



FRIENDS OF THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM 2025 AGM

Sunday 30th November 2025, 2pm, Oriental Museum, Education Room

MINUTES

1. Sue Childs welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies: Barbara Atkinson, Nigel Clark, Cristina Frattini, Lyn Gatland, Jane Manley, Enid Pearson, Keith and Sondra Pratt, Rick and Eileen Smith, Charlotte Spink, Jill Stephenson, John Tait and family, Malcolm Walker, Riccardo Zannoni.

Present: Ralph Austin, Craig Barclay (Head of Museums, Galleries and Exhibitions), Rachel Barclay (Senior Curator), Anne Bothwell, Gavin Brown, Ann Catterall, Paul Catterall, Sue Childs (Chair), Fiona Clark, John Dixon, Mavis Dixon, Victoria McGuinness, Ian Stewart, Pamela Stewart, Brian Straughan (Treasurer), Clare Walker

2. Minutes of the previous meeting (24th November 2024)

(i) Approval

The minutes were circulated to the members with the subscription renewals (by both email and post to those without an email address), attached to the reminder of the 2025 AGM and put up on the Friends webpage.

The minutes were approved as a true record of the 2024 AGM. Proposer: Anne Bothwell, Seconder: John Dixon.

(ii) Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Chair's Report given by Sue Childs

In the Orient Express I reported on last year's programme. Last year, and for the upcoming programme, our events were more connected to activities within the Museum, i.e. Friends-only tours of exhibitions and handling sessions, and publicly available lectures attached to visiting academics and meetings. Some flexibility is obviously required for such activities so they are not all organised by the time the Orient Express is published. Notification of events is always given by email, and where possible by mailing updates to members without an email account. Publicly

available events are promoted by the University's PR. We thank the Museum staff for their time and enthusiasm in providing this up close involvement with the work of the Museum.

In the past year, Lauren Barnes, Curator of Korean Collections, gave a tour of the exhibition 'Knitted together: the Korean lives and legacies of Richard and Joan Rutt' and a Korean Collections handling session. The MA students provided a tour for the Friends of their exhibition 'Telling Tales – Making Stories Come to Life'.

For lectures, Dr Robert Bluck, Buddhist Chaplain at Durham University, gave an illustrated talk on the Buddhist sacred places in India. We also receive notification of NE Ancient Egypt Society (NEAESOC) events, and vice versa. Our joint NEAESOC / FOM lecture was given by Dr Stephen Buckley, University of York, who described the first known mummification workshop ever found in Egypt. NEAESOC events are usually both in-person and on Teams. We also held a Zoom talk with Gill Ramsay, Assistant Curator at the Oriental Museum, who gave an update on the Museum's international projects. We held another afternoon tea in the Oriental Museum.

The pattern continues for our current programme.

For tours:

After this AGM, Rachel Barclay, the Senior Curator, will give a tour of the exhibition 'Echoes of Friendship: the Squire Family in Meiji Japan'. On the afternoon of Monday 26th January 2026, Qin Cao, the Chinese Collections Curator, will give a tour of the Palace Museum exhibition. On the afternoon of Monday 25th May 2026 there will be tours of the new Korea displays and the Huang exhibition, led jointly by Lauren Barnes, the Korean Collections Curator, and Tullia Fraser, Assistant Curator.

For lectures:

We have already held a lecture, on Wednesday 10 September 2025. Samira Mian talked about "The Art of Precision: Tracing the Journey of Islamic Geometric Patterns". This talk was a public lecture associated with the Aperiodic Tiling Conference at Durham University's Department of Mathematical Sciences; flexibly taking the opportunity offered by a University activity. In March 2026 Prof Yoshi Miki, consultant for the National Museum of Japanese History and an expert on Japanese ceramics, will be visiting the Museum. He will give us an update on his current work.

In May 2026 we will organise our Friends Annual Meal. Though the two Afternoon Teas we've held have been enjoyed by all who attended they are a lot of work for a small number of volunteers. We thank Lyn Gatland and the volunteers for their hard work. So we are going to try a different annual meal option in 2026: Saturday lunch in a local pub.

I'd like to promote our Mahjong Group. We meet in the Museum (the Education Room) on the second Sunday of the month from 1.45pm to approx. 3.45pm. New members are welcome. Mahjong sets are available and we provide training. In the past we've exhibited the game at evening events in the Museum and this year at the Lunar New Year Lantern Festival celebration on 12 February.

The most important function of the Friends is to support the Museum and its staff. The Museum has a very rare and old Māori cloak. The plan is to transport the cloak to New Zealand for elders and weavers and the local community to view and study it. In April/May 2026 Auckland Museum have asked Rachel Barclay to travel to New Zealand to take part in a week of community events at the

museum. The Friends will provide support towards her accommodation costs. Rachel may be saying more about this in her report.

I note with sadness Friends who have passed away in the last year.

I would like to conclude my report with a number of thank yous.

Thank you to all the Council members for the work they undertake to keep the Friends group running, and in particular our Treasurer, Brian, and our Secretary, Jane.

Thank you to the Museum staff, for the marvellous work they do.

There were no questions.

4. Treasurer's Report, independently examined accounts, and appointment of independent examiner

given by Brian Straughan

Draft accounts were presented. These have already been approved by Council members. The independent examination has been arranged but still has to be completed; if there are any changes required Friends will be informed. The accounts were approved. Proposer: Clare Walker, Seconder: Ian Stewart. There were no questions.

