

Coins: a legacy of love to the Ashmolean Museum – transcript

Spencer Wisdom (SW): Good afternoon and welcome to our alumni webinar, 'A legacy of love to the Ashmolean Museum'. My name is Spencer Wisdom and I'm the Head of Development for Legacies at Oxford and it's my great pleasure to introduce today Dr Frédérique Duyrat, Keeper of the Heberden Coin Room and Director of Collections at the Ashmolean and Professor Chris Howgego, Research Keeper of the Heberden Coin Room. Welcome to this webinar and we hope to have time for some of the questions that you would like to ask our experts today so please do submit any questions you have into the chat and we'll take a selection of those questions at the end. Now, Carl Subak lived a long and incredible life. He died on the 6th of February 2022 at the age of 103 and we're honoured today to be joined by his daughter Susan and his son John, and to be able to share with you the story of one of the great loves of Carl's life - ancient coins. It was a love that began for Carl as a small boy on the estate his family managed as land agents in Petronell in Austria on the banks of the Danube, where centuries earlier a Roman legionary camp of Carnuntum had been located from which at one time the emperor Marcus Aurelius had commanded his army, no doubt stoically. And it was here that Carl found his first coin and ignited a passion that lasted a lifetime. Now, Chris, what is it about coins that can fascinate people so much, even young children like Carl?

Chris Howgego (CH): I think this is something that everyone can get in a way, and I use a couple of phrases to explain the interest of coins. The first phrase I'm going to use is 'history in your hand', you can simply, just one example will probably do, if you just put in the hand of a child, and this works with grown-ups too, say a coin of Julius Caesar from the year in which he was assassinated and it has his name and it says dictator on it, if you don't get excited by that then there's something sort of not quite working, and everyone can see that very direct connection with the material. I mean some people listening maybe have young children and aren't going to be able to put a coin of Julius Caesar into the hand of their child so I just thought I'd say that that in the money gallery in the Ashmolean we have created displays deliberately targeted at young children sort of in the 7 to 11 age group, which cover the Greeks and the Romans and the Anglo-Saxons and the Tudors and the Victorians, the periods that the children often study and they're interactives in the gallery too so if you want to excite your youngsters in this sort of way that's an excellent place to do it and of course the museum is free so do come along for those who can come. So 'history in your hand' is a very direct way, and one going think of any number of examples, but there's another phrase I use that applies, is perhaps even stronger, and applies more to Carl, which is 'history from the ground'. You've just heard that Carl, you know, found Roman coins on the site of Carnuntum which was a legionary site and a Roman town. He also, when he was young, and I'm sure this was a key part of the motivation, when he'd been good his father let him choose coins from a bowl which the estate workers, which his father managed, had found coins when they were out in the fields and put them in the bowl, and Carl was motivated by being able to choose them, and that's a really good way, of course, of exciting the young. He was obviously particularly interested in what he was seeing and this is Roman history just coming out from home, as it were. He did become a collector and he was obviously precocious. We know that he was attending the great free war auctions in Vienna by the age of 16, so was a school boy,

he went to school in Vienna but he was already, these are famous auctions and he was there, and he was proud to talk about that. We also know, and I don't know quite how this happened, that he visited the distinguished London coin dealer A H Baldwin and Sons just before the war, whilst still a school boy, and that's a dealership which was close to Charing Cross down by the Thames, and there's a lovely story that he was so excited he chose so many coins that he couldn't afford all of them, but the proprietor actually allowed him to take them all away and pay later, and he was very grateful for that and remembered that, and he was already fostering connections with the coin trade at that stage. He was later to go on to become a successful coin and stamp dealer himself in Chicago, and he also became a specialist collector. Collectors typically start off collecting everything, but if you want to make a real impact you often choose a particular area and really get to know those, but I'm really running ahead of the story now so I'll hand back to you to tell what happened to Carl in between.

SW: No, well it's fascinating, and in your experience Chris, are the children who come into the Ashmolean now as taken with coins and still fascinated?

CH: Yes, very much so. In fact when we opened, the whole museum was redeveloped in 2009 with something like 30 new galleries, and the money gallery became so popular that families with young children were directed to go to the money gallery first, and it's partly having the interactives and things there, but I always considered it a great success not when the children were playing in the interactives, but when the grown-ups were dragged in them so they could have a go, I thought that showed you had really succeeded.

SW: You had hit the mark! Well you mentioned Carl's journey and introduced the 1930s and we know that for Carl and his family in Austria as the 1930s progressed, life did become tougher as the Nazis came to power in Germany, and then following the Anschluss in Austria itself, and we'd like you to hear from Carl himself a little bit about the period that he lived through and the decisions that they made as a family to survive.

