# File name: The Museum Podcast #8 A is for Amazon, B is for blueprints, C is for communism.mp4

**Moderator questions in Bold,** Respondents in Regular text.

KEY: **Unable to decipher** = (inaudible + timecode), **Phonetic spelling** (ph) + timecode), **Missed word** = (mw + timecode), **Talking over each other** = (talking over each other + timecode).

## (TC: 00:00:00)

**Hugo Chapman: Welcome to the British Museum podcast. It's Hugo Chapman and-,**

## (TC: 00:00:04)

**Sushma Jansari: And Sushma Jansari.**

## (TC: 00:00:06)

**Hugo Chapman: Sushma, you've been away, I haven't seen you for a bit. Where have you been?**

## (TC: 00:00:10)

**Sushma Jansari: I've been mostly at home actually over half term, but we did have a fabulous Halloween party for five-year-olds, so, that was quite good fun. Lots of chocolate.**

## (TC: 00:00:19)

**Hugo Chapman: Fantastic.**

## (TC: 00:00:19)

**Sushma Jansari: How about you?**

## (TC: 00:00:21)

**Hugo Chapman: Well, as I said before, I think I turned off all the lights and hid behind my, sort of, bed and hoped that nobody would come. So, no change there. Sushma, we've reached podcast number eight. It's November and we've got a very packed episode this month.**

## (TC: 00:00:37)

**Sushma Jansari: We really do. I mean, one of the people we're talking to is Laura Osorio Sunnucks, she is of the Santa Domingo Centre of Excellence for Latin American Research and she tells us a lot about the really exciting and innovative work she and her team are doing.**

## (TC: 00:00:53)

**Hugo Chapman: And then we've got Tom Hockenhull talking about a poster, it's in the Money Gallery, that is part of his ongoing research of communist imagery. And then we're in the archives.**

## (TC: 00:01:05)

**Sushma Jansari: We are. We're back with Sian and Francesca and they are talking about blueprints.**

## (TC: 00:01:12)

**Hugo Chapman: And also how the British Museum have obtained the land from the Duke of Bedford.**

## (TC: 00:01:18)

**Sushma Jansari: Oh, that's sounds quite interesting.**

## (TC: 00:01:20)

**Hugo Chapman: Yes, so, stay tuned. Listen up.**

## (TC: 00:01:23)

**Sushma Jansari: Now, Tom Hockenhull, Curator of Modern Money in the Department of Coins and Medals tells us all about a communist poster.**

## (TC: 00:01:30)

Tom Hockenhull: My name is Tom Hockenhull. I am Curator of Modern Money here at the British Museum. We're standing here in the Money Gallery on the upper floor of the British Museum, room 68,

so you know next time you visit. We're at the far end of the gallery as you come up from the main stairs on the left hand side, and we're looking at a framed poster on the wall. First, I want to tell you a little bit about the artist. His name is Boris Yefimov. He was born in Ukraine in 1900. He was seventeen-years-old when, in Russia, the Bolsheviks swept to power. He was twenty-two when he produced his first cartoons and propaganda posters for agitprop. He was in his thirties during the Great Terror, a period when it was extremely dangerous to be speaking truth to power. Indeed, he lost a brother during the Great Purge. He survived the Great Patriotic War and the death of Stalin, and he lived through the Great Stagnation of the '70s and '80s in Russia. He was 90-years-old when the Soviet Union collapsed. He was 100 when Putin came to power in 2000. He was producing cartoons up until shortly before his death in 2008, a career spanning some 90 years. I often think that, if you want to gain a sense of Russian history during the long 20th Century, you can do worse than to study the works and career of this man. This poster was created when he was a mere 90-years-old, and its title is Shadow Economy Corruption and Crime. The inscription below says, 'People taking bribes are causing a scandal in our organisational order. We must organise to repulse them and to break free of them.'

And then there's this central image here that has this official, you know, he's probably a government official because he's got this medal on his lapel and there is all this handshaking and money that is being exchanged and being stuffed into pockets. There's this hooded figure with his hat pulled down low over his left shoulder who is holding a revolver. This is documenting the juncture between two Russia's. The old Russia of the Soviet Union and the Russia of, I suppose, the 1990s of increasing market liberalisation and their relative democratic freedoms. But it's saying that what is going on here is creating a problem in itself, the rise of organised crime. Now, this poster is clearly the work of a cartoonist, a satirist. It's printed in yellow and black and at the centre we have this figure who is this grotesque caricature of half man half tree, these bribes he is taking are literally routing him to the spot. I've always felt that looking at this poster there really is more to it than meets the eye. Is this poster therefore suggesting that these bribes are really being transacted at the highest possible level, or is that just the cartoonist's in joke? This poster perhaps foreshadows the wild and crazy 1990s in Russia in which organised crime underwent exponential rise unimpeded going to a collapse in law and order, and this of course has had long lasting effects on the Russian economy, on its politics and on the very fabric of its society.

