



Research and Cultural Collections:  
An introduction

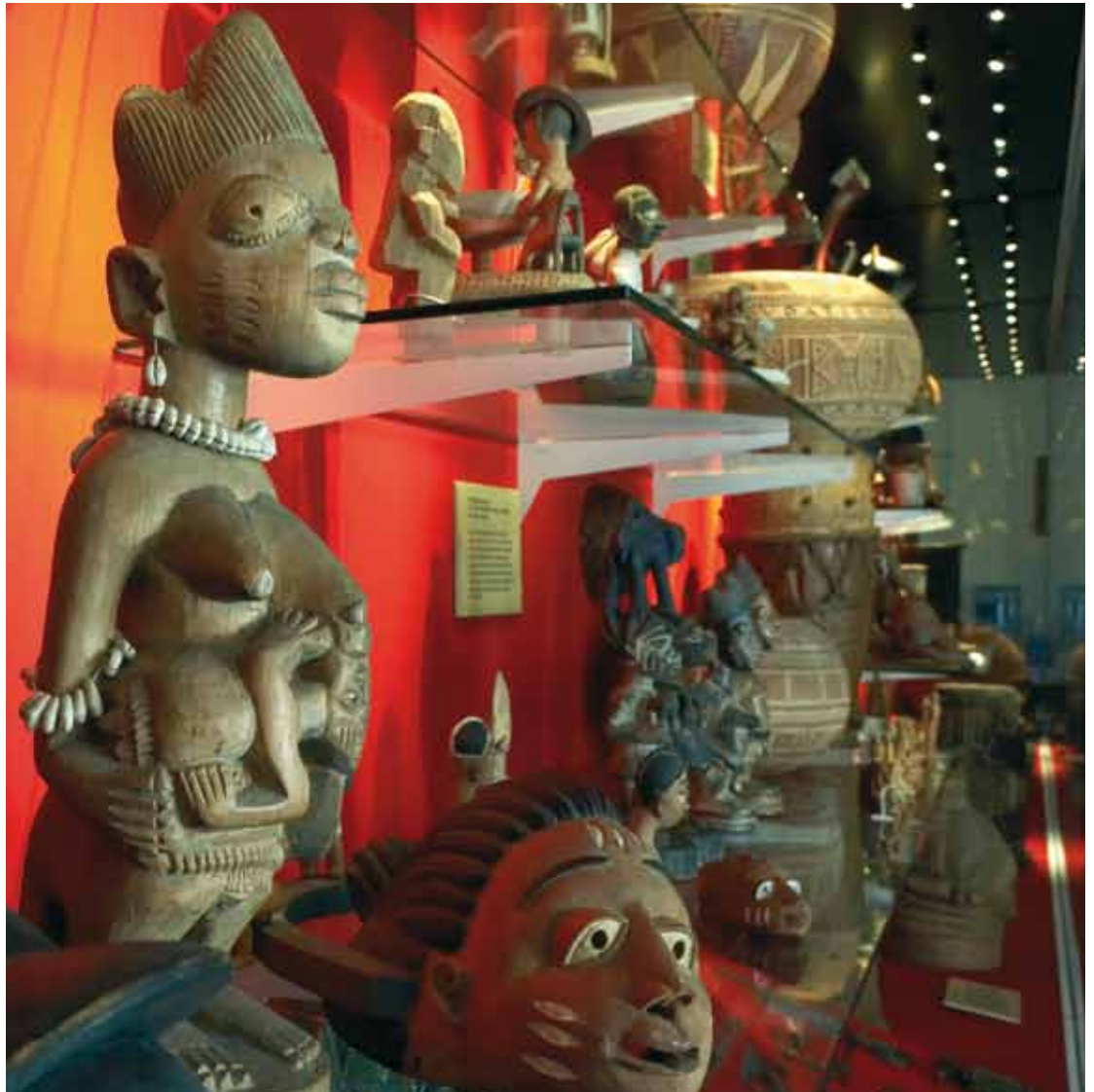
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Text by Clare Mullett, Assistant University Curator

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Graham Chorlton (b. 1953) *View* (detail). Acrylic and oil on canvas, 2008.



The Danford Collection of West African Art and Artefacts

# Research and Cultural Collections

Foreword by Dr James Hamilton, University Curator

Following an initiative taken in 1991 by the then Vice-Chancellor Sir Michael Thompson and the Registrar David Holmes, a survey was made of the miscellaneous groups of pictures, sculpture, artefacts, and ceremonial objects that were to be found in and around the University.

Sue Armitage led the survey, working with the photographer Ron Swift, and the unexpected new knowledge they gained galvanised the University into appointing a part-time curator to begin the task of cataloguing, organising and assessing these newly identified collections, and any others which might later emerge.

In the subsequent seventeen years the University Collections (renamed in 2008 the Research and Cultural Collections) has developed through the incorporation of the Danford Collection of West African Art and Artefacts, the Archaeology Museum, the Historic Physics Instruments, the Historic Medical Artefacts, as well as the Fine Art Collection (including outdoor sculpture), the University Ceremonial Silver Collection and the University Portraits. It is one of the most interesting, varied and active University collections in the country, operating without its own central museum building.

The germ from which all university collections develop is the acknowledgement that objects can uniquely loosen the professor's tongue and widen the understanding of students. Research priorities change over time and it follows that the value of a particular collection to academics and students will correspondingly fluctuate. It is the job of the University Curator to distinguish between the use and the care of university collections, and to manage the continually evolving balance between these two principles. Museum objects are repositories of knowledge and information, but, more than books which are usually replaceable, they may also be the facts themselves.

Since the mid-1990s a programme of redisplay has continued in line with historical precedent. When the University moved to Edgbaston in 1900 the new buildings incorporated eight separate museums attached to departments to aid teaching, and this practice was used as a model for the 1990s. The Danford and Archaeology Collections were the first to be given museum-quality display cases in their departments, thus drawing collections and teaching tightly together so that staff and students would be constantly aware of the presence in their departments of their historic objects, and of their teaching value.

