



**MUSEUM** *of the*  
**HISTORY** *of*  
**SCIENCE**

**1 August 2006 – 31 July 2007**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



# DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MUSEUM

## Opening Hours

With funding from the Renaissance programme of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Museum has extended its public opening hours to 30 per week, distributed as follows: Tuesday to Friday, 12-5; Saturday, 10-5; Sunday, 2-5. The weekday hours between 9 and 12 are available, as before, for educational visits and it can be helpful with school groups in particular that the galleries can be given over to the activities involved in visits. It is also useful for work such as constructing displays that one day (Monday) is available to staff without the problems and hazards of visitors being present.



## New Posts from Renaissance

The Renaissance programme of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council has been supporting the Museum's education service, principally by funding its education officers (one FTE). Now, in addition to funding the extension of the Museum's opening hours (see above), the programme has begun to fund an increase in the Conservator's employment to full-time and the creation of two new half-time posts: a web officer and an audience development officer. Renaissance funding to the Museum totaled over £64,000 in 2006-7.

## Museum Store

Major improvements were made to the Osney Store, with decoration, refurbishment and new lighting, the creation and equipping of a work area for cataloguing, photography, cleaning and packing, and the installation of new roller-racking as well as static storage units. This was a major project, involving a substantial commitment of expenditure and staff time, including the hiring of temporary staff to assist with cleaning and cataloguing, and the removal of a large section of the stored collection to temporary accommodation.

## Small Worlds

A new research project, 'Small Worlds', was begun in October with funding from the Designation Challenge Fund of the Museums, Archives and Libraries Council. Two research officers have been cataloguing and photographing the Museum's collection of microscopes and microscopical specimens, while a special exhibition, a website and a programme of educational events will concentrate on the challenge of presenting the collection of specimen slides in an engaging way for visitors and (via the internet) the wider public. Later in the year a web officer and two artists (visual artist Heather Barnett and performance poet Will Holloway) joined relevant members of staff on the project team, which met fortnightly throughout the year to monitor progress and plan the exhibition, website and programme of events for 2007-8.

## New Collections Management Software

After an extensive review of the collections management software in use in museums and a close assessment of our needs, it was decided to purchase KE EMu from KE Systems, a database programme with a large client base among major museums in the United Kingdom, including the group of public museums in Manchester and the Natural History Museum in South Kensington. Purchasing and installing the new system represented a major investment for the long-term care and management of the collection, covering cataloguing, locations, loans, conservation, photography, and the whole range of collections work, along with web-based access for public users. Training sessions were organised, and a series of staff seminars is continuing. The new system is now in use.

## Quarterly Programme, ART@MHS

As the programme of exhibitions, education activities and public events has expanded, a new design of quarterly leaflet was introduced in October. It includes such additional features as gallery plans, current loans and featured instruments. The second issue, in January, included several art events - an increasingly common aspect of the programme - and they fell naturally into a section given the title 'ART@MHS'. So far that has been the case each quarter and, without a special effort to fill it, that section of the programme has survived.

## Visitor Figures

The numbers of visitors, both real and 'virtual', increased very significantly.

The number of visitors to the Museum was 97,066

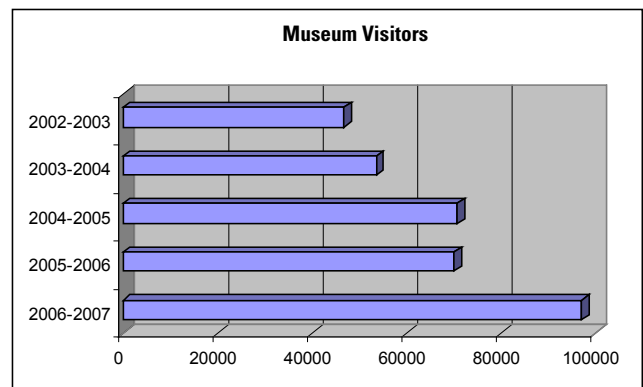
(numbers in previous years were:

2005-6: 70,131

2004-5: 70,791

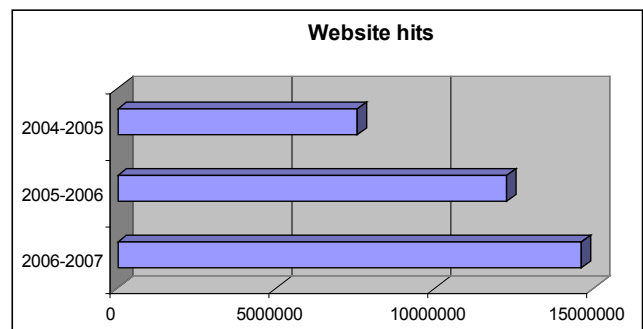
2003-4: 53,796

2002-3: 46,838)