This poster is in the Money Gallery because, of course, it features money, but also it is one of the few references anywhere that you'll find to a dual or parallel economy, this so-called shadow economy.

Shadow economy merely refers to the black market and we have to acknowledge that this exists and always has existed and probably always will exist to some extent in society as a way for people to transact. Monetary depictions take all forms and this is obviously a very caricatured representation. The notes in the pockets of this man are denominated in hundreds of thousands and it is in a part of the gallery that is adjacent to a display on the currencies and the economies of other states which were ruled by the Communist Party. And really this shows that, sort of, duality of the socialist economy, the fact that you have the official money, the currency of circulation that is used for everyday wages and the payment of transactions, and yet during periods of shortages there had to be another way for people to get the goods and services that they wanted and needed, and for that reason the black market, the shadow economy, was a necessary component of the economy. It didn't just exist to enrich a few citizens, it existed to enable

people to get the things that they needed. If you're interested and want to learn more about the history of money then do come and visit the Money Gallery at the British Museum. It's free and it's open daily.

## (TC: 00:07:16)

Sian Toogood: The clocks have just gone back and it's the end of British Summertime as we know it. So, we thought we would tell you all about the time related products in the British Museum shop online. Of course we have clocks and watches, but we also have time inspired books, jewellery and even a Victorian explorers sextant. Sadly we don't have any time related tea-towels but that's just because we believe it's always time for tea, so, why don't you stick the kettle on and head to the britishmuseumshoponline.org, that's britishmuseumshoponline.org today. All purchases support the work of the British Museum.

## (TC: 00:07:51)

**Hugo Chapman: Sushma and I are together and we're going to talk to Laura Osorio Sunnucks of the Santo Domingo Centre of Excellence for Latin American Research. That's quite a mouthful. Well, firstly, Santo Domingo, why?**

## (TC: 00:08:08)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: The Santo Domingo Centre is named after the family who generously support the centre.

## (TC: 00:08:13)

**Sushma Jansari: Ah, interesting. So, what does the centre do, and what do you do as part of your work?**

## (TC: 00:08:17)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: So, we've been set up effectively to promote the research of the Latin American collections at the museum which are extensive. There are about 62,000 objects from Central and South America in storage. Very few of them, of course, are on display, as is the case with a lot of the collections, and I think it's becoming increasingly important for museum projects to focus on collections work. And, so, we are promoting collections research, so, inviting researchers from Latin America to come to the UK and stay and, sort of, co-develop with us projects around certain collections. We're also hoping to invite-, well, we will be inviting artists, so, artists in residence to create artworks in response to some of the collections.

## (TC: 00:09:04)

**Sushma Jansari: How exciting. I mean, could you give us an idea of what kind of objects you're talking about?**

## (TC: 00:09:08)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Yes, sure.

## (TC: 00:09:09)

**Sushma Jansari: I'm not particularly familiar with this, sort of, part of the world in terms of their collections, so, you know.**

## (TC: 00:09:13)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Yes, well, so, we have all kinds of archaeological historical ethnographic collections, but I'll speak a little bit about the collections projects that we've been doing so far.

## (TC: 00:09:22)

**Sushma Jansari: That would be great. Thank you.**

## (TC: 00:09:23)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: So, the first and last collections visit that we had, we only launched the centre at the beginning of this year, was by a group of people from the Colombian Amazon from a place called (mw 09.36). So, there were two people from the (mw 09.40) which is better known as the Witoto (ph 09.41) community and a professor who works in the region as well. And basically what they came to look at was a collection that was made by a French explorer called Jean Robichaud (ph 09.50) at the beginning of the 20th Century, and was sent by him back to the British Museum before that explorer died in mysterious circumstances (TC 00:10:00) in the Amazon.