Carl Subak (CS): And I arrived in England, that was in May of 39. Well then eventually I got my, oh yes, in England my cousins already had arrived because Jewish children were evacuated, in what was called the Kindertransport, and those two younger boys were able to go on this transport to England in 39.

Interviewer: Which cousins were those?

CS: They would be the sons of father's brother, who lived in the same building. We grew up like brothers because those cousins, even though they were quite a bit younger than me, I played often with them because they lived in the same building just upstairs.

Interviewer: So was this the little cousin who had taken your...

CS: Yes, and the older of those two was the boy who took my application to the American Consulate. And it impressed me that that he was so conscientious that had actually done it because that, almost my life had depended on this, if I would have known how important it was, you know, but that was very early in 38, a few, maybe three, four weeks after the Nazis marched in. I didn't, I mean, I had no serious intent to come to America.

Interviewer: And your two cousins who were they to stay with?

CS: There were some Jewish families actually, who took children in from the so-called Kindertransport, so they stayed – the younger one, which at that time I think must have been around 11, yeah, he must have been around 11 or 12, he was with a family and the older boy, the one who took my application to the consulate, he was sent to a farm in the northeast of England and he worked on the farms.

Interviewer: You were in contact with them when you were in England? How did you make that contact?

CS: Well, I knew where they were, I mean, I was in contact with my mother and also with the family of my uncle and so they, I always knew where they were, and we all stayed in close contact, I knew where my sister was at all times, so I knew where she was in Italy, I knew when she came to America, I knew where she was in America, I knew where my cousins were, I knew where my... we all stayed in contact.

Interviewer: What was the next step you took?

CS: Well then eventually I got my American visa and.

Interviewer: How did that come to you?

CS: The American Consulate would notify me that my quota was now reached and so I was invited to come to the American Consulate for an interview, and also then go to the consulate doctor for a physical examination.

SW: To hear from Carl himself talking about how he, his sister and cousins did escape and incredible to hear the lovely soft voice he had with that hint of an Austrian accent. Chris, you came to know Carl very well in in your time as Curator and then Keeper of the Coin Room. Why was the Coin Room so important to Carl, and how did he support the museum and its work?

CH: Yes, well first of all I just like to say how incredibly moving it was to hear Carl again and I think people get a sense of what he was like with a twinkle in his eye and the obvious great intelligence, but also the quietness and balance with a topic like that, I mean and talking about that, I think that's a great tribute to the kind of man that he was. But to go back to your question, Carl's first involvement with the Coin Room I think was in the 1960s when he met

Michael Metcalf. Michael Metcalf was Keeper of the Heberden Coin Room before Frédérique and before me, he happened to bump into Carl and his wife Eileen on a train station and they struck up a friendship that lasted 40 or 50 years. One of the things that I think really cemented that was Carl was, he'd become a coin dealer and he was seeing these amazing things that had been found passing through the trade, but they weren't being recorded and he wanted someone to record these great finds and he tried a number of people and they had sort of said 'yes, very interesting' and nothing had happened, and he met Michael and what he talked about was published within a sort of month or two. Michael was a formidable person I sat opposite, next to him, opposite him for five years, he just sat there and wrote all day, he was just writing publications, it was astonishing, so he, you know, Carl had found the right person and they struck up this friendship and Carl became a regular visitor to Oxford when he got to know Michael even better, and he used to stay with Michael and his wife Dorothy in North Oxford, but he also got to know everyone in the Coin Room as well and so he became friends and he started giving annual donations to the Coin Room, something like £10,000 a year to start with, and he was very, sort of, he trusted us to do our job as it were, he didn't dictate what that was necessarily for, but the help he gave us in his lifetime about which you asked and which was really important actually, came in three forms. One was helping us with Acquisitions, which we used to pay for out of the regular grants that he gave us and if something exceptional came up we would write to him and he might help a bit more. I couldn't list them all but I was going to give you two examples. In 2004 we were able to acquire the Chalgrove Hoard, which was 5,000 Roman coins that were found in a pot only about 10 mil away from Oxford. I knew this hoard very well it was found at the weekend and brought in to me on a Monday in a cardboard box and I said we're going to be creating a money gallery. I contacted my friend at the British Museum, I said we'd love to acquire this hoard because you need a hoard in a pot to really sort of show the excitement of finding treasure. It turned out to be much more exciting than I imagined because as they were going through and conserving this hoard they found a Roman emperor that no one had ever heard of, someone called Domitianus, who was Emperor about ad 271, an extraordinary thing. In fact he had been known from one of the coin which had been found in France 100 years earlier, but people initially thought that was a forgery, but this had been found in the centre of this hoard, just leaping out, so that when I say 'history from the ground' this is a really good example, and it's particularly I think a nice thing that Carl was able to help us buy it. But Carl gave us £4,000 towards this, which about a tenth of the purchase price, and this is one of the things his donations were able to do, to help us, with. When you want to acquire treasure which is found there are pre-emption rights for museums, but you have to raise the full value to reward the finder, and you can apply to public funds but you really need to start off with some funds, and so Carl was able to provide us with the seedcorn money for this, and I, switching from what was quite the first hoard I think he helped us buy to the last hoard that that he helped us buy in 2016, was an amazing hoard of coins from Watlington, so on the chalk where the road, more or less where, close to where the road goes over towards London. This came from the end of the 870s so there were 200 Anglo-Saxon silver pennies, jewellery fragments and ingots, and this seems to have been buried by the Vikings when they were moving back from the West, the marshes and all, and all that, to to East Anglia in 879 so we have an exact context. But the real interest of this hoard was it included lots of coins with

