GLAM Collections Move Team Leader + (until March 2021), GLAM Collections Move Project Manager + (appointed March 2021)

Peter Brown, GLAM Collections Move Project Assistant + (until March 2021), GLAM Collections Move Team Leader + (appointed March 2021)

Giles Lingwood, GLAM Collections Move Project Assistant +

Jennifer Donovan, GLAM Collections Move Project Assistant +

Laura Malric-Smith, GLAM Collections Move Project Assistant +

Rachael Rogers, GLAM Collections Move Project Assistant + (until June 2021)

Lucy Crossfield, GLAM Collections Move Project Assistant +

Megan Farrell, GLAM Collections Move Project Assistant +

Miriam Orsini, GLAM Collections Move Project Assistant + (until May 2021)

Anastasia van Gaver, GLAM Collections Move Project Assistant +

Commercial

Yvonne Cawkwell, Commercial Manager (until July 2021)

Scarlett Grant, Sales Supervisor

Beverley Stacey, Shop Assistant * (until October 2020)

Sarah Stretton, Shop Assistant * (until August 2020)

Tara Ferguson, Shop Assistant *

Nicole Culligan, Shop Assistant *

Conservation

Jeremy Uden, Head of Conservation *

Andrew Hughes, Deputy Head of Conservation

Jennifer Mitchell, Conservator *

Rebecca Plumbe, Clothworkers’ Conservation Internship +

Misa Tamura, Conservator Textile project (appointed December 2020)

Curatorial, research and teaching

Christopher Morton, Head of Curatorial, Research and Teaching and Head of Photograph and Manuscript Collections

Clare Harris, Curator and University Lecturer (Anthropology)

Dan Hicks, Curator and University Lecturer (Archaeology)

Meghan O’Brien Backhouse, Researcher – Action for Restitution to Africa *

Marenka Thompson-Odlum, Project Researcher – Labelling Matters

Ashley Coutu, Research Fellow

Sarah Mallet, Project Researcher – Action for Restitution to Africa

Mary-Ann Middelkoop, Researcher (appointed January 2021)

Gallery staff

Fernando Calzada, Deputy Gallery Manager – Acting Gallery Manager

George Kwaider, Visitor Services Assistant – Acting Deputy Gallery Manager

Kieran Brooks, Visitor Services Assistant *

Rosaleen Croghan, Visitor Services Assistant * (until November 2020)

Navigator Ndhlovu, Visitor Services Assistant *

Michael Peckett, Visitor Services Assistant *

Matthew Scott, Visitor Services Assistant *

Olya Baxter-Zorina, Visitor Services Assistant *

Mohammad Al-Awad, Visitor Services Assistant *

Abdullah Alkhalaf, Visitor Services Assistant *

Blake Morton, Visitor Services Assistant *

Mirjam Von Bechtolsheim, Visitor Services Assistant * (until July 2021)

IT

Tim Myatt, Digital Partnerships Manager + (until July 2021)

Marketing and media

Louise Hancock, Marketing and Media Officer *

Public engagement

Andrew McLellan, Head of Public Engagement and Programming *

Rebecca McVean, Education Officer (Primary) *

Melanie Rowntree, Education Officer (Secondary) *

Jozie Kettle, Public Engagement with Research Officer +

Jessica Croll-Knight, Public Engagement with Research Officer + (until December 2020 maternity cover)

Beth McDougall, Families and Communities Officer *+

Nuha Abdo, Community Ambassador – Multaka Oxford *+ (until January 2021)

Hannah Bruce, Project Officer – Beyond the Binary *+ (until December 2020)

Nicola Bird, GLAM Communities – Multaka Oxford *+

Susan Griffiths, GLAM Communities *

Joy Todd, GLAM Volunteers *

Caroline Moreau, GLAM Volunteers *

Miranda Millward, GLAM Art *

Technical services

John Simmons, Head of Operations and Technical Services

Christopher Wilkinson, Deputy Head of Technical Services (until July 2021)

