



## **The MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund celebrates 125 years of supporting regional acquisitions**

*"The Purchase Grant Fund is one of the unsung heroes of the museum world, quietly achieving results of lasting value for communities up and down the country with maximum effectiveness and minimal bureaucracy"*

Jacob Simon, National Portrait Gallery

Over the past 125 years, the Purchase Grant Fund has enabled regional organisations from Cornwall to Cumbria to acquire objects as varied as Bronze Age rings, a Victorian kitchen range, a manuscript by Ted Hughes, Gainsborough drawings and a Grayson Perry pot.

This summer museums, archives and specialist libraries in England and Wales will mark the Purchase Grant Fund's anniversary in a number of ways and objects supported by the Fund will be highlighted in displays and featured in exhibitions.

The Fund was launched in 1881 with a budget of £1,500 to support the recently-founded municipal museums to build their collections. Operated and financed by the South Kensington Museum, now called the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), the scheme has always formed a key part of the Museum's nationwide work. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) now provides £1m for the grants annually as part of its framework to support collections development.

Now, as then, the Fund's aim is to raise the quality of collections and standards of collections care through financial assistance to acquire significant items which, without the Fund's support, museums could not afford.

It is the only fund which regularly supports significant but more modest purchases which are not necessarily major heritage items or works of art.

From the beginning, the Purchase Grant Fund has been a conduit for expertise and advice. This is often as valuable to applicants as financial support. Expert

advice is provided by curators at the V&A, other national museums and The National Archives.

### **Notes to editors**

- The MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund supports the acquisition of objects relating to the arts, literature and history by regional museums, record offices and specialist libraries in England and Wales.
- Each year the PGF considers over 300 applications and in 2005-06 awarded £1,000,949 to 104 organisations, enabling acquisitions of over £3.9 million to go ahead. For details of grants given visit <http://www.vam.ac.uk/purchasegrantfund>
- The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is the lead strategic agency for museums, libraries and archives. We are part of the wider MLA Partnership, working with the nine regional agencies to improve people's lives by building knowledge, supporting learning, inspiring creativity and celebrating identity. The partnership acts collectively for the benefit of the sector and the public, leading the transformation of museums, libraries and archives for the future. <http://www.mla.gov.uk>
- For further information contact V&A press office. Email [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk) or call 0207 942 2725