

# The Museum of the History of Science

## *Discovering the Entrance Gallery*

The Entrance Gallery shows the range of objects in the museum's collection and how it has been built up from different sources.

Use this sheet to help you find out about what's on display.

1. This building housed the original **Ashmolean Museum** when it opened in **1683**. It was named after a man called **Elias Ashmole** who wanted his collection of curious objects to be left in a museum.

What is this object in the display cabinet called '*The Old Ashmolean Building*'?



2. The next display cabinet is called '*Themes from the Lewis Evans Collection*'. Lewis Evans was a keen collector of scientific instruments. The **Museum of the History of Science** that opened in **1924** was built up around his collection. What sort of things did he collect?

Look at his portrait hanging on the wall and see if you can find the object he is holding. What do you think it is?



3. In the opposite corner you will find a collection of **microscopes**.

Look for **Benjamin Martin's 'Grand Universal'** microscope.

What is it made of? Why do you think so many instruments were made of this material?

Why do you think he called it the 'Grand Universal'? What does the design of this instrument say to you?



4. There are several earlier microscopes named after an instrument maker called **Culpeper**.

See if you can find one.

Where do the specimen slides go and how were they illuminated?

5. Look in the cabinet on the other side of the gallery next to the poster rack. It contains some miniature '**netsuke**' figures. These were often worn as part of traditional Japanese dress.

Why else they might have been worn?

Choose one that interests you and make a drawing of it in the space opposite.



6. The jewel in the crown of the museum's collection is the **spherical astrolabe** in the display case near the entrance. It was made in the Middle East in about A.D. 1480. Why do you think it is marked '**Year 885**'? (Clue: Religion?)

Why is it so special?

7. Nearby is an interesting clock made in France during the **French Revolution**. It has a clock-driven universe ('**armillary sphere**') on top!

Look carefully at the clock face. It has two hour dials, one in Arabic numerals and the other in Roman numerals. What is there a difference between them?

What else do the hands show?

9. At the bottom of a small cabinet near this corner you will find **John Russell's 'Selenographia'**. What does it show?

Russell was an artist who made careful drawings of the moon. What did he use to observe the moon?

Why is the other side of the moon blank?

10. Find the **Chinese cups for detecting poison**. How do they work?

8. In the nearby corner you will find '**The Orrery Collection**'.

**Orreries** are models that show arrangements of stars and planets.

Look at the two pairs of models showing the solar system.

What is the main difference between the '**Ptolemaic**' and the '**Copernican**' models?

How many planets are shown? Why?

Find the symbols used for **Venus** and **Mars**.