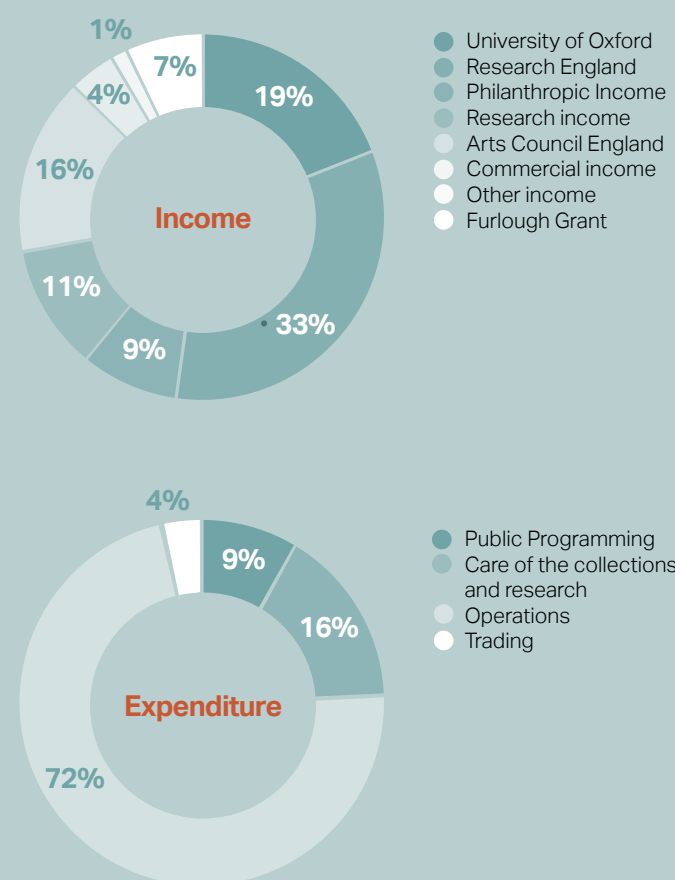
Alan Cooke, Museum Technician

Jonathan Eccles, Museum Technician (until July 2021)

Adrian Vizor, Museum Technician

C. Finance

The museum forecasts and budget were significantly affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Closures and restrictions on international travellers impacted visitor numbers and resulted in a loss of commercial income. The museum, together with all other museums in the GLAM division, ended the year in deficit. The initial projected deficit was partly offset by a range of mitigations that were put in place; the museum was able to access the furlough scheme and received funds for roles that could not continue while the museum was closed. The museum as part of GLAM was also successful in securing funds from the national COVID Recovery fund and was able to draw on funds to support a resilient recovery.



D Visitor numbers, enquiries, research visits and loans

Object collections

Despite closing the Research Room for large portions of the reporting year, research visits did continue in a limited capacity. Visits have taken on a hybrid model, with some researchers coming into the museum to examine material, whilst others have viewed the collections in all sorts of innovative ways, whether through video calls or photography of the displays and of objects removed from display.

There were 86 recorded research visits to examine material from the museum's object collections during the year. Of these, 43 came from the University of Oxford and 11 from other UK higher education institutions, and there were 32 other visitors including colleagues from across the globe, indigenous groups and individuals, artists and independent researchers. Notable visits included a live-streamed event in May 2021 with Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA), where a 17th-century 'witch bottle' had its contents examined as part of MOLA's 'Witch Bottles'; Concealed and Revealed project. At the end of May, two large virtual visits took place as part of the Talking Threads project: weavers from the Pacific Northwest looked at a number of textiles from the collection. The aim of both visits was to understand how museums can document their collections in ways that are useful to contemporary weavers.

Loans

Loans from the Pitt Rivers Museum continued through 2020 to 2021; many, however, were delayed and extended because of the COVID-19 situation. The impact was greatest on the loan of Maori artefacts to Tairāwhiti Museum, Gisborne, New Zealand for the exhibition *Tū te Whaihanga* which opened in October 2019. Owing to gallery closures this loan continued through 2020 and 2021 with a closure date planned for spring 2022. In similar vein, the loan to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art of the touring exhibition *Fiji: Art and Life in the Pacific*, which was on display from 15 December 2019, was extended to a final closure on 2 May 2021.

A loan to the British Museum of a Chukchi sealskin map (1966.19.1) was made for the exhibition *Arctic: Culture and Climate* (22 October 2020 to 21 February 2021).

Photograph, manuscript, film and sound collections

There were 89 research visits requiring the retrieval of photographs, manuscripts, film and/or sound recordings. Of these, 41 came from within the University of Oxford and four from other UK Higher Education institutions. There were 44 other visitors, including staff members of other museums, students and academics from non-UK universities, as well as visual artists and private researchers.