The University's art collections grew from the 1960s through the dedication of a small number of determined academics including Professors Janusz Kolbuszewski and Anthony Lewis, Angus Skene and Kenneth Garlick. Together they laid the foundations of the collections with commissions and acquisitions of work by artists including William Gear, Barbara Hepworth and Peter Lanyon. Their example encouraged the University to continue to foster the art collections from the 1990s, adding works by Sonia Lawson RA, Julian Meredith, Humphrey Ocean, Nicholas Pope, John Walker, Austin Wright and others. Perhaps the most generous recent gift was the sets of prints and the bequest of plasters by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi RA.

While being rich sources for teaching and research, the University's Research and Cultural Collections also have a vital decorative function. Buildings need pictures and sculpture, and continued campus enhancement is a central plank of their purpose. Paolozzi's monumental *Faraday* at West Gate and Hepworth's *Ancestor I* in University Square are celebrations and signposts of our confidence in our landscape and in ourselves. Collections create a sense of place, as the high unsolicited and continuous demand from colleagues for art for their buildings further demonstrates.



*Detail of Egyptian Anthropoid Wooden Coffin Lid of Ahmose.*  
Painted wood, 500 BC.

We would not have been able to develop the use and care of the collections without the help of many people including Phyllis Benedicz, Holly Grange, Alan Leary, the late Binnie van der Raay, Gillian Shepherd, Robert Whitworth, Inga Wolf and our many volunteers. My colleague Clare Mullett, Assistant University Curator since 2002 and the author of this booklet, is persistent and unflagging in her work for the University.

The Research and Cultural Collections are a brightly coloured twist in the fabric of the University. The University would function without them, but it would indeed be a drab place.



*Eduardo Paolozzi (1924–2005)*  
*Moonstrips Empire News.* Screenprints on paper, 1967.  
Displayed in the entrance to the School of Law

# Introduction

From Archaeology to Zoology, from West African Masks to modern British landscape paintings, the University of Birmingham Research and Cultural Collections hosts a vast range of extraordinary artefacts that play a valuable social, cultural and educational role in campus life and in wider communities.

The Research and Cultural Collections is an array of collections on campus which variously play ceremonial, commemorative, decorative and didactic roles in University life. The collections are housed in departments relevant to their origins or purpose, and are dispersed throughout the campus into the very places where students and staff study and relax.

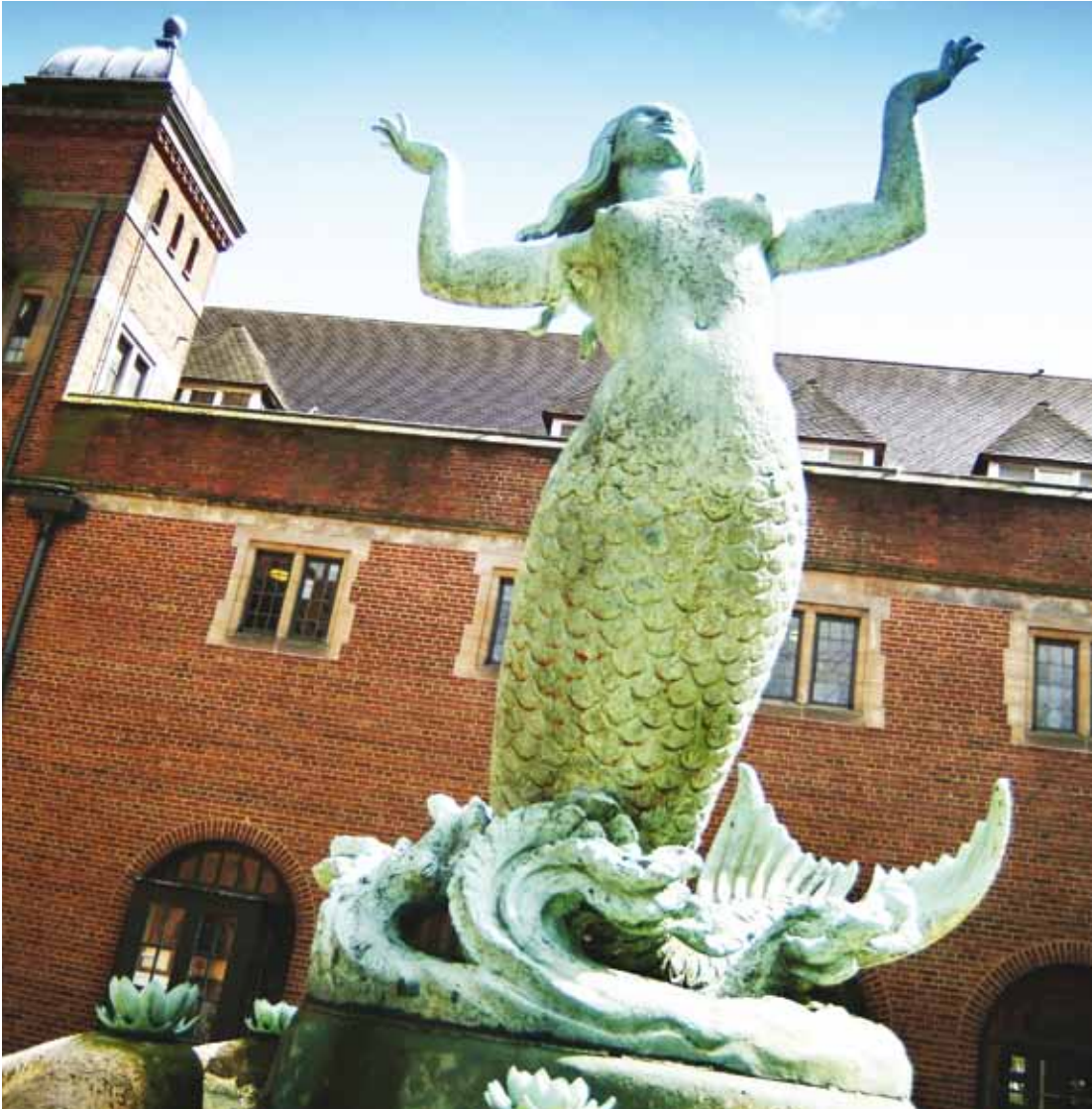
The Research and Cultural Collections is one of five independently-managed museum structures at the University of Birmingham. Along with the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, the Lapworth Museum of Geology, Special Collections and Archives, and Winterbourne Botanic Garden, we provide a breadth and diversity in cultural assets ranging from public museums to small specialist research collections.

