



# ASHMOLEAN

## ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM AND WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD

### SACKLER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP ON THE HISTORY OF CONSERVATION AT THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

#### FURTHER PARTICULARS

Worcester College, in conjunction with the Ashmolean Museum, invites applications from suitable qualified candidates for a Research Fellowship, to be held at the Ashmolean Museum, for a period of three years. The appointment will commence on 1 October 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

#### **Worcester College**

There are 38 self-governing and independent colleges at Oxford, giving both academic staff and students the benefits of belonging to a small, interdisciplinary community as well as to a large, internationally-renowned institution. The collegiate system fosters a strong sense of community, bringing together leading academics and students across subjects, and from different cultures and countries.

Worcester College occupies the site of Gloucester College, founded in 1283 for monks from the Abbey of St Peter, Gloucester. It was re-founded as Worcester College in 1714, following a benefaction by Sir Thomas Cookes, Bt., from Worcestershire. The original Benedictine site was large, and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century additions to it have resulted in the College occupying some twenty-six acres. The gardens were laid out to include a lake in the early nineteenth century, and the adjoining sports field was reclaimed from drained water meadows in the late nineteenth century. The mixture of architectural styles, set amongst landscaped, wooded gardens and grounds, make Worcester one of the most attractive colleges in Oxford.

The College is fortunate in having a number of endowed Research Fellowships in particular subjects: the Kadas Senior Research Fellowship in Geopolitics; the Isenberg Junior Research Fellowship in 20<sup>th</sup> Century English & American Literature; the Scott Opler Junior Research Fellowship in Architectural History. The Sackler Research Fellowship is funded by a generous grant from the Sackler Foundation. In each cycle, it is tenable in a different department of the Ashmolean Museum, with which the College has strong links (each Director, including the current one, Dr Xa Sturgis, has been made a Fellow of the College).

More information about the college may be found at: [www.worc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.worc.ox.ac.uk).

#### **Ashmolean Museum**

The Ashmolean is the University of Oxford's museum of art and archaeology, founded in 1683. The Ashmolean has been described as "unquestionably the finest university museum in the world" (The Times, October 29th, 2009).

The Ashmolean's collections are extraordinarily diverse, representing most of the world's great civilisations, with objects dating from 8000 BC to the present day. Among many riches is the world's greatest collection of Raphael drawings, the most important collection of Egyptian pre-Dynastic sculpture and ceramics outside Cairo, the only great Minoan collection in Britain, outstanding Anglo-Saxon treasures, and the foremost collection of modern Chinese painting in the Western world. These world class collections are used for teaching and research purposes both within the University and in the worldwide academic and research communities. Above all, the Ashmolean is a great public Museum, open to all without charge.

## **The Conservation Department**

For over 300 years, conservation and preservation have played a significant role in the Ashmolean Museum and the history of the collections. A suitable environment in the new museum was a concern of the founder, Elias Ashmole, who specified *'the building of some large roome, which may have Chimnies to keep those things aired that stand in need of it'* and restoration in one form or another has been carried out on parts of the collection for centuries.

In 1905 the Ashmolean established its first purpose-built conservation laboratory for the department of Antiquities under the newly appointed restorer William Young. He signalled the transition in conservation from the craft of restoration to the science of conservation that had begun to develop. His son, William Jnr, went on to found the first objects conservation laboratory at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Further conservation posts were created in the Museum's Cast Gallery and in the Eastern and Western Art Departments during the century.

In 1999, the individual conservators were brought together to form a single Department of Conservation for the whole museum.

A new conservation studio for works of art on paper was opened in 2004, and in 2009 a suite of new conservation studios opened for the conservation of paintings, objects, textiles and preventive conservation. The 2009 redevelopment of the museum also included two new permanent public galleries dedicated to conservation and the history of conservation. Today the department is a dynamic and busy one playing a key role in the museum's vision 'To be in every way the world's greatest university museum of art and archaeology'.

## **Overview of the Role**

The Sackler Research Fellow will be based in the Ashmolean's Conservation Department over the three years of the Sackler Research Fellowship and will research the preservation history of the museum. The research will concentrate on a history of conservation and restoration through the records and practices, collections and staff, building on existing work carried out in the department and on display in the Restoring the Past Gallery.

As well as adding to this new and growing area of research into the history of conservation, outputs are likely to include: an audit of conservation and preservation documentation and practices that will form the basis of an integrated conservation database; a history of materials and techniques for use when assessing or treating works from the collections; information that will inform future research, preservation decisions, activities and outreach; conventional and/or online publication. This work could also support the public conservation gallery 'Restoring the Past' and there may be opportunities to create further displays around the subject in the museum.

