F.L. GRIGGS
VISIONS OF ENGLAND

ASHMOLEAN TOURING EXHIBITION
The Ashmolean Museum is touring an exhibition celebrating the work of F. L. Griggs (1876–1938). While Griggs trained initially as an architect in the Arts & Crafts tradition under C. E. Mallows, it is as a draughtsman and printer-maker that he is best known. His unsurpassed contemporary reputation as an etcher was acknowledged by his election to the Royal Academy in 1931. Demonstrating an equal mastery of meticulous architectural detail and poetic effects of light and atmosphere, he created images of compelling visionary intensity.

Griggs’s artistic career was assured in 1900 by a commission from Macmillan to illustrate their guidebook series Highways and Byways. Beginning with his native Hertfordshire, he completed eleven further volumes, among them that devoted to Oxford and the Cotswolds. Places that he originally encountered as an illustrator often subsequently provided him with inspiration for his own topographical and imaginative work.

Griggs’s experiments with etching began in 1895 but it was not until 1912, the year of his conversion to Roman Catholicism, that he created his first mature works in the medium. Thereafter, it remained his primary means of artistic expression. His profound faith reinforced his deep-seated love of the countryside and medieval architecture. He increasingly lamented England’s lost identity as a result of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth, and the modern dissolution of community, accelerated by the horrors of the First World War, of the twentieth. Writing to his friend, the poet Russell Alexander on 20 September 1911 he proclaimed, ‘Damn everything & especially change’. Yet his work offered refuge, resisting change by reforming the past through imagination and memory.

With consummate technical skill Griggs subjected his etching plates to successive revisions, infusing his favoured motifs – the church, the farm, the street, and the bridge – with spiritual significance. In this he drew not only upon his intensely personal response to the natural world and English history, but upon the Romantic tradition, especially the example of Samuel Palmer. Indeed, through the V&A’s 1926 Palmer exhibition, Griggs was instrumental in introducing Palmer to a new generation of artists, among them Graham Sutherland, whom Griggs instructed in print-making.

The Ashmolean’s collection of Griggs’s work is unrivalled and this exhibition displays over 30 examples spanning his career, including volumes of Highways and Byways, etchings, fascinating preparatory drawings, and superb watercolours. Works never previously exhibited are included in this rare opportunity to examine the range of Griggs’s achievement.
EXHIBITION COSTS

The fee includes:

• Over 30 works spanning Griggs's career, including volumes of *Highways and Byways*, etchings (over one third of the 57 he produced), fascinating preparatory drawings, and superb watercolours.

• Transport of loans from and return to Oxford (if venue is under 140 miles from the Ashmolean)

• Object preparation and condition reporting

• Object labels and wall panels

• Tour co-ordination by the Ashmolean Museum Registrar’s Department

• The exhibition's curator would be available for a lecture

• A selection of 5 images for use in the venue’s own press and publicity

The following items and costs will be covered by the venue, as they arise:

• 'Nail to Nail' Insurance

• Crating for works, as required

• Transport of loans from and return to Oxford (only if venue is over 140 miles from the Ashmolean)

• Courier expenses

If you would like further information about this exhibition please contact: touring.exhibitions@ashmus.ox.ac.uk