The University displays and teaches from thousands of objects within several distinct collections in the Research and Cultural Collections. They are the Danford Collection of West African Art and Artefacts, the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity Museum, the Collection of Historic Physics Instruments, the Biological Sciences Collection, the Medical School Collection, the Silver

and Plate Collection, the University Heritage Collection and the Campus Collection of Fine and Decorative Art. There are also important objects which are yet to be formalised into collections, such as an historically interesting group of Chemistry artefacts. These include equipment used by Nobel Prize winner Sir Norman Haworth when he synthesised Vitamin C at Birmingham in the 1930s, and various synthesised chemicals and compounds such as rubber and Terpene from the University's original Applied Chemistry Museum. There are also a number of artefacts that relate to the development of computing.

Since our beginnings, objects have been integral to teaching and research at the University of Birmingham, with the result that some collections are embedded within various academic departments. Other collections enhance their environment, and offer inspiration and enlightenment to all.

The Research and Cultural Collections is a registered museum. If you would like to know more about the collections, please visit us online at [www.rcc.bham.ac.uk](http://www.rcc.bham.ac.uk) or make an appointment to visit in person.



William James Bloye (1890–1975)  
*Mermaid Foundation*. Bronze and stone, 1960.



Brian Robb (1913–1979)  
*Venetian waterscape*. Oil on canvas, 1971 (detail).



Commemorative medallion struck for the opening of Mason Science College.  
 Bronze, 1880.

# The Danford Collection of West African Art and Artefacts

The Danford Collection of West African Art and Artefacts celebrates the extensive cultural traditions and artistic expression of countries in West Africa.

The Danford Collection ranges from domestic and ceremonial utensils to contemporary fine art, and is one of the finest collections of its kind in Europe. The collection is an active teaching resource in the University, comprising approximately 800 objects, including woodcarving, metalwork, pottery, textiles, painting and domestic and votive objects.

The nucleus of the collection was collected between 1943 and 1957 by John Danford OBE, a professionally-trained artist who was for some years a British Council representative in Nigeria. Danford lent the collection initially to University College, Ibadan, Nigeria (1957–63), but in the mid 1960s he moved it to the University of Birmingham's Centre of West African Studies (CWAS). Carvings and other artefacts acquired during Danford's final posting in Sierra Leone (1966–69) were added in July 1970, some two months before his death.

The Danford Collection was purchased by the University from Danford's estate in 1975, with help from the W A Cadbury Charitable Trust, John Cadbury, and the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund. It has been

regularly augmented by gifts, bequests and loans from various donors, notably Sister Evelyn Bellamy, whose collection of Ghanaian artefacts were donated in 1968. E H Duckworth, founding editor of NIGERIA magazine who was an influential patron of Nigerian craftsmen during the 1930s, was another generous donor, as was W A Cadbury who contributed artefacts collected in Angola and the Gold Coast (now Ghana) between 1908 and 1931, and Pete Tunley who has lent a wide range of Hausa craftsmen's tools and craft products collected in the mid 1970s.

The strength of the collection lies mainly in the Yoruba material Danford assembled while in Ibadan in the early 1950s, stemming from his role as a patron of traditional carvers such as Bamgboye and Lamidi Fakeye at a time when chiefly and religious patronage was already declining. Their magnificent sculpted masquerade head-pieces, houseposts and divination bowls form the centrepiece of this beautiful collection. The oldest pieces in the collection are approximately 100 years old and the collection is still growing. Members of CWAS visit African countries every year and bring back objects to augment the collection.

The Danford Collection is popular with both staff and students on campus and is an important resource for schools in the West Midlands and the local community in general. Education groups visit the collection to be inspired by its contents, and respond to the artefacts by producing their own versions. The collection also hosts musicians who perform traditional African music and teach education groups about African instruments and song. The Centre of West African Studies regularly holds poetry readings and performances by prominent African, Caribbean, Black British and related writers and artists in the Danford Room amongst the collection. Those who have performed include Linton Kwesi Johnson, Niyi Osundare, Kwame Dawes and Femi Oyebode.

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*Yoruba Mother and Child.* Nigerian, wood and cowrie shells (detail).



*Ibo Nigerian Dance Mask.* Painted wood, 1952 (detail).



*Selection of calabashes.* Yoruba, 1940s.



*Bandeleson of Areogun - Helmet Dance Mask.* Yoruba, Nigeria. Painted wood, collected 1952.

# The Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity Museum

The Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity Museum is an actively used teaching collection of approximately 2000 examples of Greek, Mycenaean, Roman and Egyptian pottery, funerary, domestic and religious objects.

In the University of Birmingham's early days, John Hopkinson, an enthusiastic lecturer in Greek, purchased antiquities to be used for inspiring his students and exciting their historical imagination. He was granted £100 to spend on Greek Archaeology, and thus the nucleus of the collection was formed.

In addition to the displayed objects, there is a large and valuable collection of pot sherds, assembled over the twentieth century by members of staff from the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity (IAA). The rediscovered Egyptian sarcophagus lid from Beni Hasan, Egypt, c. 550BC, is a highlight of the collection. It was cleaned in 2001 in order to remove dirty paraffin wax poured over the lid in the early twentieth century in an attempt to 'age' it. The restoration revealed freshly coloured paint and also traces of gold leaf applied to the human face carved on the lid. The sarcophagus was given by John Garstang, excavator of Beni Hasan, to the University in 1904, and was subsequently displayed for many years at Leamington Spa Museum.