## (TC: 00:10:02)

**Hugo Chapman: Oh, wow, that sounds-,**

## (TC: 00:10:04)

**Sushma Jansari: Sounds like a movie.**

## (TC: 00:10:05)

**Hugo Chapman: Yes, absolutely, yes.**

## (TC: 00:10:06)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Yes, a bloodthirsty one because the reason that the collection, I think, is so important and so important for the two elders that came to visit is because it was made at the time of the heightened brutality associated with the Rubber Boom genocide. So, the Rubber Boom was basically a period of time in the long history effectively of rubber tapping in the Amazon between 1902 and about 1909 when the Peruvian Amazon company, Julio Cesar Arana tries to boost the stock market, or the stock of his company in London by having actually British partners, and couldn't boost it the normal way because he didn't actually own any land or any trees, and, so, he needed to effectively increase the amount of rubber that he was producing for export, etc. And, so, he engaged in basically this torturous system where he would capture and enslave and often rape and kill people from the indigenous communities in that area in order to produce as much rubber as possible, and of course it was always his intention to alleviate that system as soon as he boosted the stock. But of course the British Government got involved and lots of people, sort of, spoke of the atrocities and eventually his-, that and a load of other circumstances led to the death of the Rubber Boom.

## (TC: 00:11:35)

**Hugo Chapman: And what kind of artefacts were sent back to London?**

## (TC: 00:11:38)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Well, they are, sort of, ethnographic collections, so, they were gathered by Robichaud (ph 11.44) I think as basically scientific materials, so, it's a lot of feather headdresses, tooth necklaces, ceremonial items, baskets, so, items from daily life-,

## (TC: 00:11:54)

**Hugo Chapman: And, so, was this a very early contact point between these indigenous people and a European or not particularly?**

## (TC: 00:12:01)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Not necessarily because, as I said, there had been, sort of, white settlers engaged in extractive processes right from the 19th Century, but the entire Rubber Boom was a time of fracture of the communities and the way that they existed and a, kind of, coalescence. So, there was increasing

contact between different communities from the big rivers and communities from the smaller rivers and our visitors came from an area which is a much smaller river, so, yes, who had had much less contact with settlers. But what was really moving actually was that, of course, because of the Rubber Boom and because of all of this culture loss, young people, and I was in the Amazon in February, who you show photographs of this material to, won't recognise it as even part of their history or traditions. But the people who came who were, sort of, in their 80s, they could remember their parents and their grandparents talking about the ceremonies associated with the objects and the objects themselves and the, sort of, material culture production processes having never even seen these things, they could remember it.

## (TC: 00:13:02)

**Sushma Jansari: So, do you think some of the material in our collections will re-inspire some of the local people to re-imagine again how they make their feather headdresses, for example?**

## (TC: 00:13:13)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: All these kinds of memory projects are really complicated and they require a long term commitment to the project. And, so, at the moment what we've done is we've had them come and I think they really enjoyed the visit and they felt that they were, sort of, spiritually healed by it, and that's very important. And they've, of course, had conversations between themselves and the professor and seen new objects and they between them can do academic outputs and publications, etc. But, yes and, of course, it's helped to document our collections better because they're specialists.

## (TC: 00:13:48)

**Hugo Chapman: You get to know them, yes.**

## (TC: 00:13:50)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: But, yes, I am hoping that the project doesn't end here and that it's not just, they came to London, they enjoyed it, we used their brain, they've gone back. And that it will be an ongoing commitment on the part of the Santo Domingo Centre to see how exactly we can work with them and with the community to, yes, to perhaps engage in some kind of cultural revitalisation project. I don't know what that would look like yet.

## (TC: 00:14:10)

**Hugo Chapman: But rather poignant in the-, I mean, talking about that Rubber Boom and here we are, you know, the cyclical nature of this seems we're talking about destruction of the Amazon not in Colombia but in Brazil for a different end but the same result.**

## (TC: 00:14:26)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Absolutely, and that's something that we've also been interested in the Santa Domingo Centre is engaging with different ways that communities deal with history, the past and memory, because whilst we can try to make amends for things that are, sort of, happening not that long ago, like for example the Rubber Boom, or at the moment in Colombia, for example, drug violence, and there are lots of projects that are about that. But when you start to talk to communities about the way that they've engaged in these intense turmoil they say, 'Well, no, this isn't it. This goes back to contact with Spanish invaders or Portuguese conquistadors 500 years ago.' And this is a, kind of, cyclical, as you say, an ongoing destruction effectively-,

## (TC: 00:15:11)

**Hugo Chapman: All part of a, kind of, wider destruction, yes.**

## (TC: 00:15:15)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Exactly, and that there is no reconciliation as long as those processes continue to happen, and as you say they are continuing to happen because that, sort of, extraction process is still going on.