5. Secretary's Report

given by Sue Childs on behalf of Jane Manley

Membership stands at 135, a little down from last year: we've lost 5 members, and had one new member. The membership comprises 105 individuals and 15 families (with families being counted as two individuals). Reminders are needed for six memberships. There were no questions.

6. Museum Curator's report

given by Rachel Barclay

It is lovely to be back after missing last year's AGM. My thanks to everyone in the Friends who sent cards, messages and gifts while I was ill. Craig and I greatly appreciated them all.

As everyone will have received the annual report for 2024/25 in Orient Express this report focuses on what has been happening since August 2025.

Qin Cao, Curator of Chinese Collections, has been working on the 'Journey of a Century' exhibition, our partnership with the Palace Museum Beijing. We are the only museum outside China hosting an exhibition for the Palace Museum's centenary celebrations, a good indicator of the level of our partnership. The exhibition has been very well received.

Gillian Ramsay, Assistant Curator, has been working with Leighton House in London on a new version of her Voices exhibition of contemporary art from the Middle East and North Africa. 'The View from Here' is now open and runs until March. It works very well in the setting and I strongly encourage Friends who are in London between now and March to visit.

Lauren Barnes, Curator of Korean Collections, has been working on a new exhibition on Richard Rutt at the University of Seoul. This follows the success of the 'Knitted Together' exhibition. The Friends supported the publication of 'Lapwing', Richard's edited memoirs, which accompanied the exhibition, for which we are very grateful. The new exhibition opened in November and has involved extensive additional research into the photographic archive. We have also been successful in a bid to the National Museum of Korea (NMK) to extend Lauren's contract for an additional year. This means she will now be with us until April 2027. As a result, we may push back the relaunch of the permanent displays for Korea to give Lauren more time for research. This would be a change from the date advertised in Orient Express. We will notify Friends if and when we agree this with NMK.

Our new assistant curator, Tullia Fraser, is making good progress on cataloguing the new Huang Collection and is on track to open an exhibition focused on this collection in May 2026.

I have been working on our new Japanese exhibition with the National Museum of Japanese History (NMJH). A tour of the exhibition will follow the AGM. Our thanks again to the Friends for their support for Yoshi Miki from the NMJH to come to Durham to study the collections. Yoshi is looking forward to speaking to the Friends about his work in March.

I have also been working on upgrades to the museum galleries. Work is now underway in the Roberts (South Asia and Southeast Asia) and MacDonald (China) galleries to install new cases between the radiators. These will be a major upgrade in terms of environmental conditions and security and for the first time in the museum will feature non-reflective glass. We are sure visitors will really appreciate the difference. This will mean some disruption and gallery closures in the run up to Christmas.

I will be leaving this week to travel to New Zealand to take our important Māori cloak to Auckland Museum for a five year research and display loan. My thanks to the Friends for agreeing to contribute to the costs of me returning in 2026 to participate in a series of community workshops to introduce the cloak to the elders, weavers and wider community. I would be happy to update the Friends as this project progresses.

15th December is the date for the Friends and Volunteers Christmas event. We will be sharing some of the newest additions to the collections.

There were no questions.

7. Election of Officers and Members of the Council

At the 2023 AGM all officers and members were re-elected for three years, so there are no current elections required.

We would welcome anyone interested in become a Member of Council. The Council meets three times a year, so the role is not arduous.

8. Submitted discussion topic(s)

None

9. Any other business

Sue asked if there was a Xmas discount at the shop for Friends. She will talk with the counter staff after the AGM.

Refreshments were provided. The AGM was followed by a viewing of the Māori cloak (being prepared for transport to New Zealand on Tuesday). Rachel Barclay, Senior Curator, gave a tour of the exhibition 'Echoes of Friendship: the Squire Family in Meiji Japan'.

The Friends of the Oriental Museum

Year ended 30th September 2025

Income and Expenditure Account (receipts and payments)

<u>Income</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Members' subscriptions and donations	1737.00	1,717.00
Gift Aid refunds	0.00	791.25
Special donations	0.00	6,000.00
Annual dinner/afternoon tea tickets	200.00	280.00
Interest on giftaid	0.00	30.10
	<u>1937.00</u>	<u>8,818.35</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Sue Childs' expenses	0.00	243.00
BAFM membership	100.00	100.00
Insurance	300.00	300.00
Printing, postage, etc.	374.80	319.87
Independent Examiners' gratuity	9.98	10.00
Sundries	27.43	29.80
Annual Dinner Expenditure	137.50	279.05
Refreshments	33.05	
Special Donation to museum	1000.00	4,000.00
	<u>1982.76</u>	<u>5,281.72</u>
<u>Surplus/deficit for the year</u>	<u>-45.76</u>	<u>3,536.63</u>

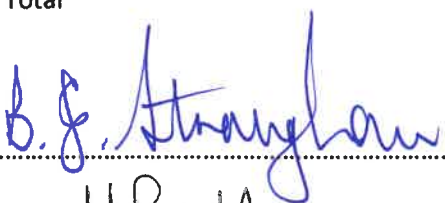
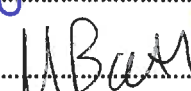
Balance Sheet

Powerpoint projector - at depreciated cost	1.00	1.00
Bank - Lloyds	8,883.44	8,929.20
	<u>8,884.44</u>	<u>8,930.20</u>

Represented by:

General reserves:-

Balance b.fwd	8,930.20	5,393.57
Surplus/deficit for the year	-45.76	3,536.63
Total	<u>8,884.44</u>	<u>8,930.20</u>


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B J Straughan (Treasurer)

M BATH..... (Independent Examiner)