

### ACTIVITIES SPRING 2012

**1) 23 January: Friends' Private Evening. 6.30- 9.00pm. The New Galleries of Ancient Egypt and Nubia at the Ashmolean'. From 6.45-7.30pm** Liam McNamara, Assistant Keeper of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, will give us this lecture in the Randolph Gallery. This will be followed by drinks from 7.30-8.00pm, also in the Randolph Gallery. There will be an independent Private View in the new Galleries from 8.00-9.00pm. Cost: Friends and Guests £20. Organiser: Ros Nicholas.

**2) 2 February: The English Bayeux Tapestry, Reading Museum.** A little known treasure of Reading Museum is a remarkable replica of the Bayeux Tapestry, stitched by 35 skilled Victorian embroiderers in the 1880s. Sticking faithfully to the eight colours used in the original, they produced this full length copy. It is beautifully displayed and we shall be given a guided walk along the tapestry. There will be time to wander freely through the rest of the museum – including the nostalgic 'Huntley and Palmer' gallery. Also on display at present is a retrospective exhibition by wildlife and bird artist Robert Gillmor. This includes the original colourful linocut prints for his recent set of Royal Mail stamps. Refreshments are not included, but there is a museum café as well as plenty of eating places in the town. Coach leaves Playhouse 9.45am, Redbridge P&R 9.55am. Coach departs Reading 2.30pm. Cost: Friends £22, Guests £27. Organiser: Rosemary Wharton.

**3) 9 February: Friends' Private Evening. 'Visions of Mughal India.'** Andrew Topsfield curator of this exhibition of Howard Hodgkin's Collection of Paintings from Mughal India, will be leading this FPE. 4.00pm for tea/coffee and cake in the Dining Room on the top floor followed by talks in the Exhibition Galleries. Cost: Friends only £18. Organiser: Sue Peach.

**4) 23 February: Friends' Private Evening. 4.00-6.00pm. Angela Palmer and Susan Walker.** Angela will talk on her installation of contemporary art inspired by the boy mummy: *Unwrapped: The Story of a Child Mummy* which is on show in the Cast Gallery. Susan will lead a tour of three galleries and talk about the **Mummy Portraits**. We will begin at 4.00pm with tea/coffee and cake in the Dining Room on the top floor, and then go to the new galleries for the talks and tour. Cost: Friends only £17. Organiser: Ros Nicholas.

**5) 1 March: David Hockney . ' A Bigger Picture', Royal Academy of Arts.** The first major exhibition of new landscape works by David Hockney RA. Featuring vivid paintings inspired by the East Yorkshire landscape, these large-scale works have been created especially for the galleries at the Royal Academy, and will be shown alongside related drawings and film. The exhibition will span a 50 year period to demonstrate Hockney's long exploration and fascination with the depiction of landscape. The exhibition will also reveal how Hockney has embraced new technology, including his early use of the Polaroid camera through to more recent use of his iPhone and iPad. Refreshments are not included, and there will be free time after the tour. Entry for everyone to this exhibition is on a timed-ticket basis. Coach leaves Taylorian 8.15am, Water Eaton P&R 8.25am, Sandhills Bus stop 8.35am. Coach will leave for Oxford at 3.30pm. Cost: Friends £33, Guests £38. Organiser: Roger Parks.

**6) 8 March: Friends' Private Evening. 4.00-6.00pm. 'The Hare with Amber Eyes': Netsuke, an introduction and handling session.** Another opportunity to enjoy this popular event inspired by Edmund de Waal's book. Clare Pollard will introduce the subject of Japanese netsuke with examples from the museum's collection (including our very own hare with amber eyes), and Joyce Seaman will discuss the Barnett Collection of netsuke, which she is currently cataloguing. 4.00pm for tea/coffee and cake in the Dining Room on the top floor, followed by the talks. Cost: Friends only £18. Organiser: Ashley Ellison.

**7) 20 March: Harpsichord Recital in the Mallet Gallery. 6.30pm.** Jon Whiteley will introduce early music specialist Micaela Schmitz. She will play Bach concerto transcriptions on the museum's unique Kirckman harpsichord and launch her new CD. Please visit her website [www.earlymusica.org](http://www.earlymusica.org). Wine will be served in the interval. Cost: Friends £17, Guests £20. Organiser: Catherine Hilliard.

**8) 28 March: Visit to Windsor Castle to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.** This very special event begins with refreshments in the Winchester Tower with introductory talk on royal dining from Elizabeth I to State occasions today. We will have a private tour of the Great Kitchen, via the State Entrance, areas not normally open to the public, followed by a leisurely audio-tour of the magnificent State Apartments, Drawings Gallery, Queen Mary's Dolls House, Precincts and St George's Chapel. Also on view will be an exhibition to celebrate the Jubilee – 'The Queen: Sixty Photographs for Sixty Years'. Time will be allowed for lunch in the Castle Café or the many eateries in town. Official Guidebook included. Coach leaves Taylorian 8.45am, Water Eaton P&R 8.55am, Sandhills Bus stop 9.05am. Return coach leaves 3.30pm. Cost: Friends £48, Guests £53. Organiser: Ashley Ellison.

**9) 3 April: Visit to Highclere Castle.** The ancestral home of the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon, Highclere Castle is familiar on our TV screens as 'Downton Abbey.' You will be free to wander (no guided tours) through the castle and grounds, recognising rooms that have become familiar through the TV series, as well as absorbing the history of this aristocratic family. In the cellars of the castle is the Egyptian Museum which celebrates the discoveries of the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon – his most famous discovery being the tomb of Tutankhamun. There is plenty of opportunity to buy refreshments, but the 'secret garden' plus grounds designed by Capability Brown may encourage you to take a picnic. Coach leaves Playhouse 8.30am, Redbridge P&R 8.40am. Return to Oxford 4.00pm (approx.) Cost: Friends £28, Guests £33. Organiser: Rosemary Wharton.