Advances in technology gave the University's archaeologists further clues as to the contents of a Canopic jar made in Ancient Egypt to hold vital organs as part of the mummification process. After being CT scanned, medical experts from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital confirmed that the jar contains an organ with the density of liver or intestines. After further analysis it should be possible to obtain more information about the person described in the jar's hieroglyphics and the period in which he lived. In this respect, IAA's study of the ancient world has benefitted from inter-disciplinary research and technological advancement and has produced a valuable new 'reading' of information within an object that has been analysed numerous times.

The Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity's Visual and Spatial Technology Centre (VISTA) is one of the best equipped archaeological visualisation laboratories in Europe. In 2003 an ancient terracotta stemmed cup made in East Greece in the seventh century BC was scanned in the VISTA centre to create a 3D image and

reconstructed in metal by the University's Department of Metallurgy and Materials using modern technologies based on those used by Ancient Greeks.

The Archaeology and Antiquity Museum is a major teaching and research resource for the department and is also the home to an undergraduate Museum Studies option.

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[www.iaa.bham.ac.uk/museum/museum.htm](http://www.iaa.bham.ac.uk/museum/museum.htm)  
[www.vista.bham.ac.uk](http://www.vista.bham.ac.uk)



*Red-figure lebes gamikos.*  
Rhodes, 325–300 BC.



*East Greek Oinochoe, of grey-beige clay with trefoil mouth.*  
Middle Wild Goat style, 7th century BC.



*Mycenaean Flask of buff clay with dark brown paint, c1350 BC.*



*Attic black-figure lekythos, 520–500 BC.*



*Egyptian Anthropoid Coffin Lid of Ahmose. Painted wood, 550 BC.*





J&W Cary. *Celestial Globe*. 1816 (detail).



Selection of Galvanometers and other Scientific Instruments



Société Centrale de Produits Chimique.  
*Curie Gold Leaf Electrostatic Demonstrator*, late 19th century.



W Jones of Holborn, London  
*A New Portable Orrery*. Painted metal, late 18th century.



Max Kohl  
*Helmholtz's Resonators*. Brass on wooden base, late 19th century.

# The Biological Sciences Collection

## Zoology

The Zoology Collection comprises approximately 2000 zoological specimens, of which around half are liquid preserved specimens, collected for teaching purposes since the 1880s. The spirit collections contain examples of most major invertebrate and some vertebrate groups. The remainder comprises skeletal and mounted specimens of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and pinned insects. There is also a collection of microscope slides. The School of Biosciences has a display case in the reception area which shows regularly changing exhibitions of zoological and related material.

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## Herbarium

The University Herbarium, or botany collection, contains approximately 75,000 specimens of national importance, collected over more than one hundred years by botanists from all over Britain. It includes material from local flora collections such as that amassed by Augustin Ley (1842–1911) whilst writing his book *A Flora of Herefordshire* (1889).

The collection is mainly comprised of vascular plants, but there are also good examples of local bryophytes (mosses and liverworts.) There are also some significant collections of critical taxa that are of national importance including *Rubus* and *Hieracium*, or brambles and hawkweeds.

Access to the Herbarium is limited but a digital repository is being developed. Enquiries about research loans and the digital repository should be directed to the Herbarium Curator, Dr Sarah Whild on the following contact details:

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<http://herbariaunited.org/athome>

The Biological Sciences Collections are curated by the School of Biosciences.



Selection of specimens from the Zoology collection



*Arachis Monticola* upper Volta Specimen. Herbarium (detail)



Selection of butterflies from the Zoology collection



Selection of preserved reptile specimens from the Zoology Collection

# Medical School Collection

The Medical School Collection contains a number of interesting historical items which reflect the development of particular specialties, including anatomy, ophthalmology and dentistry, and artefacts which reflect the development of the medical school and medical education more generally.

Items relating to the history of anatomy and pathology are particularly rich. For example, the collection includes a rare group of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century anatomical wax models originally used for demonstrations. Relating to the history of embryology, the specimens were made by the well known German modeller, Friedrich Ziegler. They are now used for teaching the History of Medicine.

An extensive historical pathology collection, the Chamberlain Museum of Pathology, surrounds a busy study area in the Medical School. The collection dates back to the mid-nineteenth century and is still used for teaching pathology, although many specimens reflect conditions that are no longer prevalent in Britain, and so only have an historical interest. A particularly interesting specimen is the diseased hand of the pioneer radiologist John Hall-Edwards (1858–1926), whose hand was amputated after developing skin cancer as a result of experimenting with x-rays on himself. The Chamberlain Museum of Pathology is principally directed at medical students and managed by the Medical School.

Modern engraved glass surrounding the student common rooms in the Wolfson Wing depicts scenes from Andreas Vesalius' anatomical Renaissance study *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (*On the Fabric of the Human Body*), another reminder of the centrality of anatomical knowledge to medical training, past and present. In addition, the Medical School displays numerous paintings and sculptures which reflect its history. These include portraits of distinguished physicians who played key roles in the development of the teaching and practice of medicine in Birmingham over the past two hundred years. Of particular note are two portraits of the school's founder, William Sands Cox, in his youth and old age, and a bust by Jacob Epstein depicting Professor Dame Hilda Lloyd, the first female President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (1949–52).

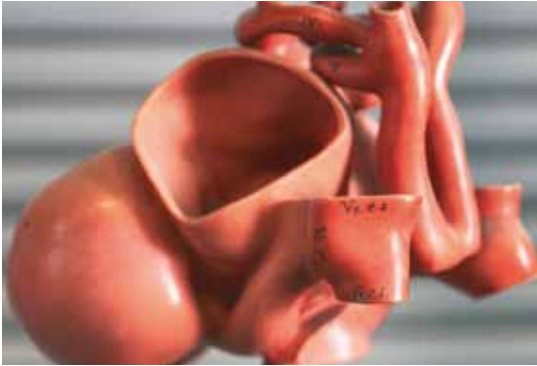
A recent donation of more than 700 artefacts which formerly comprised the Nursing History Group Museum complements the existing collection and provides a useful research tool for medical students studying in the Centre

for the History of Medicine. A handsome nineteenth-century medical cabinet, complete with early twentieth-century materia medica and donated by the family of a general practitioner who worked in the Midlands, makes an important historical addition. Similar donations include the complete collections of early texts in the fields of dentistry and ophthalmology.