The post will be responsible to the Head of Conservation.

## **Background**

### Material sources

As the country's oldest public museum, the Ashmolean is in an exceptional position to follow the history of conservation and restoration over the last 334 years. The department holds formal conservation records from cards and notebooks that date back to the middle of the last century. There are also a number of former Ashmolean staff who could be approached for an oral history. Other sources include photographic archives, annual reports, museum catalogues, museum and university archives, R F Ovenell's *The Ashmolean Museum 1683 – 1894* published in 1986, Griffith Institute Archives, and publications by Mark Norman on conservation history at the Ashmolean. Support will come from staff at the Ashmolean and has been offered by Mark Norman, previous Head of Conservation and Honorary Curator. There is also an active Early History Group in the University which brings together researchers into the early history of anthropology and archaeology at Oxford.

There may be opportunities for candidates with a suitable qualification in conservation to maintain practical skills during the period of the Sackler Research Fellowship if they wish, so long as this enhances the research focus of the Sackler Research Fellowship and by agreement with the Head of Conservation.

### **Responsibilities:**

The post holder will:

- be responsible to the Head of Conservation, currently Daniel Bone
- undertake and publish collections research relating to the history of conservation at the Ashmolean through on line and / or conventional publication the scope of which should be agreed with the Head of Conservation. This may take the form of a supplement to the conservation galleries.
- audit the department's records of conservation activity
- catalogue the people, materials and techniques that have been used on collections at the museum.
- advise on any improvements to the housing, arrangement and organisation of conservation records
- respond to scholarly and other enquiries concerning the conservation history of collections
- advise the Sackler Library on library acquisitions in the history of conservation
- attend museum and departmental meetings
- record his or her activities as required for Fellowship, Museum and University reports
- contribute to the Museum's Education, Corporate Entertainment, and Development programmes, including evening events
- participate as a full member of the Conservation Department
- undertake other specific tasks within the field, as directed by the Head of Conservation
- participate in the intellectual and communal life of Worcester College and, at some point during tenure, offer a seminar presenting their research

## Selection Criteria

### Essential

- proven ability to carry out research in an area related to the history of collections or conservation.
- a relevant post-graduate degree, either completed or due to be completed by October 2017
- genuine interest in learning about conservation ethics and preservation methodologies
- willingness to use museum databases
- relevant computing skills
- ability to work independently and to a high level of accuracy
- ability to work well, collaboratively and flexibly with colleagues and to communicate effectively
- willingness to participate in the broader conservation community
- a pragmatic, adaptable and flexible attitude
- absolute integrity

### Desirable

- experience of work in a museum environment
- experience of conservation and preservation
- experience of museum databases
- ability to undertake oral history interviews

## Terms and Conditions of Employment

The post is full-time and is offered on a fixed-term contract for three years. The Fellow will receive a salary of £28,413 per annum, which will be reviewed annually, in addition to a Housing Allowance of £5,000 per annum. As a member of the senior common room, the Fellow will be entitled to lunch and dine free of charge in College whenever the kitchens are open.

## How to apply

1. Applications should be received by Worcester College no later than **10am on Thursday 31 August 2017** and should be submitted via [human.resources@worc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:human.resources@worc.ox.ac.uk) in the form of a **single PDF file**. Late applications will not be accepted.
2. Applications must include:
  - a completed application form, available from [www.worc.ox.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.worc.ox.ac.uk/jobs)
  - a covering letter or statement explaining how you meet the criteria set out in the above
  - a current curriculum vitae showing your career to date, including details of publications, academic interests and any other details relevant to this application.
  - an indication of where you first heard about this post
3. Candidates are encouraged to complete a Diversity Declaration form which will assist the College with monitoring equal opportunities in recruitment. We can assure you that the information given is kept separately from the information used in recruitment decisions; that all information is strictly confidential, used purely for statistical purposes and to ensure that policies are being applied fairly.

4. Please e-mail your Diversity Declaration form to [human.resources@worc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:human.resources@worc.ox.ac.uk) or send in hard copy, separately from your application, to the HR Department, Worcester College, Walton Street, Oxford, OX1 2HB.
5. Should you have any queries about how to apply, please contact [human.resources@worc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:human.resources@worc.ox.ac.uk) All applications will be considered by the selection committee as soon as possible after the closing date.
6. Interview date to be confirmed but interviews are expected to take place early September.
7. Please note that applications for this post will be considered by a selection committee containing representatives from both Worcester College and the Ashmolean Museum. The selection committee is responsible for conducting all aspects of the recruitment and selection process.