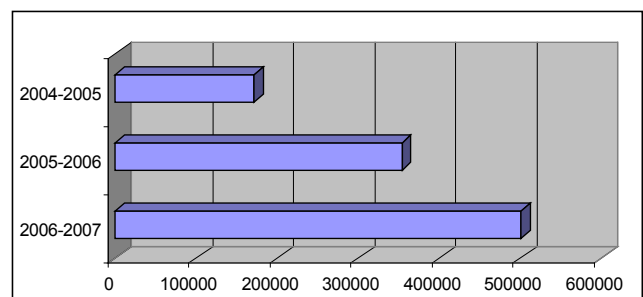
The number of website 'hits' was 14,622,577

(up from 12,264,300 in 2005-6 and 7,560,681 in 2004-5)



The number of unique users of the website was 500,700

(up from 353,830 in 2005-6, and 171,301 in 2004-5)



## STAFF

Laura Ashby was appointed to the new half-time post of Audience Development Officer; Elizabeth Bruton to the new half-time post of Web Officer. The contracted hours of the Museum's Conservator Cheryl Wolfe were extended to full time. Meg Zeyfert was appointed as a maternity leave replacement for Education Officer (Primary) Michelle Holloway. Alicia Chiu resigned as Clerical Officer and was replaced by Corrina Connor. Librarian Andrew Hudson was appointed Librarian of Regents Park College and was replaced by Gemma Wright. The 'Small Worlds' project created three new temporary posts: two research officers (Vince Mason and Ben Mersey) and a part-time IT Officer (Elizabeth Bruton). Dr Johnston was granted sabbatical leave from January to March and Dr Bennett from April to June (when Dr Johnston was Acting Director).

## TEACHING

The Museum's M.Sc course in 'History of Science: Instruments, Museums, Science, Technology' took place again this year (after a break in 2005-6) but for only one student. Being taught and examined entirely within the Museum, it represents a substantial teaching commitment for Dr Bennett and Dr Johnston and with declining numbers of students applying, it no longer seems an effective way to deploy the Museum's staff resources. It was decided that in future the Museum's graduate teaching, at the Master's level will be offered within the MSc organised by the Professor of the History of Science, and that a new undergraduate course, 'Nature and Art in the Renaissance', will have a substantial component from the Museum. Dr Bennett and Dr Johnston were involved with planning this new course, which will replace 'Gunpowder, Compass and Printing-Press'. Dr Johnston organised and taught the 'Gunpowder' course in what will be its final year, while Dr Bennett was examiner, setting the examination and marking the scripts.

Dr Bennett supervised three DPhil students. He was examiner for one DPhil thesis and for one transfer to DPhil student status.

The undergraduates and masters students in History of Art visited the Museum for a tour of the collections and Dr Bennett and Dr Johnston both offered tutorials on objects in the collection.

# COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

## Collections Management

The improvements to the store have included the refurbishment of the entrance area to create a work space, increasing the number of electrical sockets, up-grading of part of the lighting system, installation of mobile shelving and small object storage cabinets, palletising and relocation of heavy objects, cleaning, inventorying, shelf rearrangement and protection of objects. Movement of material was required to and from temporary storage at Central Chemistry (library and archive material), and within the store to allow the work to proceed. Further planning for future storage at Nuneham Courtenay involved discussions with and escorted visits by the new project managers, Frankhams.

In line with an increasing focus on the stored collection, relevant staff have been spending significantly more time at the store. An Emergency Plan for the store has also been completed, alongside improvement in procedures for dealing with hazardous material. An update of the Emergency Plan for the main building was also completed.

Managing the flood threat at the Southwell Building and Osney Mead following excessive July rains created both additional work and anxiety, but we escaped without flooding.

The cataloguing work associated with the new research project, 'Small Worlds', began in October, the principal task of the two research officers being to catalogue (or re-catalogue) and photograph the Museum's large collection of microscopes and microscopic specimens. Most (though not all) of the microscopes had been catalogued before, but not photographed; the specimens had been neither catalogued nor photographed.

Collections staff have led the way in the use of the new collections management system, KE EMu, and have worked to become familiar with the improved procedures and expanded potential it offers. The evaluation of alternative database systems involved study visits to Manchester Museums (EMu), the Royal College of Surgeons (Adlib) and the Ashmolean Museum (MuseumPlus), as well as systematically reviewing our requirements for collections management elements. Following installation, work was needed in tidying and cleaning database entries, as well as training in the use of the new system. The object records have been transferred and KE EMu, adapted to the requirements of the Museum, is now in daily use.