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Friedrich Ziegler  
*Wax Anatomical Model*, late 19th century.



Cornelius Saftleven (1607–1681)  
*The Ages of Man*. Oil on canvas.



Friedrich Ziegler  
*Wax Anatomical Model of a Human Foetus*, late 19th century.



Henry Room (1803–1850)  
*Portrait of William Sands Cox (1802–1875)*. Oil on canvas, late 1840s.



Friedrich Ziegler  
*Wax Anatomical Model of a Human Heart*, late 19th century.



Jacob Epstein (1880–1959)  
*Dame Hilda Lloyd*. Bronze bust, 1951.

# The Silver and Plate Collection

This collection, which is entirely ceremonial, comprises silver and plate commissioned for and presented to various departments or schools within the University during the twentieth century.

Principal among it are the two ceremonial maces: one, the Arts and Crafts University Mace, was made in 1900 by Philip Webb, and the other, the Centenary Mace, was made by Claire Davies commissioned in 2000 by the Birmingham Assay Office for the University. The maces are carried at every graduation ceremony. Other objects include bowls, goblets, salvers and candlesticks commissioned over the years by the Senior Common Room, the Guild of Graduates, Chancellor's Hall Association, University House, the Holdsworth Club (Law), the Medical School, the School of Dentistry, the Department of Chemical Engineering, St Francis Hall and the Munrow Sports Centre. The silver is mainly kept in store but is used at congregation dinners and other special occasions.

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*University Mace* designed by Philip Webb.  
Silver parcel gilt with enamel, garnet and chalcedony inlay, 1902.



Robert Welch. *Modernist condiment sets*, 1964.



Barker Bros. *Edwardian three piece oval semi-reeded teapot*, 1902.



One of a pair of late Victorian baluster fluted peppers, 1888.





*Commemorative Key.* Replica of the gold key used in the opening ceremony of the University of Birmingham, 1909.



Henry Pegram (1862–1937)  
*Architectural Carvings of Beethoven, Virgil, Michelangelo, Plato, Shakespeare, Newton, Watt, Faraday and Darwin.* Darley Dale Stone, 1907.



*Commemorative Medals* issued for the opening of the University of Birmingham by King Edward VII. Bronze, 1909.



Albert Drury (1856–1944)  
*King Edward VII.* Marble sculpture, 1912.





George Reid (1841–1913)  
*Sir Oliver Lodge (1851–1940), (detail), FRS, Principal.* Oil on canvas, 1919.



John Byam Shaw (1872–1919)  
*Portrait of Margaret Nettlefold before her dining room at Winterbourne.* Oil on canvas, 1904.



Humphrey Ocean b. 1951  
*Sir Julian Bullard, Pro-Chancellor (1928–2006), (detail).* Oil on canvas, 1994.



Peter Edwards b. 1955  
*Roger Burman, Pro-Chancellor (1994–2001), (detail).* Oil on canvas, 2002.



Roger Eliot Fry (1866–1934)  
*Landscape*. Oil on canvas, 1910.

### Art in public spaces

Since the 1960s the Campus Collection of Fine and Decorative Art has developed through commission, purchase, loan and gift to include a variety of styles and genres of work by many acclaimed artists. These works are displayed throughout departments and spaces inside and outside, and across the campuses in Edgbaston, Selly Oak, Birmingham city centre and Stratford-upon-Avon. They have both commemorative and emblematic purpose and enhance their surroundings, encouraging unexpected dialogues and responses, and reaching thousands of people.

Acquisitions have historically been driven by particular individuals, or by small ad hoc groups, notably in the 1960s and 1970s by the late Professors Kolbuszewski and Lewis, and the then University Treasurer Angus Skene. Together, they and others acquired works by Peter Lanyon, Barbara Hepworth and William Gear. Peter Lanyon's *Arts Faculty Mural* (1963) mingles reflections on the artist's native Cornish landscape, weather and light with the red brick



Peter Lanyon (1918–1964)  
*Arts Faculty Mural*. Oil on board (detail), 1963.

and icy spaces of the University in the snow. This is Lanyon's last large work painted a year before his untimely death in a gliding accident. David Prentice's series of mirror paintings *Pleides* (1971) was commissioned for the new Metallurgy and Materials building and relates to research into the formation of metallic lattices and grids on a micro-scale and also the structural lines of Philip Dowson's concrete architecture.

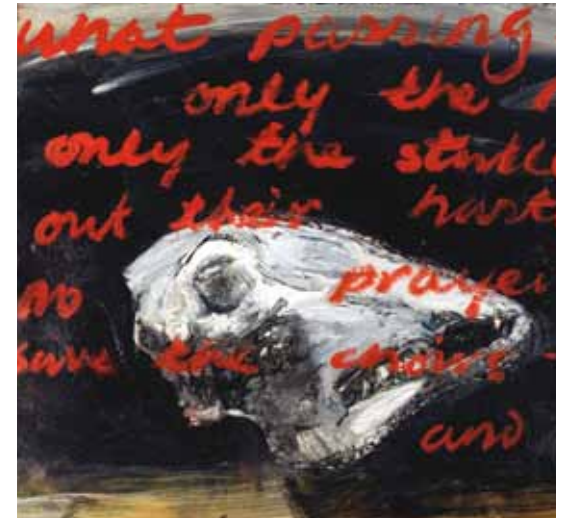
Since the early 1990s, gifts, commissions and purchases have included Sonia Lawson's *Guardian I and II* (1994), full of vivid poetic imagery evoking companionship and reliability. Julian Meredith's *Sewen* (1994), hangs in the Lapworth Museum of Geology, its fish shapes carved from a tree trunk are preserved in printed ink as if fossilised like the fish specimens from Wyoming displayed nearby. John Walker's *The Blue Cloud* (1996) in the Arts Building uses landscape, figures and literature to consider the cyclical nature of life and death; and sunflowers and a self portrait by John Bratby RA decorate the walls of the Bratby Bar in Staff House. The bar was named for the artist, who was given an honorary degree by the University in 1992.