portraits of Alfred the Great, a the key figure, and also of Ceolwulf II of Mercia, and the hoard showed to us that in fact although in Alfred propaganda and as seen in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Ceolwulf is portrayed as someone very weak and as a vassal of the Vikings, in fact they were in full alliance with Alfred and clearly what happened is Alfred at some point did away with his former ally and took control of the whole of England, so there's a really new story about the foundation of England coming straight out of the ground in Oxfordshire. Now that's an amazing thing and Carl helped us to acquire that hoard, and in fact I think this is perhaps also worth just stressing, he gave us \$29,000 towards that and that helped us raise 1.4 million which is what the hoard actually cost, so I suppose Carl was smart and he liked us doing smart things, and that sort of way of leveraging what a donor can do for you is something which people, you know, people remember and which I think showed Carl that that he was his benefactions were going in a good direction. So that's astonishing. So he helped us with acquisition, he also helped us with research, he helped actually pay for a small book which we created on the Watlington hoard that I've just talked about which was actually published with amazing speed, in part by one of my colleagues John Naylor, which actually came out before we did the fundraising and so Carl by helping to pay for the book also helped us with the fundraising, so that's another rather nice way of going about things. I said that Carl became a specialist collector, he collected large European silver coins and coins of Augustus, but he's probably best known for a specialist collection of quinarii, which I imagine most people on the call haven't heard about. The standard Roman coin was a denarius and a quinarius was a half of that and they're really very rare, I think Carl bought his first one in the 1970s but he then went on to create a specialist collection and he commissioned a colleague of mine who was the at the Ashmolean called Cathy King to produce the standard book on this denomination, which included the coins from Carl's collection itself and coins also from all over the world, so he commissioned this great scholarly work too. So that was just two of the ways in which he was helping us with scholarship.

SW: And with a hoard Chris, the example you've given about the Watlington hoard, when they come and they're in sort of earthen pots. is that part of the story as well?

CH: Well certainly, it shows that all the coins certainly belong together and someone's buried it deliberately, and sometimes people bury hordes at fixed distances away from each other so you can start looking in straight lines for others and things, but yes I mean people mostly buried their treasure for retrieval, but in some cases they buried them as sort of offerings to the gods and things and they weren't intended to recover.

SW: You wonder with Carl's story, whether that resonated with him, the idea of having to flee quickly, and deposit what you had.

CH: Well quite possibly, that in some ways leads us on very nicely to the final category where Carl helped us, an actually inspirational piece of help and I think he was thinking about his own experience of fleeing Austria in the war. Shortly after the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, Carl and also his son John, I think that's on the call today, and a few others through their initiative, created a studentship for numismatists from countries of the former Eastern Europe

as it were, part of the Soviet block, to be able to visit Oxford so they could come and visit Oxford for four to six weeks and study in the summer. These are people on the whole who either hadn't had the money or perhaps even the permission to travel before, so it was a really important thing, he saw that as a moment of freedom, the return of democracy to Eastern Europe, and an opportunity to get people out and to meet us, and in fact from 1991 to 2004, 27 scholars came from 11 countries and these are visits that people still remember and they've made connections which last and which help us now in our international research projects to have contacts, you know internationally, so it really builds on itself, and I'm really happy to say although that scheme ran till 2004, in fact it was possible with help from another very generous donor, the Ronus Foundation, to revive that scheme in 2018 and it still carries on and last year for example we had a visit from a Ukrainian scholar who's done extraordinary things recording what's being found by metal detectors often publicized on Facebook but in the most incredible circumstances, when you think about it, and so you know, you really feel these schemes do good.