The arrival of the clocks for the 'Time and Place' exhibition occasioned a great deal of condition reporting, etc, while winding them throughout the duration of the exhibition was also time-consuming.

Work in other areas included some progress towards the regularisation of long-term loans out, reconciling paperwork on recent accessions and minor revisions to the Accessions and Acquisitions Policy. Loan administration in general continued to be a major commitment.

Initial work has been done to identify hazardous material (radioactive material, asbestos, mercury, poisons, lead) in the collections, in liaison with Safety Office, resulting in dedicated labelling and notification on the database. Initial sorting and identification of material held at Examination Schools has begun, with a view to identifying hazards and informing subsequent decisions on retention, disposal or relocation to the Museum or Osney Store.

Revision of the paperwork required for more efficient loans management is nearing completion. A revised policy on long-term loans out is now in place, while significant progress has been made with regularising agreements and terms and conditions for such loans in line with the new policy.

The Collections Manager, Lucy Blaxland joined the MLA South East Emergency Response Team. She took part in the 'Behind the Façade' project organised through the University Museums Education team, demonstrating the work of a Collections Manager, including object handling, to a group of young people with disabilities. She attended the following training courses: 'Disposals, Loans' Midlands Museums Group Birmingham 'Object Handling & Packing', Museums Association, Manchester Museum 'Documentation Essentials', MLA South Region, Horsham Museum Emergency Response Unit training, MLA South East, Standlake

## Acquisitions

With the temporary closure of the store for refurbishment, etc, the number of acquisitions was relatively small, but there were some very significant additions to the collection:

**Architectonic sector to the design of Thomas Carwitham, c.1730, by Thomas Heath,** purchased with the assistance of a grant from the PRISM Fund administered by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

**Tintometer colour comparator, by J. W. Lovibond, Salisbury, late 19th century,** gift from Dr Robert Anderson

**A set of printed astrolabe sheets (including two paper astrolabes) by Adriaan Zeelst of Liège, 1602,** purchased with the assistance of a grant from the PRISM Fund

**A triangular quadrant, possibly by John Browne, London, 17th century**

Significant research access to the collection was arranged for:

James Evans, early astrolabes

Denis Roegel, Babbage machine

Harry Williams, Morse key

Stanley Warren, Peter's machine

Scott Wolter, astrolabe

David Young, parallel rules

Julian Holland, microtome

Catherine Hilliard and Ruth Ogden, Pointer natural history collection

Simon Baker and Dawn Ades, micrographs



Architectonic Sector (Carwitham Pattern), by Thomas Heath, London, c. 1720-30

## Loans out



Jevons' Logic Machine

Jevons' Logic Machine to the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Australia, for 'The Curious Economist: William Stanley Jevons in Sydney', October 2004 to October 2005, extended to November 2006.

Brunel's surveying sextant and box sextant lent to the SS Great Britain, Bristol, for 'Nine Lives of I.K. Brunel', 29 March to 5 November 2006

Oxford Astrolabe, by W. Watson & Sons, Ltd, 1925

Noonday Cannon & Horizontal Dial, by J. L. Morzieres, Paris, 19th century

Equinoctial Dial, by A Vogler, Augsburg, 18th century

Planetarium Orrery, by Giovanni Savoj, Florence, 1779

Orrery, English, early 19th century

Celestial Globe, Unsigned, Indo-Persian?, Modern?

to the Museum of Oxford for 'Exploring Space', 16 September 2006 to 28 January 2007

Astronomical Compendium by Ulrich Schniep, 1566

Set of Drawing Instruments, unsigned, Italian, 16th century

Armillary Sphere, Italian, c.1500

Astrolabe by Giovanni Domenico Fecoli, 1558

to the Victoria & Albert Museum for 'At Home in Renaissance Italy', 5 October to 7 January 2007



Brunel's surveying sextant

Model of the structure of penicillin, by Dorothy Hodgkin et al., Oxford, 1940s, to the Hunterian Museum, Royal College of Surgeons for 'Inside out: the body imaging sculptures of Angela Palmer', 30 January to 19 May 2007

Surveyor's folding rule, by Humfrey Cole, London, 1575

Altazimuth theodolite, by Humfrey Cole, London, 1586

to the British Museum for 'A New World: England's first view of America', 15 March to 17 June 2007.



