

The Rockridge Museum

The Museum of Asian Art, Antiquities and Culture at Rockridge University (to give it its full title) was opened in 1960, to house and display a world renowned collection that covers the entire range of human history and prehistory from the civilisations and cultures of Asia, Egypt, Islamic North Africa as well as the Near- and Mid-East. Originally built around the private collection of the Third Duke of Rockridge, the museum owes its very existence to the private passions of collectors fascinated by Egyptian antiquities, Chinese ceramics and many other aspects of Asian art and material culture – donated exhibits from a variety of sources have swelled the museum's collected works to over 10,000 objects. Open to the public, schools, scholars and researchers, the museum is widely recognised as the county's leading exhibition of its type

The small, but passionate, staff is led by the museum's director, William J. Le Petomane, with Howard Johnson taking responsibility for all aspects of marketing. With an obviously limited budget, however, any marketing activity is limited to leaflets being distributed around local hotels, tourist attractions and so forth and a great deal of public relations in order to raise the museum's profile. A small website is maintained by the staff in the university's IT department – there is no online purchasing facility. Formal marketing efforts are subsidised by those of the 'Friends of the Rockridge Museum' – a group of enthusiasts who give their time and expertise to support the museum.

Although visitors are asked to pay a nominal entrance fee (£1.50), educational activities incurring a charge to cover variable costs and relatively small contributions from the local council and the university itself, the museum relies on the generosity of individuals, companies, trusts and foundations to not only help run the institution, but also to acquire, display and research new material. Bequests, acquisitions and loans from private collections play a key role in the museum's development. Family activities, 'experience' days and guest exhibitions are all regular events held to increase awareness of the museum in the local community. The 'friends' also give their time to support these events, so keeping additional costs to a minimum.

Additional income is generated from a small café and a gift shop selling mementoes, books and illustrations of the various exhibits.



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