## (TC: 00:15:27)

**Sushma Jansari: So, I think there are about three people, three core curators as part of this centre, and you're working probably on the same sort of projects, but what sort of future projects have you got planned?**

## (TC: 00:15:37)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Absolutely, so, we've been very much working with, as I said, the Amazonian group this year and obviously we're supporting a range of other projects in the same region, etc. We have begun to think about the kinds of projects that we're interested in next year and it will involve field work by one of us to Latin America to talk to people and figure that out, sort of, co-develop the project. That still obviously hasn't happened. That will be happening one short trip at the end of this year and then another trip at the beginning of next year, but my interest for the next year is towards the idea of Diaspora communities in Latin America. So, I'm particularly interested not just in indigenous Diasporas but also in other communities. So, there are Lebanese communities, there are lots of Chinese/Japanese, for example, in Peru, in Ecuador, and they're widespread across Central and South America, of course like everywhere in the world, and I think obviously we hopefully have moved past the idea of England as just being English people and English indigenous material culture, whatever that means, so, we should be doing the same thing for Latin America.

## (TC: 00:16:48)

**Hugo Chapman: And give us a name check of your colleagues in the centre?**

## (TC: 00:16:52)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Yes, absolutely. So, there are two brilliant curators that work with me and one of them is called Maria Fernanda Esteve and she is a specialist in the Muisca (ph 17.02) of Colombia, she did lots of really excellent research on affect amongst the Muisca there. And then Maria Mercedes Martinez Milantchi, who is doing a research project at the moment on Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican ceramics. She's a, sort of, science woman and they're brilliant and we all have really horrible long names. So, we match each other.

## (TC: 00:17:28)

**Hugo Chapman: No, wonderful. I think we feel very out-named don't we?**

## (TC: 00:17:33)

**Sushma Jansari: Absolutely, I have a grand choice of three and that's it. So, is the centre acquiring objects as part of, you know, the projects that you're all working on?**

## (TC: 00:17:41)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Yes, absolutely. So, we have acquired some objects from the Amazon recently which I'm really excited about.

## (TC: 00:17:48)

**Sushma Jansari: And are there plans to display any of this when it does arrive?**

## (TC: 00:17:52)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Yes, so, oh, so, in terms of the Amazonian pieces we are hoping, I don't know if this is necessarily going to happen, but we're hoping to refresh one of the cases in room 24 which has currently got arctic material, and-,

## (TC: 00:18:07)

**Hugo Chapman: So, give us a guide as to where room 24-, how would you find your way to room 24?**

## (TC: 00:18:12)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: So, if you came into the British Museum from the south, as in main entrance, and you were in the Great Court with the Norman Foster ceiling, and you walked right round the rotunda and into the back as if you wanted to exit the north side of the museum.

## (TC: 00:18:26)

**Hugo Chapman: So, past the Rapa Nui figure?**

## (TC: 00:18:28)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: So, room 24 is the room with the Rapa Nui figure.

## (TC: 00:18:30)

**Sushma Jansari: Ah, the welcome gallery?**

## (TC: 00:18:31)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: The welcome gallery, or also known as living and dying-,

## (TC: 00:18:36)

**Hugo Chapman: It's got multi names, yes.**

## (TC: 00:18:36)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Many names. But, so, yes, there are four large cases there, and, so, we're hoping to put all of the Amazonian stuff there and, sort of, respond to the fact that we just have this really important collections visit. And then in terms of Maria's (ph 18.49) artwork, I don't have anything to report there yet, but you never know, and certainly whilst she's here we'll have an open studio so that we can, sort of, exhibit her artwork and maybe some of the things that she's used from the British Museum's collections to people who are interested in small groups or whatever at her studio.

## (TC: 00:19:10)

**Sushma Jansari: Sounds fantastic. I have to ask you, how did you become the head of this centre and get to work on these incredible projects? I mean, what has your career path been?**

## (TC: 00:19:19)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Oh great. So, I studied archaeology at UCL. I studied classical archaeology actually for four years and did lots of languages, but I ended up slightly brain numbed by that, so, wanted something new and am half Mexican, so, decided that Mexican American archaeology wouldn't be too much of a stretch, which is nonsense. But I did a Masters and PhD in that in Leiden University, and then I moved to Paris to work for UNESCO and I worked at the Le Louvre for some time in education. And then I did a post doc in Canada at the-,