Model of the structure of penicillin

A new, renewable loan out was made:

Goldsworthy Gurney's oxy-hydrogen blowpipe, by Newman, London, c.1830

to Gurney Gallery display, The Castle Heritage Centre and Gallery, Bude, opening 29 July 2007

Renewable loans out were continued to:

Museum of Oxford

National Maritime Museum

Museum of Science & Industry, Manchester

Jenner Museum

Science Museum

Hunterian Museum, Royal College of Surgeons

Sheldonian Theatre



A Persian astrolabe, c.1650

A Persian astrolabe, c.1650 and Qibla indicator and sundial, 18th century was lent to the Ashmolean Museum for the exhibition 'Pilgrimage – The Sacred Journey', 10 January – 2 April 2006

## **Loans in**

66 clocks from 29 lenders

for 'Time and Place: English Provincial Clocks 1640-1800', 25 November 2006 to 15 April 2007

Sculpture by Marilène Oliver

for 'Discovering Leonardo', 11 September to 14 November 2006

16 watercolours by Rebecca Hind

for 'moonscope', 24 May to 16 September 2007

The loan in of a selection of the Tradescant Collection from the Ashmolean Museum was extended to December 2008.

## **Conservation**

Conservation of 75 objects was completed, 14 being for loans out. The objects on open display were cleaned 4 times during the year. 175 condition audits were entered on the database and 296 condition reports were linked to EMu. Environmental conditions in the gallery and stores were monitored electronically, while the manual monitoring of insect pests led to action in two offices.

A PRISM conservation grant has been awarded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council for the Museum's very important longcase clock by Fromanteel and arrangements agreed for its conservation in two outside studios, one for the case, one for the movement.

The Conservator (Cheryl Wolfe) attended a 2-day training course in Birmingham on dealing with hazardous materials in museum collections.



## LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

The Librarian, Andrew Hudson, left the museum in January to become Librarian of Regent's Park College. His replacement, Gemma Wright, previously of the Taylor Institution Library, was appointed in February.

Before taking up his new post, Andrew Hudson catalogued many of the Radcliffe Tracts and small books in the pamphlets collection onto OLIS. He also catalogued the books kept for the library from last year's Millburn bequest onto OLIS. The Library's holdings on OLIS now number nearly 11,600, with 1,891 items added this year. Work has begun on accessioning the Millburn bequest and cataloguing it on the in-house database. The total number of accessions this year was 197, the majority of which were donated or bequeathed. 214 items were added to the in-house database.

The series of library and archives exhibitions continued in the basement gallery (the details are given in the Exhibitions section of the Report). For parts of the year the library was used as a base of researchers for the 'Small Worlds' project, and staff for the 'KE Emu' project.

Work on the library building has continued: part of the glass brick wall in the reading room was demolished and rebuilt to prevent damp, and the roof was re-lined to prevent leaks. This has improved the leakage and flooding situation to the extent that the collections are not at significant risk, but not entirely solved it. The library now has an official sign with the University crest outside the entrance.

The librarian has started a process of managing the physical collections, which includes cleaning and sorting the books, and evaluating the classification and location of material. Through this task, some of the books which were recorded 'missing' in the recent stock checks have come to light. The archivist has been aiding the effort to rationalise the collections by evaluating the library material stored off-site and arranging the off-site shelves. It is hoped that as the library settles into its relatively new surroundings, the collection will remain as accessible as possible. We have received compliments from readers about the speed of our book retrieval service, compared to the hours or even days that some items take to get from the Bodleian stacks.

There were 108 loans to staff and students this year. Around 5,700 photocopies were made. Visitors to the library were mainly students from various disciplines, and museum staff. There were also many members of the public and external researchers interested in various parts of the collection. Enquiries continue to be received, mostly in person or via email, but also by telephone and letter, from the UK and various parts of the world.

Archival work has been a significant part of the refurbishment and improvement of the store, with material formerly in the Clarendon Building now accommodated in the Osney Store, having been temporarily placed in Central Chemistry.

Researchers using the archival and manuscript material have included:

Patrick Wallis, Dr James's fever powder MS

Sherrie Palmer, Dollond MSS

John Jones, penicillin document

Richard Dunn, Gabb MSS

Carolyn Cook, medical sketchbooks

Ann Christie, Herschel photos

Margaret Harrigan, Herschel photos

# PUBLIC PROGRAMME, EXHIBITIONS, OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

## Exhibitions

The exhibition, **'Wireless World: Marconi and the making of radio'** (mentioned in the previous annual report), closed on 1 October. The display of a substantial part of the Tradescant Collection continued in the gallery it occupied in the 17th century, while redevelopment continued at the Ashmolean Museum.

**'Leonardo and the Mathematical Arts'** was the Museum's contribution to 5 linked exhibitions in the University, 'Leonardo and Oxford: discovering the world of Leonardo in Oxford's collections'. The MHS exhibition ran from 9 August to 5 November, and was accompanied by a leaflet and a programme of workshops, tours and talks.