Notable gifts of works of art include a group of paintings by Roger Fry, given by the artist's sister Margery Fry in the 1920s, and the bequest of John Galsworthy family portraits from Rudolf Sauter in 1977. In 2001, six paintings were given to the University from the Royal Academy's Chantrey Bequest, including works by John Aldridge, Kum-Siew Mak and Brian Robb. A substantial and particularly generous gift is that of the sculptor and printmaker Sir Eduardo Paolozzi RA (1924–2005). Along with *Faraday*, the colossal sculpture at the West Gate, the artist bequeathed a series of plaster maquettes of his sculptures and also presented five sets of prints – *Bunk!*, *Z.E.E.P.*, *Moonstrips Empire News*, *General Dynamic FUN* and *Calcium Light Night*. Various University colleges and departments, including Law, the Business School and American and Canadian Studies display Paolozzi's prints in their rooms and corridors. In 2006 Through the University's Alumni Fund, Sport and Exercise Science acquired a series of prints by Nicholas Pope to hang in the foyer of their new building. Such commitment demonstrates an investment in the department's surroundings, with works of art providing an inspiring and engaging environment for students and staff.

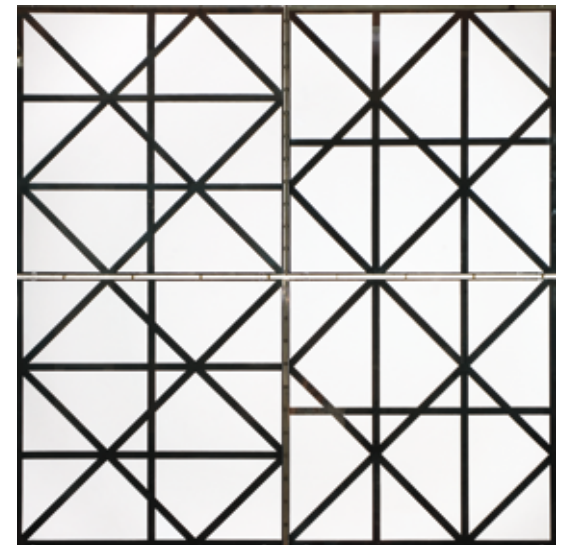




Sonia Lawson b. 1934  
*Guardian I*. Oil on canvas (detail), 1994.



John Walker b. 1939  
*The Blue Cloud* (detail). Oil on canvas polyptych, 1996.



David Prentice (b. 1936)  
*Pleides* (detail). Oil on mirrored glass, 1970.



Eduardo Paolozzi (1924–2005)  
*Faraday*. Bronze, 2000.

### Sculpture

At the West Gate of the Edgbaston campus stands the monumental bronze sculpture by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi RA. *Faraday* was made in 2000 and presented by the artist to mark the University's first centenary. This highly contemporary giant, half-man and half-machine, is a sculpture that looks equally to the past and to the future. The sculpture expresses the achievements of experimental scientists who unlock and transform understanding of natural phenomena and is also an allegorical figure representing the control of power. As the artist said, 'The work is for Faraday, not of him.' Around the base of the figure are lines from *The Dry Salvages* by T S Eliot, reflecting upon growth and change. They bear a valuable message for all University students: *'Here between the hither and further shore, While time is withdrawn, consider the future, and the past with an equal mind.'*

The colossal piece acts as an emblem and a meeting place for the University, as do many of the sculptures in the diverse collection. Other pieces include William Bloye's *Mermaid Fountain* (1961) a smiling and welcoming



Michael Sandle (b. 1936)  
*Woman for Heidelberg, (detail)*. Bronze, 1987. On loan from the artist.

sculptural version of the mermaid from the University coat of arms; Sir Anthony Caro's *Scorched Flats* (1974)\* which rolls across the ground without a plinth, relinquishing the idea of a work of art being 'superior'; Barbara Hepworth's *Ancestor I* (1970)\*\* which recalls her inspiration from the ancient standing stones in Cornwall, and Sir Jacob Epstein's *Portrait bust of Dame Hilda Lloyd* (1951) which celebrates this pioneering doctor though bold modelling and roughly textured surfaces.

The University's sculpture collection has been the inspiration for a number of art courses and workshops including The Big Draw, organised by the Campaign for Drawing. The Campus Sculpture Trail is an entertaining way for visitors to orientate themselves and explore the University. A copy of can be downloaded from the website or picked up from the main reception desk in the Aston Webb building.

\**Scorched Flats* is on loan from the artist

\*\**Ancestor I* is on loan from the trustees of the Hepworth Estate



Anthony Caro (b. 1924)  
*Scorched Flats*. Steel, 1974.



Bernard Sindall (1925–1998)  
*Girl in a Hat*. Bronze, 1972.



British School  
Tom Skelton (detail). Oil on canvas, 17th century.



Portrait of the Moorish Ambassador to Queen Elizabeth I.  
Oil on oak panel, 1600.