SW: And all part of Carl's legacy.

CH: So that's Carl's legacy. In fact the renewal of it was from the Ronus Foundation, but that lasted you know, under his sponsorship, for what 10, 13 years or 14 years or something, so it is. And this just, I mean Carl was a great traveller, he travelled everywhere. I should perhaps mention that he travelled so much that that when he visited Michael Metcalf or his brother in Glasgow he actually kept walking boots in their houses so you could go walking so he was traveling all the time, so yes I think the idea that mixing people up and traveling is you know, that was something clearly part of his motivation for and such wonderful timing with the restoration of freedom to Eastern Europe.

SW: Absolutely.

CH: Well, one final thing I should say just about his motivation for philanthropy, because he once explained that he wasn't a collector who could only see coins, he knew perfectly well that there were bigger things in the world to which you could give money, like you know, global poverty or something like that, and he actually articulated that, but he said he was wealthy but he wasn't that wealthy and he couldn't really shift the dial on global poverty, but by giving money to something he cared about and targeting that, he could really make a difference, and that's something he was very keen to do, and I hope you've got the sense from even what he was doing in his lifetime and even more perhaps what we'll hear about later he really was able to do something extraordinary.

SW: Absolutely, well let's talk a little bit more about that, if we may, Frédérique – we heard from Chris that Carl was fascinated by Roman coins but the Ashmolean's Coin Room goes back much earlier and in fact right the way up to the present date. What do they tell us, those coins, and how do they enable us to trace global history?

Frédérique Duyrat (FD): Yeah, thank you for the question which is excellent and I think the Ashmolean museum is the right place to answer it, especially because before speaking about the coins I think we need to understand the institution itself and in fact the emerging coin room has in fact a very long story. So formally it was founded only in 1922, so more than one century ago, but in 1922 what happened is that the Ashmolean museum gathered the collections through Oxford across colleges and the Bodleian and brought them in the same place with the founding collection of the Ashmolean museum itself, because in fact the Tradescants are the original collection of the Ashmolean museum in the 17th century already had coins, so we have that very long history of collecting and that sort of wonderful depth and it makes the collection also extremely interesting because being formerly the collection of research institutions like the colleges, the Bodleian or the museum itself, it has that sort of holistic blend between that encompasses any kind of coin or means of payment used in the world through history and which means that we have obviously coins from the birth of coinage in the 7th Century BC in current, in Turkey, modern Turkey, but also original coins which were not round from China for instance, and we also have other kind of monetary objects, like tokens, bank notes obviously, and we also have objects that are related to coins but are not coins, which are medals and everything around a metallic heart, so it's that variety in fact already shows what the wealth of knowledge that we can bring from the study of these objects, and obviously I should add more complex collections like hoards and Chris beautifully explained in fact all the wealth of knowledge we can bring from the study of a complete hoard, especially if it has an archaeological context, so it makes the Ashmolean museum and the Heberden Coin Room a very exciting place in fact to work and study coins. May I mention that we currently have 350,000 coins and related objects, which makes it one of the top 10 collections in the world, and coins are indeed extremely useful to understand global history because they are related to every aspect of life. In fact our first reaction when we think about a coin is to think about what we have in our wallet, which is a round object, and we go and buy some bread or something like that with it, the point is that in fact if we study coins we are, we discover an entire civilization. For instance if you take iconography, just the images are extremely carefully designed by the coin issuers, and you also have coins as we understand them, so just objects that you count and people tacitly agree on their value you know, so a hoard like that for instance, I could speak for hours, it's more my area, about a hoard like that, but you learn really a lot from this object and there, sorry you want to...

SW: No no no, but I think you said in your answer that the establishing collection, so from Elias Ashmole's collection, would have included coins then, when the museum was created, and the coins from that time, so from the 17th century, Charles I, would now be ancient coins themselves and of significant historical interest.

FD: Yes.

SW: Would it be true that some of the coins in our pockets now are going to give that sort of information to future historians in centuries to come?

