

21th April 2016

Press information

Visitors flock to new Harley Gallery at Welbeck

The new gallery for The Portland Collection at The Harley Gallery, Welbeck, in north Notts, is celebrating a successful first month which has seen over 10,000 visitors flocking to the new attraction.

Unveiled to the public on Sunday 20th March, the new gallery houses treasures of The Portland Collection, assembled over 400 years by the Dukes of Portland. Masterpieces include: Michelangelo's Madonna del Silenzio, on show for the first time in 50 years; Van Dyck's paintings of a young Charles II in armour and Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford, not publicly exhibited since 1960, as well as the pearl earring worn by Charles I at his execution in 1649.

Carol Neal, from Woodsetts in South Yorkshire, was the 10,000th visitor to attend The Portland Collection, visiting alongside sisters Jane Nicholls and Ann Broadfoot.

Carol said: "What an amazing gallery! We came on a lovely sunny day, the gallery was bathed in light and so spacious. The collections are beautifully presented and fascinating, we particularly enjoyed the miniatures and the George Stubbs paintings."

Images: <http://bit.ly/1TiXHTL>

Lisa Gee, Director at The Harley Gallery, said: "We're so pleased with the number of visitors and the positive reaction to The Portland Collection gallery. We've welcomed lots of families through our doors as well as visitors from across the UK. The quality of the displays and the exhibits has ensured that visitors have really engaged with the works; a drawing by Michelangelo has been especially popular."

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Local tourism has also seen a boost since the opening with nearby businesses enjoying increased trade. The award-winning Welbeck Farm Shop, which shares a courtyard with the new gallery, has also seen an increase in footfall since the opening of The Portland Collection.

Shop Manager Oliver Stubbins said: "It's been wonderful to see so many new faces in Welbeck Farm Shop. Visitors are enjoying finding out about Welbeck – learning about the estate's history in The Portland Collection and then discovering the great artisan food community who work here now through Welbeck Farm Shop. Cheese has been especially popular, with customers enjoying locally made Stichelton blue cheese."

The Portland Collection is free to visit and is open daily 11am - 4pm. For more information visit: www.harleygallery.co.uk.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

Images: <http://bit.ly/1TiXHTL>

The Portland Collection:

The new gallery showcases masterpieces from The Portland Collection, including:

- Michelangelo's *Madonna del Silenzio* (c.1538), on show for the first time in 50 years
- A rarely seen Van Dyck painting of Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford and advisor to Charles I, not publicly exhibited since 1960
- The pearl earring worn by Charles I at his execution in 1649
- The Portland Tiara by Cartier worn by Winifred, Duchess of Portland to the coronation of Edward VII, and drawings of the tiara on display for the first time

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- George Stubbs painting of the 3rd Duke of Portland on horseback outside the stables at Welbeck

The Harley Gallery

The Harley Gallery is where old and new come together. Home to the historic Portland Collection of fine and decorative art, displays from this internationally significant collection are accompanied by exhibitions from leading contemporary artists.

Additional attractions include events, ranging from tours of the State Rooms at Welbeck Abbey to meeting craftspeople at the Open Studios, a café serving homemade meals and snacks, shop specialising in contemporary crafts, and children's' activity area.

Situated on the picturesque Welbeck Estate in Nottinghamshire, The Harley Gallery is easily reached from the A1 and M1.

Free entry. Free parking. www.harleygallery.co.uk

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