### Shakespeare Institute

The collections at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford include furniture, paintings, drawings and prints which furnish a magnificent Georgian town house and garden and the Johnson Library. The furniture is appropriate to the period of the house, and the pictures are largely of Shakespearean themes or portraits of former members of staff. An oil painting on panel from the sixteenth century, *The Portrait of Abd el-Ouahed ben Messaoud ben Mohammed Anoun, Moorish Ambassador to Queen Elizabeth I*, is thought to be the only known depiction of the man who inspired Shakespeare to write *Othello*. The Johnson Library houses several works of art including the beechwood sculpture *Lear* (1954) by Austin Wright and paintings of Shakespearean subjects by John Uzzell Edwards, *'When I was born the earth did shake...'* (1995) and *'Once more unto the breach'*. (1999)

### Furniture, fixtures and fittings

There are around 200 significant items of furniture, fixtures and fittings including original architectural fittings, carvings, plaques, garden ornamentation, fireplaces, staircases and windows within the many buildings in and around Edgbaston. Important pieces of furniture include some of the historic Mason Chairs, presented in the early twentieth century to the professors who held the original Professorial 'chairs' endowed by Josiah Mason, a desk made for George Fiedler, the first Professor of German, and the desk belonging to the original Barber Professor of Jurisprudence. Each of these are housed in relevant or accustomed places around campus.

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# What we do

Research and Cultural Collections is managed by the University Curator and the Assistant University Curator, with support and advice from academic experts in relevant departments, and a team of volunteers. The Biosciences Collections are solely managed by the staff of the School of Biosciences as listed on page 14.

## Exhibition and display

Objects from the permanent collections are displayed throughout the campus. Museum cases show objects which form a narrative through their relationship with each other, and interpretation panels and labels offer further information. We work with colleagues from the University's five Colleges in commissioning or investing in works of art to enhance their environment. Objects are also loaned in and out from other collections for exhibitions.

There is a popular programme of temporary exhibitions which are held in the Rotunda of the Aston Webb building. These renew and refresh interest in the permanent collections, relate to different subject areas and introduce the work of contemporary artists to the campus. We also host events relating to the exhibitions such as guest lectures, poetry readings and art 'happenings'.

## Collections management

There is a careful balance between use and care of the collections. Preventative conservation in the form of cleaning and monitoring prolongs the life of an artefact, and in consideration of this we work with conservators for

specialist treatments. The Collections are documented on the museum management system MIMSY XG, which is shared with the Barber Institute of Fine Arts and the Lapworth Museum of Geology. Research and Cultural Collections is registered as a museum with the MLA.

## Interpretation and accessibility

Those parts of the Research and Cultural Collections that are housed within teaching rooms and departments are open to the public by appointment only. However, in order to introduce them to a wider audience they are being made available online via the website [www.collectionsonline.bham.ac.uk](http://www.collectionsonline.bham.ac.uk). There is a Campus Sculpture Trail which provides highlights from the sculpture collection and other trails are being developed. We also offer guided tours and 'behind the scenes' talks.

While some collections on campus are of a specialist nature, all displays are organised to be generally and intelligently engaging to all, with informative labels.

Artists in residence are also invited to respond to the collections and offer alternative ways of interpreting them.

## Education and Outreach

The Research and Cultural Collections are used for current teaching modules and form the basis and inspiration for academic research. Staff of Research and Cultural Collections also provides lectures and seminars on aspects of museum studies for different departments and provide support and guidance for students studying aspects of the collections.

We host school and family workshops each year, featuring different aspects of the Collections and regularly take place in The Big Draw, in conjunction with the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Education department.

The Research and Cultural Collections provide a tangible example of the high quality of life, learning and environment that the University offers and provides an accessible way for Outreach programmes to encourage local school groups and communities to interact with the University.



Education and Outreach activities

**Student Project programme**

We host an active volunteer programme involving students from different disciplines across and outside the University, developing projects which are mutually beneficial. The students work on solo projects and in groups to gain valuable work experience for developing careers in the heritage sector.

# Visit us

Collections are open to the public **by prior appointment** with the school or department concerned. You can also visit us online at:

[www.rcc.bham.ac.uk](http://www.rcc.bham.ac.uk)

**Admission free**

## Staff

Dr James Hamilton  
University Curator

Clare Mullett  
Assistant University Curator

To search our collections online:

[www.collectionsonline.bham.ac.uk](http://www.collectionsonline.bham.ac.uk)