FD: Oh yes, they will have to, because coins are really interesting because you won't put any image on it, it's always very carefully chosen by the power that strike the coins, so you won't have something that is mundane for instance, you will have a carefully chosen image of that power, it's self image in fact, so yes it will. The difference may be that our coins are struck by millions, technically they are overwhelmingly represented, so it won't be the same kind of work as working on coins in periods when in fact coinage only covers one part of the exchanges, so it's a limited quantity of coinage, now coins are everywhere all the time, so the quantity I think will completely change the scope of other studies in the future.

SW: Fascinating, and throwing a question out there, if I may, about coins and whether they would be of use to future historians do you think there will still be coins in 300 years, 400 years time?

FD: Well it's difficult to answer that question, you know it reminds me when digital books are starting developing and being fashionable and everybody said 'oh, end of printed books', it will in 10 years we will all be reading digital, it's not true. In fact we are publishing more books now but we are producing less long series, I mean you would publish 10,000 copies instead of 30,000 but in fact the editorial sector is very healthy and has produced quite a lot since then, so I could not answer that question easily, it's you know, but I'm not sure that coin will completely disappear, so yeah. And there was the last thing I wanted to say because we have been speaking about coins as physical objects but in fact what we do at the Coin Room is also now what we call Big Data because coins are digitized, we've created portals that allows to gather collection from other museums and coin cabinets which mean that we now are in a situation that is wonderful because we can give access to this collection to absolutely anyone from anywhere, in a way that is extremely easy, because when I was a student you needed to know in which library, to go which book to read, which news, you don't need that now. You come there, usually you have bibliographical reference with it, and these big data are really transforming completely the landscape of ancient numismatics and I'm sure that Carl would have been very excited about that because it's new areas, new ways of studying, and we have added a new layer, recently we've started working with artificial intelligence and for instance we are currently having a project at the Heberden Coin Room led by Dr Jerome Mairat who has managed in fact to use Chat GPT to develop abbreviated legends on provincial coins which is a nightmare if you're not a specialist, and with Chat GPT he is doing that automatically, and he's training the machine to translate that, so we are, it's the next step to open this type of object to absolutely everyone because everyone will be able to read that, and it would enable for instance students to work with coins while they would have hesitated because they were so tricky and such a specific topic years ago.

SW: It's amazing, so we're using AI to learn more about the coins that we've already got in our collections. Fantastic. Well, you mentioned about Carl and how impressed he would have been with all this. Carl made such generous provision for the coin room in his will, and that was on the centenary of of the Coin Room itself. What difference is his legacy going to make to coins at the Ashmolean and what are your plans for the future of the Heberden Coin Room?

FD: So I should start saying that when Carl's legacy was detailed I received emails from people from all the other major coin cabinets saying 'wow, this is absolutely mind-blowing, what remarkable generosity' so Carl's legacy already places me in a different word I would say. I've been here six months for me, so it started with that, which was really amazing. Carl's legacy is divided in two parts in fact, and one is dedicated to acquisition and the other one to research, with our, the main areas, where he always supported the Coin Room. I must say that the acquisition side has already started making a difference because the value of coins on the art market have been increasing constantly during the last decades which makes for institutions like museums, it makes it very difficult to acquire our first class coins because the prices are really, really high, so to have such a support is already fantastic, and we have already started working with Carl's legacy because we are currently in the process of purchasing a complete collection of medieval coins from the Oxford mint dated to Charles I, so again we see the power of that historical episode and that collection is for us very exciting because it has been gathered according to the dies, so the dies are the tools that are used to strike the coins and it's quite rare in fact that a collector organizes a collection like that, but if you can purchase this collection we will have the complete series of every single die used for this and Carl's legacy will play a big part in our capacity to purchase all this collection.

SW: And those are coins minted in Oxford? That's incredible that they're coming back to Oxford and will remain here.

FD: Yeah, and there is a second area where we are quite proactive, it's a Portable Antiquity Scheme because John Naylor, who is part of the team, is in fact working for the Portable Antiquity Scheme and you may know that regularly detectors find fantastic hoards or coins, individual coins, and when, so normally they are purchased by local museums in this country, the point is that sometimes local museums are either not interested or don't have the money, and so one of the possibilities for us in the future will be to use Carl's legacy to purchase any very important finds that would not have found a museum to take it, so we have a fantastic opportunity in fact to make sure that the objects don't go back to commerce but stay in the museum with us.

SW: And once they're in the museum, they stay here and are preserved forever?

FD: Yeah.

SW: Which is exactly what Carl would have wanted.