**'Time and Place: English country clocks, 1600-1840'** ran from 25 November until 15 April. The exhibition was the Museum's second collaboration with the Antiquarian Horological Society, focusing on this occasion on clocks by provincial English makers. 66 clocks from private collections were borrowed for display, providing visitors with an opportunity to see clocks of the greatest interest and variety, that would never normally be on display. It was particularly instructive to see what was being produced far from the metropolis in 17th-century England. A catalogue and an issue of Broadsheet were published, the former by the Society, and a parallel programme of public events was arranged. The Society held its annual conference in Oxford to coincide with the exhibition, and Dr Bennett gave an invited lecture.



The subsequent exhibition in the Special Exhibition Gallery was **'moonscope'**, which displayed lunar images by two artists – one from the 18th century (John Russell) and a contemporary painter (Rebecca Hind). Here too there was an issue of Broadsheet and a programme of public events.

At the invitation of the Royal Society, the Museum contributed an abbreviated version of its former exhibition **'Bye Bye Blackboard'** to their Summer Science Exhibition 2007, and published an issue of Broadsheet. The opportunity to contribute to the event at Carlton House Terrace, which the Royal Society offers as science's answer to the Royal Academy's Summer Show, and which is attended by many distinguished guests at evening receptions, as well as by the general public, was an important occasion in the Museum's history.



Smaller exhibitions included **'Leonardo's Great Lady'** (centring on a contemporary sculpture by Marilène Oliver), a selection of the **Museum's calendars** (a traditional new-year event), **'Fire'** (including our outstanding collection of matches), **'Vision'** (an intervention by artist Roma Tearne), and **'Faces of Oxfordshire'** (on Oxfordshire clocks). Exhibitions by the library and archives staff were on Leonardo da Vinci, on **'The Board of Longitude and Eighteenth-Century Horology'**, and on recent additions to the manuscript and archival collections, chosen to illustrate the variety of material we acquire and help preserve, including medical sketchbooks, an important manuscript on the structure of penicillin by Sir Robert Robinson, and material from the Millburn bequest.



## Education Service



This year's education programme has continued to develop and is attracting a steadily increasing number of visits from school groups from both primary and secondary sectors as well as other FE and university student groups. During the period January to July of 2007 there were 52 separate visits booked by schools compared with 33 in the same period of 2006.

Within the Primary schools' programme, the 'Tudor Ships' session has continued to prove a successful session for Primary Schools whilst Michelle Holloway has further developed 'The Measurers' and an outline for a new session, 'Meet the Museum', designed to introduce young visitors to the museum environment. Michelle has continued to support the provision of workshops for home education groups developing sustainable relationships with Home Education group organisers in the Oxford area.



During the initial period of Michelle's maternity leave (from the end of March '07), Chris Parkin took over the provision of Primary sessions until Meg Zeyfert was appointed and began work in June. Chris experimented with sessions addressing part of the Science curriculum, 'The Earth and Beyond', with trails and activities involving modelling sundials. This has since led to a new session on offer in the Primary programme.



The museum has continued to contribute to the introduction of Brookes University PGCE students undergoing teacher training to museums as a resource for education.

Over the second year of the Secondary schools' programme, co-ordinated by Chris Parkin, there has been a steady increase in the number of secondary school visits despite the universally recognised difficulties of attracting visits from this sector. An encouraging sign has been the repeat visit of several school groups with the same teachers. These are mainly science teachers, but there has been renewed interest from history teachers in relation to the GCSE Schools' History Project component, 'Medicine through Time', drawing on the sessions on 'Penicillin' and 'Surgery and Anatomy in the Seventeenth Century'.



Astronomy has also been a popular theme with science groups which has included the session on 'The Astrolabe' developed alongside last year's special exhibition on the astrolabe. This has also been offered as a session in the university's admissions department's 'Access' scheme to attract able GCSE students from a wider range of backgrounds and to groups of students visiting the Physics Department under the Sutton Trust scheme.

In addition to regular work with school groups, about 70 students from schools in the Oxford area attended a third sixth form 'study day' on the subject of 'Astrophysics', a special topic in several of the A-level Physics syllabuses, was organised by the Museum in March using lecture facilities in the Physics Department. The Sixth Form Study days have now become a well established part of the Museum's secondary programme and provide an excellent opportunity for students to gain access to the expertise of university academics and to link with the Museum's collection.

In addition to organising school visits, the Museum's education staff are responsible for the 'Family Friendly' programme, including this year the 'Paper Moon' day, detailed under 'Public Events' below.