Among more notable or longer research visits – either in person or, during the pandemic, virtual – were those by Amy Budd (Modern Art Oxford), developing a new artwork commission for exhibition at Modern Art Oxford; Sophie Horáček (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), studying nineteenth-century archaeological excavations in Cyprus; Rinella Cere (Sheffield Hallam University), researching lantern slides; Elio Brancaforte (Tulane University), researching the history of travel in Azerbaijan; Melissa Cross (Victoria University of Wellington), studying the use of gourds as musical instruments by Makereti and her troupe of Māori performers; Lúcio Manuel Gomes de Sousa (Universidade Aberta), researching the ethnographic fieldwork of Portuguese anthropologist/poet Rui Cinatti in East Timor; Bernard Comrie (University of California, Santa Barbara), preparing a grammar of the extinct Great Andamanese language Akajeru, drawing on surviving archival and published sources; Camille Graindorge (Musée du Quai Branly), studying classification systems of knowledge; Aamer Nazih Ibraheem (Columbia University), studying the history of the Druze community; Chris Fuller (London School of Economics), researching the life and work of anthropologist Herbert Risley in colonial India; Ailsa Hendry (University College London), studying the former collections of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum; and Jack Fuller (University of Bristol), tracing the development of Sir Arthur Evans' vision of the Minoans through objects and archives.

E. New acquisitions

Donations

The museum is grateful to the following individuals for their donations:

Shane Balkowitsch (collection of 30 Ambrotypes of Native Americans taken by the donor, 2021.5); Dan Hicks (protest banners collected during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in Oxford, 2020.41 and Trump protest material collected during protests against Donald Trump (President of the USA) in 2018, 2020.39).

Purchases

Sixteen paintings by Solomon Enos of figures based on a legend from Hawaiian mythology (*The Epic Tales of Hi'iakaikapoliopole*) purchased with money from the Art Fund New Collecting Award.

Dwellings: In this Space we Breathe, a set of nine silk-screen prints based on original tintype photographs, by Gambian-British artist Khadija Saye. Purchased from Victoria Miro Gallery, London, with financial assistance of ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Transfers

No transfers were made during the reporting year 2020/21.

Balfour Library

The Balfour Library was grateful to receive donations from the following in 2020/21:

Bagpipe Society, Piers Bedford, Bodleian Libraries, Paul Cannon, Mark Dickerson, Rosemary Lee.

F. Interns, volunteers and work experience

Photograph, manuscript, film and sound collections

Volunteers in the section included Wenrui Li and Siqi Zhang, who together researched and wrote a blog article on a late-nineteenth-century album of photographs of China, identifying that the prints show scenes in and around Taiyuan, the capital city of Shanxi Province (<https://pittrivers-photo.blogspot.com/2020/09/scenery-of-capital-of-shanxi-reading.html>); and James Morgan, who wrote a blog article on a collection of lantern slides of Central and Eastern Europe (<https://pittrivers-photo.blogspot.com/2021/05/folk-costume-and-wooden-churches.html>). Interns included Rosie Croysdale, who studied photographs in the Beatrice Blackwood collection relating to her 1925 visit to Alert Bay in Canada, and researched and wrote about the fieldwork notes of art historian Marian Wenzel recording Nubian house decorations in the Wadi Halfa region of Sudan; and Aayushi Gupta, who researched and wrote about several collections of historic postcards, including two albums of postcards compiled during travels made in the 1920s, and a collection of around two hundred early twentieth-century commercial postcards from Burma.

Student placements included Zoë Alexander (History of Art), who researched and wrote about stereographic photography in the collections, principally a set of stereo cards published by Underwood and Underwood titled 'The United States of America Through the Stereoscope.'



Public engagement

The public engagement team was supported by regular volunteers.

Primary School guides: Anne Phythian-Adams, Linda Teasdale, Frances Martyn, Sukey Christiansen, Kay Symons, Lizzy Rowe, Angela Badham-Thornhill, Olivia Goodrich, Michaela Jones, Fiona Fraser, Helen Cadoux-Hudson
Trainee Primary School Guides: Richard Bahu, Emma Coleman-Jones, Karen Hayward, Will Oldfield, Rosie O'Neill, Fatima Maryam, Sif Laerke-Hall.

Decolonising the Curriculum steering group: Ananya Sharma, David Damtar, Harriet Aldrich, Abigail Branford, Zobia Haq.

Micro-internships: Peter Miller, Aniya Selvadurai, Susmita Dave, Madeleine Wright, Vivian Abrokwah.