FD: So, and the second part is research, so you know, Carl's record was always was very generous, today's research is almost entirely based on our capacity to successful apply to research grants, and so we are quite successful in that field but it's quite, it narrows in fact our capacity to research to the areas where we find the money. Carl's generosity is such that it will allow us in fact to decide freely which research we would like to support and it will give us great flexibility and the opportunity to develop research along several axes, one is where I

would like to plough my own furrow, I would say, I would like to create a bigger grant, in fact a bigger grant application, typically now we are back to ERC, so European, very big grant, since the UK is again part of it, I think it would be fantastic if we could try that and hopefully be successful, and the second area where I really would like to encourage the Coin Room is sustainability of our big digital project, because all of them are in fact relying on research grants, either from donors or from other sources of funding and it's always a threat, and so I would, although Carl's helped there, I think the best solution for us would be to support research seeds, as you said beautifully you know research seeds, and encourage with Carl's money these young projects, you know when you are in an emerging field sometimes you are not big enough or not ripe enough for a big application and so Carl's money will give us the flexibility to encourage new thinking, new paths, and then the idea obviously will be to leverage in support and write applications for the grants once the ideas are ripe, so that that's the first area. The second area for me would be to support researchers with time, because in fact we spend a lot of time collecting data but we often don't have enough time to think about the data we collected and typically our digital projects are absolutely massive so they require more time in fact to extract the historical material they have gathered there, and so my idea would be to have a kind of council backed 'research of the year' on this kind of project, so I have proposed Chris to be the next one so maybe you can say a word of what we you will do.

CH: Sure, well that's an immense privilege. I've been running one of these big digital projects in numismatics for the last 10 years or so, called 'Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire'. This is about mapping digitally the coin hoards that have been found at large across the world. They astonishingly run from Ireland all the way through to Thailand, I mean who thought Roman material extended over that long and over that far, and also over the first four, five, six centuries AD, so we've already put online sort of 17,000 – 18,000 hoards containing an astonishing 7 million coins. This is the sort of big data which isn't available so much in the humanities, and this is a project which has been wonderfully funded for us by another very generous benefactor, the Augustus Foundation, but the one thing that's been missing is, although I've been running this project with a colleague Professor Andrew Wilson in All Souls, I haven't actually really had any time myself to start writing about all that data, so the idea of having a year to actually sit back and think about this data is astonishing and I'm sure that, you know, Carl would have appreciated the fact that it's both about Rome and it's also about hoards which were two of his great interests, and I can't help adding just a coda which I hope might just strike a note with John and Susan, that I, we, employ directly just two people on this and one of them is a Romanian scholar, a friend of mine, Cristian Gazdak, and Cristian Gazdak, before he worked for our project, was responsible for publishing the coin finds from Carnuntum, where else, so this is a most wonderful sort of apposite and relevant sort of thing. I mean, who would have thought that would even happen, so I think the multiple references there to Carl's interest make this a particularly interesting project to work on, but no, the potential of what you can do with that amount of data in all sorts of different ways, I mean, we're rethinking how, you know, Roman imperialism and the Romans' attitude to commerce and Rome's attitude to its boundaries through this kind of data, and we're working

on that right now, so I hope that's pleasing to John and Susan as a nice coda to what we've been talking about.

SW: I'm sure it will be, and from what you've both said today, Carl seems to have been a very savvy philanthropist and being able to use seed funding and by engaging with you both as academics and curators and the museum staff to really maximize the impact of his philanthropy at the museum. Is that something you welcome and would encourage people with a similar passion to Carl to get into contact with you both and with the teams at the Ashmolean to see how they could achieve similar impact.

CH: Well of course, very much so, and we're lucky to have a large number of donors, all of whom turn out to be interesting in you know in different ways and I mean I think this one example really of Carl just shows how rich that sort of relationship can be. One thing I'd say about Carl, I mean I think maybe you got it from listening to him talking, he was incredibly intelligent and incredibly savvy but he didn't seem to have a big ego so he was really interested in how things would actually work, rather than having, you know, something which he wanted to force on us, so it enabled us to do our job as well, which is an incredibly thoughtful kind of benefaction.

FD: May I say that for me that relationship, despite the fact I didn't have the pleasure of meeting him, is also a relationship of pleasure because we share the same passion obviously, but it's also, it's not just a passion for one or two people between themselves, I mean yes the Ashmolean museum is a fantastic place, it is a museum of the University of Oxford, we teach with this we teach, with the collection and we teach with the tool, the digital tool we are creating, we bring young people, the next generation of researchers, but also of barristers or any other kind of business, who are studying in Oxford, who are with us for a while, who love the history of this country, the global history through the objects and then go and plough their own furrow, I think it's part of the elation, of the real pleasure there is to work there with these collections.