## (TC: 00:19:57)

**Hugo Chapman: Wow, this is an incredibly glamorous CV, I mean, wow. (TC 00:20:00)**

## (TC: 00:20:02)

**Sushma Jansari: We've just both been in London, (talking over each other 20.03) careers.**

## (TC: 00:20:07)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Yes, so, as a result I have no furniture and I don't have things like winter wardrobes because they all get just lost in packing, so, there are downsides. But, yes, so, I really enjoyed my time in Canada. I absolutely loved it. I was working for a museum called the Museum of Anthropology which is part of the University of British Colombia. So, it's a much smaller museum, but it's got a long history of, kind of, issuing narrative neutrality and taking political positions, in their case mostly with their indigenous community because they are on traditionality territory as it is. But, I really enjoyed it. So, as soon as I finished that I came to work here, and I'm very happy to do that.

## (TC: 00:20:46)

**Sushma Jansari: That's amazing, gosh.**

## (TC: 00:20:47)

**Hugo Chapman: Well, fantastic Laura. Thank you so much for coming in and I hope we will have time to, kind of, check out what you've been doing in a bit.**

## (TC: 00:20:55)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: I hope so too. Come and see (mw 20.57) when she's here.

## (TC: 00:20:58)

**Sushma Jansari: Looking forward to it, yes.**

## (TC: 00:20:59)

**Hugo Chapman: Yes, that sounds amazing.**

## (TC: 00:21:00)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Yes.

## (TC: 00:21:00)

**Hugo Chapman: Thank you so much.**

## (TC: 00:21:01)

Laura Osorio Sunnucks: Thank you very much. Thanks.

## (TC: 00:21:02)

**Hugo Chapman: Delving into the British Museum's archives with Francesca and Sian and they're talking about blueprints.**

## (TC: 00:21:08)

Sian Toogood: So, once again we are back in the archives. I'm Sian Toogood, one of the producers of this podcast, and I'm here with-,

## (TC: 00:21:17)

Francesca Hillier: Francesca Hillier.

## (TC: 00:21:20)

Sian Toogood: Great. So, we've had a brief hiatus, put away the statues and the trustees minutes and so on and have found a plan. Now, the first time I ever saw any of the plans for the museum was when I came to you when I was organising Night at the Museum Three, Secret of the Mummies Tomb-,

## (TC: 00:21:38)

Francesca Hillier: Oh, yes, yes.

## (TC: 00:21:40)

Sian Toogood: And I think I was looking for floor prints and elevations for their art department of the Parthenon gallery, Egyptian sculpture gallery, so on and so forth. So, that's how I first got introduced to them.

## (TC: 00:21:54)

Francesca Hillier: Yes.

## (TC: 00:21:56)

Sian Toogood: But can you give us a, kind of, brief overview and description about what plans you have in the archives?

## (TC: 00:22:02)

Francesca Hillier: We have plans in the archive that begin in the late 1600s because when the museum's trustees purchased Montague House in 1754, which was the first home of the British Museum, which was also situated on Great Russell Street here in London, the Earl of Montague gave all the deeds and plans that he had for his house, Montague House, to the trustees. So, we have all the records that relate to the original building of Montague House which was built in 1640s originally, burnt down and then was rebuilt in the 1670s. So, we have all the land deeds and plans and we also have the plans of the house itself, and we have a particularly beautiful set of plans by an architect, Henry Flitcroft, which I'm going to show you now.

## (TC: 00:22:54)

Sian Toogood: This is just at my elbow.

## (TC: 00:22:55)

Francesca Hillier: It is just at your elbow.

## (TC: 00:22:56)

Sian Toogood: So, to paint a picture for our listeners, this is in a beautiful burgundy cylinder box and then inside that box there is a, kind of, just a bit bigger than A3 burgundy leather book with gold leaf decoration on the outside.

## (TC: 00:23:14)

Francesca Hillier: So, these deeds are from 1725. Henry Flitcroft was the architect who was tasked by the Earl of Montague to modernise his house, although it had only been rebuilt some 30 or 40 years earlier, he wanted it to be remodelled.

## (TC: 00:23:31)

Sian Toogood: Oh, there's a lovely crackle-,

## (TC: 00:23:33)

Francesca Hillier: The pages are parchment and it is quite crackly, but there's a beautiful crest on every single page all hand drawn, and the pages have a border of, I don't know what that decoration is, but it's all hand printed. And then the actual plan itself, which is floor by floor of Montague House as it was then, but it includes an extensive drawing of the gardens including little fountains in each bit of the lawn.