Two special projects were undertaken by the education staff. 'Parallel Worlds' was a community project carried out in collaboration with the artist, Katy Beinart funded by the Arts Council under the 'Art Plus' scheme. The focus for the project was an investigation and portrayal of the several different cultural worlds encompassed by the City of Oxford. The Museum provided a context for

exploring an aspect of the University world of learning and the participants, mainly children from the Blackbird Leys area of Oxford, were involved in activities at the museum featuring optical instruments such as the camera obscura and telescope. On a follow-up visit, the children were treated to a Victorian style magic lantern show which included slides they had created themselves in response to the project. Their work subsequently formed part of an exhibition at the OVADA Gallery.

The Museum participated in this year's extended schools project working with the Isis group of Oxford schools based at the Oxford Community School. The extended schools initiative aims to encourage children to pursue learning enrichment beyond the school environment and school day. The theme, 'Sequence and Symmetry', provided the opportunity for a number of children from East Oxford to experience aspects of the museum's collection in relation to mathematical themes. A handling session at the school provided an opportunity to use the new loan box, and this was subsequently followed by a visit to the museum. Involving the Art Education Officer, Adrian Brooks, the children created their own art work which featured in an exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum.

## Programme of public events

Four quarterly programme leaflets were printed and distributed; two further leaflets announced events linked to special exhibitions. In addition to more unusual events, a programme of frequent gallery talks, exhibition talks and 'table talks' was offered throughout the year.



The Museum held its fourth '10/10 Day' on 23 September, with a programme of activities under the title '**10/10 Wave**', to link with the Marconi exhibition. The speakers were:

Daniel Mitchell, 'A history of the wave theory of light'

Dr John Darwin, 'Britannia Rules: a very short history of the seaborne British Empire'

Andrew Smith, 'Tsunami: after the wave'

Dr Graham Sinden, 'Wave power'

Dr Clare Pollard, 'Hokusai's Great Wave'

Howard Dawes, 'Wheatstone's mechanical waves'

Brian Hawes, 'Could radio waves cross the Atlantic c.1900?'

Professor Anthony Bailey, 'Brainwaves'

Rachel Chambers, 'Surfing: the search for the perfect wave'.

There were special displays, demonstrations, activities for families, films, music and tours from 10 am till 10 pm.



A '**Clockfest**', linked to the 'Time and Place' exhibition, was held on 10 March, with talks, tours, family activities, and clock advice from visiting experts.



Two special Saturdays were linked to the 'moonscope' exhibition. Along with children's activities, storytelling, film and music on a '**Paper Moon**' day, there were talks from:

Dr Nick Campion, 'Moon, Myth and Meaning'

Dr Christiana Payne, 'Visions of Moonlight' (on Joseph Wright of Derby)

Adam Ford, 'Midnight Moonscapes' (lunar mapping).

The day included a drawing activity in which visitors created a magnificent 'moon mobile' which hung down the length of the stairwell, and a poetry competition.

A similar formula was used for a '**Blue Moon**' day on 30 June, when a blue moon – a second full moon in a calendar month – very fortunately occurred on a Saturday. There were talks by:

Silke Ackermann, 'Moon, Men and Mansions: Lunar Astrology'

Gemma Wright, 'The Trouble with Blue Moons'

Dr Stephen Johnston, 'The Great Moon Hoax.'



A fifth '10/10 Day' was held on 7 July (07/07/07), when the title was '**10/10 Seven**'. There were activities, tours, music (Haydn's 'Seven Last Words') and film, together with a 'Shakespearean Karaoke' on the 'Seven Ages of Man'. The talks were:

Dr Stephen Clucas, 'Seven Days in the Week'

Dr Elizabeth Baigent, 'Seven Seas'

Dr Erica Charters, 'Seven Years War'

Canon Brian Mountford, 'Seven Deadly Sins'

Dr Stuart Judge, 'Seven Colours of the Rainbow'

Jack Flavell, 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom'

Professor Michael Vickers, 'Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.'

On the same day the Museum contributed to the 'Alice's Day' activities in collaboration with many of the County's museums.





Public lectures linked to special exhibitions were as follows:

Marilène Oliver and Francis Wells, 'Practitioners of Art and Medicine', 30 October

Dr Jeff Darken, 'English Country Clocks', 6 February

Other public lectures were:

Andrew Robinson, 'Thomas Young', 21 November (in the 'Between the Lines' series on accessible books in the history of science)

Professor Philip Steadman, 'Vermeer and the Camera Obscura', 27 February

Professor Keith Thomson, 'Dr Plot's Dilemma: what on earth is a fossil?'

Other events included an afternoon for **'Radio Collectables'** and a **'Holy Roman Empire'** trail.

An unusual event was a performance of **'Who was Guglielmo Marconi?'**, a live presentation of three aspects of Marconi's character and achievement, with the audience invited to choose between them. A Leonardo Study Day was held in collaboration with the Ashmolean Museum and Christ Church Picture Gallery.