## Opening hours

Monday–Friday 10.00am–5.00pm

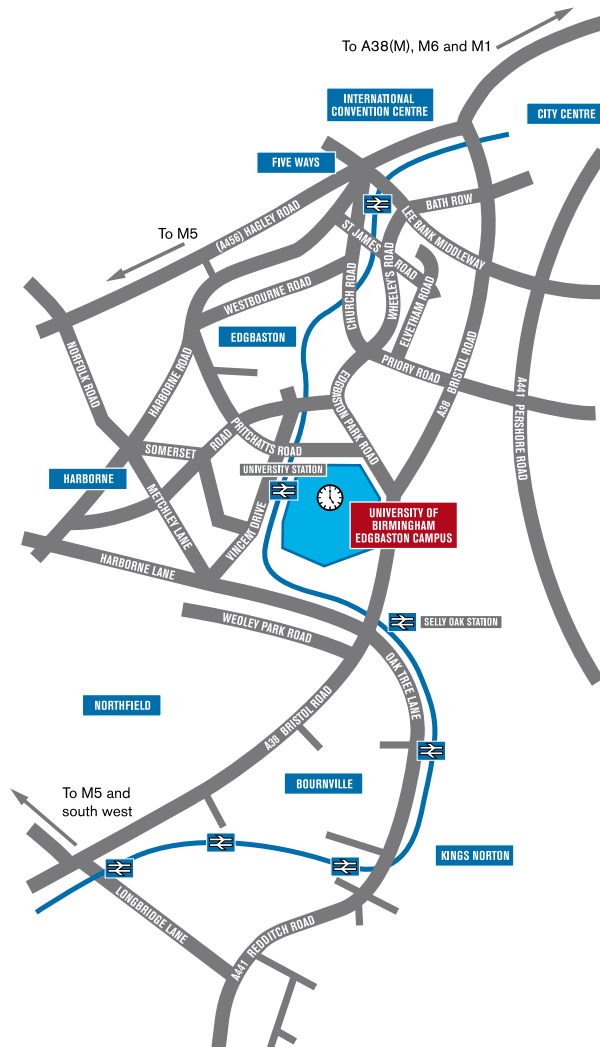
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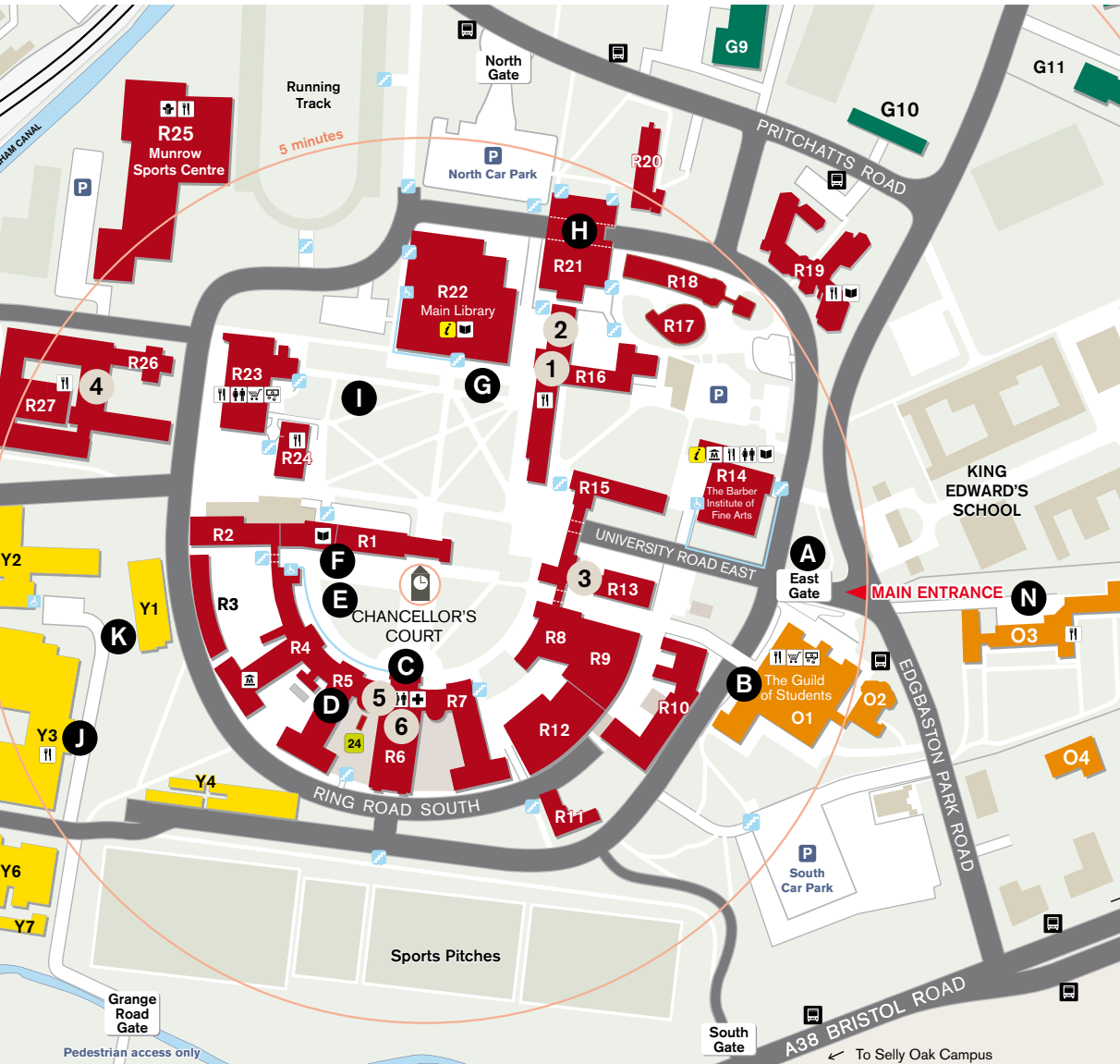
e: [rcc@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:rcc@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

[www.rcc.bham.ac.uk](http://www.rcc.bham.ac.uk)



## Collections

- 1 The Danford Collection of West African Art and Artefacts  
Arts Building, R16
- 2 The Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity Museum  
Arts Building, R16
- 3 Collection of Historic Physics Instruments  
Poynting Building, R13
- 4 The Biological Sciences Collection  
School of Biosciences, R26, R27
- 5 University Heritage Collection  
Aston Webb Building, R6
- 6 Rotunda – for temporary exhibitions  
Aston Webb Building, R6



## Sculpture

- A** **Workshop of John Nost the Elder**  
*Equestrian Statue of King George I*, 1717–1722. Barber Institute of Fine Arts
- B** **William James Bloye**  
*Mermaid Fountain*, 1961
- C** **Henry Pegram**  
*Beethoven, Virgil, Michelangelo, Plato, Shakespeare, Newton, Watt, Faraday and Darwin*, 1907
- D** **Alfred Drury**  
*King Edward VII*, 1912
- E** **Bernard Sindall**  
*Girl in a Hat*, 1972
- F** **Maker unknown**  
*Heraldic Shields from Mason College*, c. 1870–1880
- G** **Anthony Caro**  
*Scorched Flats*, 1974. On loan from the artist.
- H** **Pietro Magni**  
*Reading Girl*, 1861 (Located in Special Collections: the Cadbury Research Library).
- I** **Barbara Hepworth**  
*Ancestor I*, 1970. On loan from the Trustees of the Hepworth Estate.
- J** **William James Bloye**  
*Engineering Frieze*, 1954
- K** **Edward Bainbridge-Copnall**  
*The Wrestlers*, 1950
- L** **Eduardo Paolozzi**  
*Faraday*, 2000
- M** **Jacob Epstein**  
*Portrait bust of Dame Hilda Lloyd*, 1951
- N** **Michael Sandle**  
*Woman for Heidelberg*, 1987. On loan from the artist.

The Campus Collection of Fine and Decorative Art is dispersed throughout the campus

Text by Clare Mullett,  
Assistant University Curator

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