SW: That's absolutely fascinating.

CH: It's not so much about donors and benefaction, it's about building relationships with people over time and that's what develops into these exciting ways, and you start off with a relationship with a person who shares your interests, and see where it goes from there.

FD: It's about sharing, absolutely.

SW: It's a mutual journey, that's fascinating. Well I can see that we're getting questions in from the audience and I wonder whether I might put a few to you. So the first one is, some of us have watched the program *Detectorists*, do our experts see metal detectorists as friend or foe nowadays?

FD: Well, how do we answer that, well I can make an answer which will be a difficult one. I love the Detectorists, I love the program and I think that detectorists are I mean partners in fact to the museum. I think it's very important that we have very strong relationship with them because to be a metal detectorist, it's not just about digging when you hear your metal detector bipping, it's about making sure that the historical information you find in the ground is collected properly and as much as possible with it's context because if you don't have the context in fact you lose a part of the identity of the object you're collecting, so for me they are definitely partners, and I'm making my British answer because I'm French and so no, in my country, my birth country, it is completely different. Detection is almost forbidden in fact, so it's a completely different thing, but it's not the topic here!

CH: No, I think what's been really important about this country is the foundation in, I think it was 1997, the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which was a scheme to sort of advise and regulate on what metal detectorists were to do with the things that they found. Obviously no one thinks it's a good idea for metal detectorist to go on registered archaeological sites and that kind of thing, but there are codes of practice, but you can't actually, metal detecting is not illegal and you can't stop people doing it, so much the best thing is to work with people, and the amount of data that's been generated has absolutely transformed some subjects. I mean like the use of money in Anglo Saxon England, which is a subject which is completely different now we have all these metal detector finds so, and countries which haven't gone for that kind of voluntary code simply see lots of coins found by metal detectorists which are then not reported at all, so what's happened in this country has been a beneficial relationship between metal detectorists and archaeologists and museum people which has transformed very many subjects. They have found new sites, they've found huge categories of artefacts that people didn't know about in that scale before, and it's a real example of citizen science actually, which I think we can all applaud as it were. Friends on the whole but not the naughty ones.

FD: The record of the Portable Antiquities Scheme is spectacular, absolutely spectacular, really, really.

SW: Well that that's a lovely answer, thank you both very much for that. Someone's just put up another question that if people aren't able to make it over to Oxford to visit the Ashmolean in person, is there a way they can also see any of these collections that we've discussed today online?

FD: Yeah absolutely, we have a very nice website, the museum has just renovated it's public website so it's quite easy to use and yes please take a look – I don't know if you want to add anything about that?

CH: No, I mean I think in common with all museums we have a major initiative to digitize all our collections and that is the way of the future, both for putting things on record for security reasons obviously, but also for making that data available to everybody who wants it, whether they be just someone who's casually interested, or someone who wants to do you know mass

analysis of big data, and everything in between the two so that is, you can see increasingly large percentages of the collection online now.

SW: That's wonderful to hear, and as a spin-off question to that, the question is can anyone start collecting coins and if so what tips would you give to those amateur collectors?

FD: Where do we start!

CH: Well, anyone can start collecting coins, I mean it could be a perfectly legal occupation and a lot of people get a great deal of pleasure and interest out of doing this, particularly if they come, as Carl did, to focus on a particular area of collecting so they really get to know it. I think the most important tip if you're getting into collecting is to get to know a reputable dealer who can advise you. I mean there are coins out there all over the place, I mean you can buy them on eBay and that that kind of thing, but you really do need some advice, so there are numismatics societies to which people can join and get some help from other people who collect, and really getting to know reputable dealers who can help you build up a collection, then later you'll be able to build up a kind of impetus and expertise yourself and take more greater charge of it, but I think getting good advice to start with is really important.

SW: And finding that personal relationship with a collector, and that's what Carl did, from your biography of him, from his earlier stages.

CG: Yeah well, he started collecting young and you see what the benefits have been.

SW: Yes absolutely. One of the questions that's come in is that an acknowledgement that coins are such a great primary source for historians. Could you tell us a little bit more about how the collections we have within the museum have advanced our historical understanding in particular areas, are there any that really spring to mind to say it's because of coins that we now know this about an aspect of politics or history of the period.