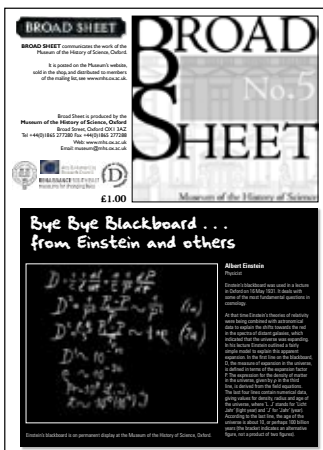
On 23 March an event was organised by Roma Tearne of Brookes University, funded by an arts award from AHRC, which involved blindfolding the stone heads outside the Museum and the Museum Director appearing blindfolded on the roof. The event was videoed by Roma Tearne, who organised a discussion on **'Truth in Art and Fiction'** at the Museum that evening.

This year's contribution to the European **'Night of Museums'** on 19 May was **'The Dark Side of the Moon'**: a programme of performance, talks and films.



An unusual and popular event, on 24 July, was the successful attempt by Alexis Lemaire on the world record for the fastest mental calculation of the 13th root of randomly-generated 200 digit number.

The programme of **'Family Friendly'** activities offered 30 events, including new material on clocks, fire, Leonardo, electricity, navigation, and the moon. The programme has now established itself in a regular pattern every other Saturday alternating between taught, structured workshops and less formal 'drop-in' activities. Particularly successful workshops have included 'Make a model Orrery', 'Pick a Pocket Sundial', 'Tick Tock Clockwork', and 'Spice Raiders'. These continue to book up on a regular basis and have established a unique position in the overall University Museums' family friendly programme providing an 'in depth' experience suitable for older children. Drop-in activities such as 'Time Trail' and 'The Easter Mystery Trail' have also continued to feature in the programme providing for a wide range of family audiences. Increasing co-ordination between the museums has meant that MHS has continued to contribute to cross-museum events such as the 'Wow How' science day organised at the OUM and to the training programme for volunteers organised by the Volunteers' Co-ordinator, Flora Bain.



The Museum again hosted an evening in the 'Headstart' programme for school pupils interested in applying to Oxford from schools with no such tradition.

Four issues were added to the Museum's new publication series, Broadsheet:

'Time and Place: English country clocks, 1600-1840'

'Chasing Venus: a photo narrative by Roma Tearne'

'John Russell: portraying the moon'

'Bye Bye Blackboard ... from Einstein and others'

Group visits remained at the high level (222) recorded for the previous year, comprising: schools, 100

further education, 56

higher education, 33

other, 33

## Other Outreach

A new on-line exhibition, '**Science in Islam**' was added to our website: it is intended for use in secondary schools.



Major improvements and additions have been made to the education resources offered on our website. The four new issues of Broadsheet have been added to the website.

Dr Bennett contributed to 'In Our Time' on Radio 4, and to a programme on the Museum for the Russian service of the BBC World Service. He and Dr Johnston promoted the Museum's public programme on Radio Oxford.

The traditional Museum party was held on Ashmole's birthday, 23 May.

## CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE

The Museum organised and hosted a research seminar series in Trinity Term 2007; the speakers were Thad Parsons (University of Oxford), Professor David Gooding (University of Bath), Dr Stephen Johnston (Museum of the History of Science), Professor Michael Cooper (University College London), Dr Gloria Clifton (National Maritime Museum).

Dr Bennett was one of the organisers of a history of science conference held from 27 to 29 September in Oxford (partly at the Museum) to mark the retirement of Professor Robert Fox.

Dr Johnston was one of the organisers of a conference in Oxford on the history of architecture in early-modern Europe in relation to geometry and instrumentation, on 19 and 20 March, the first day being held at the Museum.

Dr Johnston submitted a successful application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a project entitled 'Architecture, Mathematics and English Culture, 1550-1750'. This will support a research officer for one year, the construction of a website, the publication of a book and the mounting of a public exhibition.

The Museum hosted a study day visit for the Ashmolean Museum, and the meetings of the Society for the History of Medieval Technology and Science. It continued to host the websites of this society, the Scientific Instrument Society and the Scientific Instrument Commission of the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science, and to host and administer the much-used and valued 'rete' bulletin board for the instrument history community. It also hosted a reception for museum volunteers across the University, which included a talk by Dr Bennett.

Dr Bennett served on the trustee committee of the Science Museum, the Peer Review College of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the 'A' Awards Committee of the Royal Astronomical Society, and the Board of Visitors for the Pitt Rivers Museum. He contributed, by invitation, to the planning of a proposed museum studies course at Imperial College. He spent time in Florence working, by invitation, on a catalogue of the mathematical instruments in the Museo di Storia della Scienza. He was a member of the Library Committee of the Royal Society, and served on the editorial boards of the journals *Nuncius*, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, and *Science and Irish Culture*. He was invited to a reception for science at Buckingham Palace.