## (TC: 00:24:05)

Sian Toogood: Yes, I mean, I have to say it is-,

## (TC: 00:24:07)

Francesca Hillier: That's a little fountain there as well.

## (TC: 00:24:08)

Sian Toogood: Very nice. I mean, you mentioned earlier, off mic unfortunately, that this fellow had some

connection with Hampton Court?

## (TC: 00:24:16)

Francesca Hillier: Apparently his father had been a labourer in Hampton Court Gardens, and he himself had worked for Lord Burlington and Lord Burlington had recognised-, he'd come from quite lowly beginnings, so, to be the architect working on such a prestigious house at the end of the 17th Century he'd come quite a long way.

## (TC: 00:24:34)

Sian Toogood: I mean, you do get a bit of a flavour of Hampton Court from these garden-,

## (TC: 00:24:38)

Francesca Hillier: The way the gardens are laid out.

## (TC: 00:24:39)

Sian Toogood: Yes. Whether that's just, sort of, of its time probably, but it is, it's very grand looking and very different from the way the museum obviously is today that even the, kind of, earliest drawings that I've seen, because I've never seen this one before, it's quite significantly different.

## (TC: 00:24:59)

Francesca Hillier: It is significantly different. The house itself is probably-, the footprint of the house is a third of the size of the entire estate, so, the garden was twice the size of the house itself. More than twice the size. But the front of the house that you can see-, the garden was at the back of the house and the front of the house faced onto Great Russell Street as we know it now, but in this period Bloomsbury was really quite rural still. Russell Square was a hay field, you know, it was really a rural setting, quite a rural setting at this point. So, having such a massive garden wouldn't have been out of place. But when the new museum was built on this site it was built more in the garden of Montague House and as we know it's further back from the road. This was right on the main entrance of Great Russell Street.

## (TC: 00:25:49)

Sian Toogood: So, the front gate that you can see at the very far left of the plan is probably where our front gate is now, where the gatehouse is (talking over each other 25.57)-,

## (TC: 00:25:57)

Francesca Hillier: Not far off it, yes, not far it. There was a gatehouse there. There are some old drawings of the gatehouse that you can see. We have actually an old photograph, an 1840s photograph, very early photograph of Montague House the gatehouse.

## (TC: 00:26:08)

Sian Toogood: Wow, cool. So, just to give a bit more of a description, I suppose, the gardens are made up of two absolutely massive lawns with, as Francesca says, beautiful little fountains and sculptures dotted around. There is a, kind of, semi-circular turning circle almost, I suppose, though I can't imagine where carriages or anything would come up. And then to the extreme west, I suppose, of the estate, there is a, kind of, wooded area that is still quite formal but looks a bit wilder than the very pretty lawn area.

## (TC: 00:26:52)

Francesca Hillier: The plans get more interesting when you can see room by room how it was laid out by storey. So, Montague House and offices were on the-, is that the first, ground floor?

## (TC: 00:27:05)

Sian Toogood: Lower storey.

## (TC: 00:27:05)

Francesca Hillier: Lower storey, which would have been the ground floor, and you can see on the plan each room is drawn out and it's all designed around the courtyard pretty much like the current museum is or was intended to be before the original one was built, the museum was built around a courtyard.

## (TC: 00:27:26)

Sian Toogood: Yes, and actually you can still see one of the, sort of, evidences today, is when it gets really dry in the summertime you can see the lines of the foundations underneath our current lawns at the front of the museum-,

## (TC: 00:27:40)

Francesca Hillier: You can.

## (TC: 00:27:40)

Sian Toogood: From some of the foundations. So, that's quite fun. I always look out for that every summer. I'm, like, 'Oh.'

## (TC: 00:27:45)

Francesca Hillier: There's a round, sort of, cartwheel shape drawn in one of the rooms and I'm not sure what that refers to, what that is actually meant to signify-,

## (TC: 00:27:52)

Sian Toogood: It looks like that. It looks like. It looks like the skylight.

## (TC: 00:27:55)

Francesca Hillier: There was a gatehouse on Montague House as well, so, it could have been perhaps it was the-, it had, like, a cupola over it, so it could have been that.

## (TC: 00:28:05)

Sian Toogood: Yes, and this one must be a spiral staircase, this particular one.

## (TC: 00:28:08)

Francesca Hillier: Yes. I love the fact that it's all hand done and it's so beautiful. It's so beautifully done.

