

# THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

*Oxford Circle enjoys a tour of biblical history*



*Catenians outside the Ashmolean Museum ready to start the tour*

The Ashmolean is the University of Oxford's Museum of art and archaeology, founded in 1683. Their world-famous collections range from Egyptian mummies to contemporary art, telling human stories across cultures and time.

Fifteen Oxford Catenians embarked on a tour titled 'The Bible in the Ashmolean – from Creation to Oxford to the Ends of the Earth'. The tour was led by James Greig of Zenas Heritage Tours, who is a friend of Oxford Brother Chris Bevan. The tour took in the Old and New Testaments, then moved on to Church history, from Jerusalem to England to the present day. Artefacts viewed and discussed included the Gilgamesh epic, Assyrian palace wall reliefs, first-century Roman nails similar to the ones used at the crucifixion, the Jewish Passover potsherd, a Dead Sea scroll jar, a Vespasian gold coin, and the Alfred Jewel, all original exhibits.

The potsherd, or fragments of broken pottery, were used by people in the time of Christ and beyond to write messages to pass to friends and family, just like text messages of today. The Passover potsherd is such an original fragment, and is the earliest physical written reference to Passover. It appears to be from a woman asking friends where they will be celebrating Passover!

Chris remarked, "We have heard the Bible stories and remember place names, but to see original artifacts from the time makes it all real. It brings history and faith together, and all this sitting here in Oxford!"