Dr Johnston served on the committee of the Scientific Instrument Society and the editorial board of *Scientific Instruments and Collections*.



## **Dr Bennett gave the following lectures and seminars:**

- 13 September 'Christopher Middleton and the Practice of Navigation, 1730-50', Scientific Instrument Commission, Krakow
- 29 September with Stephen Johnston, 'Access, Display and Teaching at the Museum of the History of Science', History Faculty, Oxford
- 12 October 'Collecting and Conserving', Imperial College
- 19 October 'Wind-gun, air-gun, or pop-gun: the fortunes of a philosophical instrument', Science Museum
- 24 October 'Presenting Science: a cultural approach', Museum's Association Conference, Bournemouth
- 26 October 'Imagining the Death of the King: an unlikely application of pneumatics in 1794', Institute of Physics meeting in Bath
- 18 November 'Mathematics at Home: personal astronomical instruments in the Renaissance', Victoria and Albert Museum
- 30 November 'Communication and diversity in scientific culture: what do galleries offer?' Lorentz Institute, University of Leiden
- 30 January 'Christopher Wren', Cambridge University Historical Society
- 12 February 'Sundials from Renaissance Florence', Cheltenham Italian Society
- 13 February 'Scientific Instruments and their Ambiguities', History of Art Seminar, Oxford
- 23 February 'Science and Public Life in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: the case of Thomas Romney Robinson', 'Keynote Lecture', Communities of Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: science, culture society, meeting at the Humanities Institute of Ireland, University College Dublin
- 24 March 'The Brief Infamy of Thomas Upton: 'Citizen', Watchmaker and Inventor of the Pop-Gun Plot, 1794-6', invited lecture to the Antiquarian Horological Society
- 11 May 'Instruments', Preserving the UK's Astronomical Heritage, Royal Astronomical Society
- 25 May 'Should Collections Set the Research Agenda for the History of Science', Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm
- 26 July 'Renaissance Science', public lecture, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

## Dr Johnston gave the following lectures and seminars:

- 10 September 'Science, satire and the architectonic sector', XXV Scientific Instrument Symposium, Krakow
- 29 September 'Access and display at the Museum of the History of Science: a retrospective view', Foxfest, Faculty of History, Oxford
- 14 October 'Leonardo and the art of mathematics', Leonardo and Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
- 16 November 'History of Science in the Museum: Public Space and Virtual Presence', IX Meeting on History of Science and Technology, Societat Catalana d'Història de la Ciència i de la Tècnica, Girona
- 19 December 'The Peculiarities of the English: Architecture and Instruments in the 18th Century', Oxford University Museums and Collections Histories Group
- 19 March 'Fit for a King? Architecture, Instruments and Audience in 18th-century England', Geometrical Objects: Architecture and the Mathematical Sciences, 1400-1800, Oxford
- 9 May 'The Needle and the Dial: Thomas Digges on Magnetism as Mathematics', Museum of the History of Science, Oxford
- 17 May 'Thomas Harriot and the English Experience of Navigation', annual Thomas Harriot lecture, Oriel College, Oxford
- 18 July 'The Astrolabe, East and West', International Astronomical Union Symposium 245, Oxford

## Staff Publications

Jim Bennett, 'Catadioptrics and Commerce in Eighteenth-Century London', *History of Science*, 44 (2006), 247-78

Jim Bennett, 'European Science Museums and the Museum Boerhaave' in Marian Fournier, ed, *75 jaar Museum Boerhaave* (Leiden, 2006), 73-8

Jim Bennett, 'The Mechanical Arts', in Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston, eds, *The Cambridge History of Science*. Volume 3. Early Modern Science (Cambridge and New York, 2006), 673-95

Jim Bennett, 'Scientific Knowledge', in M. Ajmar-Wollheim and F. Dennis, eds, *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2006), 172-3

Jim Bennett, "'Braggers that by showe of their instrument win credit": the Errors of Edward Worsop', in Liba Taub and Frances Willmoth, eds, *The Whipple Museum of the History of Science: Instruments and Interpretations* (Cambridge, 2006), 79-94

Stephen Johnston, 'Reading rules: artefactual evidence for mathematics and craft in early-modern England', in Liba Taub and Frances Willmoth, eds, *The Whipple Museum of the History of Science: Instruments and Interpretations* (Cambridge, 2006)

Tony Simcock, 'Early Photographs at the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford', *The PhotoHistorian*, no.149, January 2007.