## (TC: 00:28:14)

Sian Toogood: And colourful, because when I think of, you know, modern blueprints they're either blue or very plain black and white. This, the walls are done in, kind of, red outline. The trees are perfectly coloured, and then all of these little details of where the columns are. The columns are in pink. All the different rooms are numbered, and yes it's just-,

## (TC: 00:28:38)

Francesca Hillier: These are in very good condition.

## (TC: 00:28:40)

Sian Toogood: I mean, they are. They look almost modern.

## (TC: 00:28:42)

Francesca Hillier: The expense of producing something as hand done and as beautiful, and the time it would have taken.

## (TC: 00:28:49)

Sian Toogood: Yes, and even, you know, things like the roof, they've shaded one side of it more so that you can where the sun would be and so on and so forth. It's just incredible.

## (TC: 00:29:00)

Francesca Hillier: It's beautiful. One of the other plans we have has-, for some reason the Montague House plan also has some drawings relating to cases making it into a museum, which someone has added later. So, it's a much earlier plan of Montague House that we had inherited from the Earl of Montague, and somebody when they were trying to plan what they wanted the museum to look like had also drawn some of the bookcases and some of the display cases they wanted to use. So, that's actually a really interesting resource for someone who is studying museum display, and I didn't actually know it was in the back of that, I just thought it was the plan, until one day I was leafing through it and I was, like, 'Oh goodness.' You know, I didn't know that was there. It's a really early design of what they wanted a museum case to look like.

## (TC: 00:29:42)

Sian Toogood: Yes, it is an amazing resource because when we talked about Tutankhamun we obviously have the photographs from that exhibition. We have photographs of all of our exhibitions in modern times, and then to have this as a resource as well is really cool, and, you know, it's, like, in episode two/three, (TC 00:30:00) when you and I talked about Montague House and the brick and that bit of wood.

## (TC: 00:30:05)

Francesca Hillier: Yes, the brick in the archive. But what is really interesting about this, because this plan has the house laid out room by room, and they didn't alter that much when they turned it into a museum, but we have all the early guide books and the synopsis of the contents of the British Museum, which were really really detailed, and you can see where the rooms were. So, you know you're on the upper floor, you're on the first floor say, and you're walking down a corridor, it walks you around the museum and

you have the plan to see where all those rooms were, which I just think is really interesting.

## (TC: 00:30:35)

Sian Toogood: Yes.

## (TC: 00:30:36)

Francesca Hillier: You can identify which rooms on this plan held which objects and which material.

## (TC: 00:30:42)

Sian Toogood: It's amazing, you just need a good imagination.

## (TC: 00:30:45)

Francesca Hillier: You do.

## (TC: 00:30:48)

Sian Toogood: Cool. Oh, yes, my little squeak of excitement there was because we have just taken a, oh, a deed?

## (TC: 00:31:01)

Francesca Hillier: It is a deed.

## (TC: 00:31:01)

Sian Toogood: The deed-,

## (TC: 00:31:03)

Francesca Hillier: It is a deed.

## (TC: 00:31:05)

Sian Toogood: From it's box and this to me is what archives are in my mind. They're dead old bits of paper covered in calligraphy and seals and illuminated characters and so on.

## (TC: 00:31:23)

Francesca Hillier: Well, it's a legal document. We have many of these in the museum and these relate to land and property, and the museum when it purchased Montague House got a lot of these deeds, when it purchased property from the Duke of Bedford later it got a lot more deeds. And this one dates to 1701, although there are three deeds attached to it because the earlier one is a deed from transferring land to the Earl of Montague. It says on the deed, Lord of Portland, so, I didn't know until I've just looked at that that perhaps this was a Portland estate, I'm not sure. But these deeds are large and they're written on vellum and covered in I think it's parchment. This is parchment I think and that strip along the bottom is vellum. And they basically detail the transfer of land and property, and because the museum in this period had acquired quite a chunk of land in this part of London, a lot of the deeds that go with that are all here. I think the earliest go back to the 1640s.

## (TC: 00:32:36)

Sian Toogood: It's amazing.

## (TC: 00:32:37)

Francesca Hillier: They are amazing.

## (TC: 00:32:37)

Sian Toogood: And it's so nice to have them in, sort of, conjunction with all of the plans that we've just been looking at for (talking over each other 32.43).

## (TC: 00:32:44)

Francesca Hillier: It gives you the full story because it gives you the background of Montague House which we've got just because the Earl of Montague gave them to us when the house was purchased by the trustees, and there is an awful lot of deeds like this in the museum that refer to that transaction, but also various bits of land around that area at that time.