Summer Internships: Ananya Sharma, Abigail Branford.

Volunteer service statement

On-site volunteering was largely suspended across the Oxford University Gardens, Libraries and Museums in 2020–21. Nonetheless, 410 volunteers contributed over 7,500 hours to GLAM organisations, mostly through online volunteering. The GLAM Volunteer Service continued to keep in touch with volunteers via its regular, volunteer-led GLAMazine newsletters and monthly online social events, many of which took inspiration from the collections. The Pitt Rivers Museum hosted an 'Introduction to Decoloniality' session for all volunteers, Pitt Rivers Museum tour guides created volunteer stories videos, and new primary school guides were recruited. In addition, Multaka volunteers contributed digital research and co-curated the online *Weaving Connections* exhibition.

Left: Woman wearing the traditional dress of Detva, formerly part of the Austro-Hungarian empire (hand-coloured lantern slide). Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. Undated, circa 1910 (2016.43.318). Featured in a blog article by volunteer James Morgan

G. Staff publications

Coutu, Ashley N, Alberto J Taurozzi, Meaghan Mackie, Theis Zetner Trolle Jensen, Matthew J Collins, and Judith Sealy. 2021. 'Palaeoproteomics Confirm Earliest Domesticated Sheep in Southern Africa Ca. 2000 BP'. *Scientific Reports* 11, no. 1 (March 23: 1–11).

Coutu, Ashley, and Paul Lane. 2021. 'Ivory in West Africa, C. 100 to 1900 CE: Archaeological Evidence and Future Research Priorities'. In *African Ivories in the Atlantic World*, edited by José da Silva Horta and Carlos Almeida, Lisbon: University of Lisbon (CH-ULisboa) – Lisbon Historical Studies.

Flamingh, Alida de, Ashley Coutu, Judith Sealy, Shadreck Chirikure, Armanda D S Bastos, Nzila M Libanda-Mubusisi, Ripan S Malhi, and Alfred L Roca. 2020. 'Sourcing Elephant Ivory from a Sixteenth-Century Portuguese Shipwreck'. *Current Biology*: CB 31, no. 3: 621–28.

Hicks, Dan, 2020. *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*. London: Pluto Press.

Hicks, Dan, 2021. 'Necrography: Death-Writing in the Colonial Museum.' *British Art Studies*, Issue19. <https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-19/conversation>

Hicks, Dan, 2021. 'Let's Keep Colston Falling.' *Art Review* <https://artreview.com/lets-keep-colston-falling/>

Hicks, Dan, 2021. 'Das universelle Weltkulturerbe unter westlichen Museumsdächern'. In *Beute: eine Anthologie zu Kunstraub und Kulturerbe*, edited by I Dolezalek, B Savoy and R Skwirbli, pp401–405. Berlin: MSB Matthes & Seitz.

Mallet, Sarah and D Stansbie. 2021. 'Substance and Subsistence'. In *The English Landscape and Identity Project*, edited by I Dolezalek, B Savoy and R Skwirbli, pp183–217. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mallet, Sarah, 2020. 'The Archaeology of Forced Migration'. In *Encyclopaedia of Global Archaeology*, edited by C Smith. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30018-0_3475

Morton, Christopher, 2021. 'Out of frame'. In *Pieces of a Nation: South Sudanese Heritage and Museum Collections* [open access – read online], edited by Zoë Cormack and Cherry Leonardi, pp117–12. London: Sidestone Press.

Morton, Christopher, 2021. 'A diary in the loose sense of the term: Henry Balfour and the 1914 Australian meeting.' In *A Trip to the Dominions: The Scientific Event that Changed Australia*, edited by Lynette Russell, pp68–91. Melbourne: Monash University Publishing.

Morton, Christopher, 2021. Review of Roger Sansi (ed) *The Anthropologist as Curator*, *Anthropos*, Vol. 116/1: 271–2.

Morton, Christopher, 2020. 'Attempted portraits: photography, obscurity, and the articulation of the past.' *Kronos*, Vol 46, No. 1: 54–71 (Special Issue; 'Other Lives of the Image', edited by Patricia Hayes and Iona Gilbert) [open access – read online]

Nielsen, Vibe, 2021. 'Kunstbegrebets Koloniale Klassifikation til Forhandling på Museer i Sydafrika'. *Tidsskriftet Kulturstudier* (1) (June): 89–112.

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Above: Iconic drawers within Pitt Rivers Museum