CH: Well the most relevant example I think that comes to mind is going back to Michael Metcalf, I mean Carl's great friend. Michael did very detailed academic work on the coinage of the Anglo-Saxon action period and he worked with metal detectors, or metal detectorists I should say, so that links up, recording the finds of little Anglo-Saxon silver coins all over the country on a scale that we simply didn't understand before, so when the Romans left there was a while when very little coinage came into the country, and then around about 600 or something Anglo Saxons started producing their own coinage and for a couple of hundred years I think it had been argued that these coins weren't used to any, they were sort of prestige objects, that weren't used to any great extent, but now we see the number of, the number of small coins that were being produced, it transforms our understanding of Anglo Saxon England and that's down to Michael Metcalf working with metal detectorists and then publishing what he did, and rather wonderfully, I mean you talk about our collection, on his 21st anniversary of keeper Michael actually gave 25 Anglo action coins which had actually be

found by detectorists to the collection, so that would building the collection too, so all these things feedback on each other.

FD: Yeah, may I add that what is specific to the Ashmolean museum is that it is a museum of the University of Oxford so as a result it's about coin collection but is also about the people, and in fact the series of numismatists who have worked there and were famous people, I mean Heavens or Robinson and so on, who have completely transformed the landscape of ancient numismatics in that case, it's absolutely amazing so we're working on the collection but not only and it is that unique blend that is really unique to Oxford to have the collection and to have the specialists in the same place, that to my eyes at least makes it a fantastic place for history, for writing history.

CH: So I think it's a great combination, we've mentioned research but also teaching, that's the other thing which you know the Heberden Coin Room has led from its start from its inception in 1922, and in fact even a bit earlier that were people teaching this academic subject which we call numismatics but we just mean sort of coins and history from coins by that, and so the regular teaching within the University of, we're so privileged in Oxford of course because you've got students coming from all over the world, so by sitting here and teaching you wind up teaching people from all over the world, and if you do it for long enough that makes the most amazing impact, so alongside the research I would just emphasize how wonderful it is to work in a museum which is part of a University from a teaching perspective as well.

SW: That's great to hear, and I think we've got time for one more question and this is a rather nice one to finish on, so it's saying hoards are continuing to be found and unearthed all the time, what would the experts' dream coin or coins be to see uncovered in any future hoard.

FD: Well, it's a very difficult question, but I think that a coin that would be completely amazing to find would be a gold coin of Cleopatra, of Queen Cleopatra, because in fact especially if it has a good portrait of her, because a coin of Cleopatra is notoriously not aesthetically satisfying, let's say, and we have no gold coin at all, which is quite astonishing for such a powerful Queen, and so that I think would be absolutely amazing. I don't know if it really answers your question?

SW: It does, seeing her beautiful face, or the profile, on a coin.

FD: Yeah, but I think that she had a sort of bun, you know, that is very severe and a very ugly profile on our coins and the best portrait are on bronze coins in fact, and the silver coin portraits of Cleopatra are quite astonishing because she looks like Mark Antony so she is a sort of male-ish, which is probably voluntary, I mean you know she embodies power in, and power is male in that case, but obviously the reverse of the coin are amazing because you have Cleopatra on one side and Mark Antony on the other really look the same, so no a nice gold Hellenistic coin of Cleopatra would be something to bring about.

SW: Thanks Frédérique, that's a great answer. Chris, any wish list coins that you would say?

CH: I, well I'm going to very carefully not answer your question, because my experience of seeing hoards, I mentioned the Domitianus coin with the new emperor and the Watlington hoard, and there have been a number of other really interesting, there was a hoard of tudor gold from the time of bit before the dissolution of the monasteries found on Church land and things, so to me it's the surprise that come with hoards, so not knowing what's going to come is the really exciting thing, so I'd like to leave that potential open rather than pinning down exactly what I want. That's my own answer anyway, and one's constantly surprised by what comes up, even in Oxfordshire, which had been a very boring county actually for coin finds before I started my Keepership, and nothing to do with me really, it turned out to be really exciting for the times I've been here since 1988, so yeah one get surprises, and I think that's surprises in history which get you to look at things differently or just know things you didn't know before that is really exciting.

SW: Well that that was such a great answer to finish on, thank you very much, and which brings us towards the end of the webinar. It's my privilege to say thank you to our experts Frédérique and Chris, for all they shared with us all today, to say thank you so much to Carl and all our donors like Carl who through their donations enable the research that we've discussed today, and acquisitions to take place, and to thank you all for joining us. We as a legacy team are always delighted to speak with any supporters who are interested in making a legacy like Carl and our details are going to be on the screen at the end of this broadcast, so it really remains for me to say thank you so much for joining us, I very much hope to hear from some of you and would be delighted to do so, but from our panel here in Oxford today, thank you very much and enjoy the rest of your afternoons.