## (TC: 00:33:07)

Sian Toogood: And I have to say, though we are looking at the things from the 1600 and 1700s, because I'm a history nerd we obviously have plans and deed right up until the modern day, you know, with the

newer building works that we've been doing.

## (TC: 00:33:26)

Francesca Hillier: We do.

## (TC: 00:33:27)

Sian Toogood: And presumably we'll continue to have them.

## (TC: 00:33:29)

Francesca Hillier: Well, we do, I mean, we hold the-, because the museum owns property outright, so, any property that is rented out by the trustees of the British Museum is also-, those deeds are also here, and right up to the modern day the drawings of when the Great Court was built and the architectural design, although we have records relating to that, the actual records sit with the architect but we have a lot of the design drawings and a lot of the plans that went with the design of the Great Court, they're also here. But also any design of a new gallery or any refurbishment or any bit that has been added to the museum, including the white wing, which is the left west-, depends on where you're standing, on the west corner, if you're standing at the front of the museum it's on the right hand side.

## (TC: 00:34:19)

Sian Toogood: Left hand.

## (TC: 00:34:21)

Francesca Hillier: Right hand side, white wing. If you're standing at the front looking in-,

## (TC: 00:34:24)

Sian Toogood: The white wing is in the west isn't it? It's where HR is.

## (TC: 00:34:28)

Francesca Hillier: No, that's new wing.

## (TC: 00:34:29)

Sian Toogood: No, oh, that's the new wing. This place. Sorry, I apologise, it's on the east then.

## (TC: 00:34:33)

Francesca Hillier: New wing was built in the 1970s-,

## (TC: 00:34:36)

Sian Toogood: Yes.

## (TC: 00:34:37)

Francesca Hillier: And it's still called the new wing because up until when the Great Court was built and then the WCC was the newest bit of the new museum, we still all refer to it as the new wing, but it's not new anymore because it was built in the 1970s. The white wing was the bit that was added in the 1880s which is on the Montague Street side-,

## (TC: 00:34:53)

Sian Toogood: On the east (talking over each other 34.53)-,

## (TC: 00:34:53)

Francesca Hillier: So, it's on the east and to the right hand side-,

## (TC: 00:34:55)

Sian Toogood: And that's where Britain, Europe and pre history, Japan and so on are.

## (TC: 00:35:01)

Francesca Hillier: Yes, it is, and that was behind one of the official residences where the staff lived, because east wing was the staff residence.

## (TC: 00:35:13)

Sian Toogood: Yes. So, thank you very much Francesca.

## (TC: 00:35:16)

Francesca Hillier: You're welcome.

## (TC: 00:35:18)

Sian Toogood: If you, as an audience would like to come and see some of these plans or learn more about the architecture of the British Museum and associated early buildings, you can contact [archive@britishmuseum.org](mailto:archive@britishmuseum.org) and I would definitely encourage you to follow Francesca on Twitter, @Franabel2010 (ph 35.38). So, until next month, goodbye.

## (TC: 00:35:43)

Francesca Hillier: Goodbye.

## (TC: 00:35:44)

**Hugo Chapman: So, Sushma, I hear you're breaking away and doing a mini episode yourself?**

## (TC: 00:35:49)

**Sushma Jansari: I'm quite excited actually, I am. First one, so, I'm speaking with Doctor Alexandra Green who is the Henry Ginsburg curator of South East Asia at the British Museum, and she's going to show me around the new Raffles exhibitions which she has curated.**

## (TC: 00:36:04)

**Hugo Chapman: And where is that?**

## (TC: 00:36:05)

**Sushma Jansari: It's in room 91 which is on the fourth floor of the north stairs.**

## (TC: 00:36:09)

**Hugo Chapman: Yes, you walk through two marvellous Princeton drawing shows, Kathe Kollwitz and Pushing paper. Quite right. And that will be coming out when exactly?**

## (TC: 00:36:18)

**Sushma Jansari: It will come some time this month.**

## (TC: 00:36:21)

**Hugo Chapman: Can't wait. So, that's all we've got time for, but as always if you could write and review on iTunes that would be wonderful, hopefully in a positive way.**

## (TC: 00:36:32)

**Sushma Jansari: Yes, absolutely, all comments and suggestions are very welcome. Maybe you could send us a message on Twitter, and it's @BritishMuseum.**

## (TC: 00:36:40)

**Hugo Chapman: So, thank you for listening and we look forward to hearing from you.**

## (TC: 00:36:44)

**Sushma Jansari: Absolutely, see you next month.**