

Welcome to Wells & Mendip Museum's newsletter with information about exhibitions, talks, events and developments at the Museum. If you would like to receive a copy by e-mail please contact admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 4pm (Closed Sundays & Mondays)

First Floor Exhibition Room

Saturday 21 January – Saturday 4 February

“The Shock of the Old” – the use of anachronistic museological display methodologies in the presentation of the natural and artefactual within visual arts practice, by Duncan Cameron

“Why as artists do we persist with anachronistic models of collection and display?”

Duncan is researching anachronistic cultures of collecting associated with museums, and the accumulation and ordering of mnemonic materials that many collate within sheds and attics, through the lens of a sculptural art practice. With a particular focus on the use by artists of taxidermy, diorama, natural history collection and archaeology he is interested in collapsed methodological boundaries and the potential that this liminal space provides for creative play, message making and equivocal readings.



It is in the small things, the prosaic marginalia of a life lived, that the narrative is often told and he is investigating the potential of the anachronistic creative device to compress or disrupt timelines. Knowingly deployed chronemic elements within visual arts practice can appear antithetical as they cause frictions with contemporary narratives and in so doing prompt interpretation and reappraisal. These anachronistic narrative mechanisms, as deployed by artists, play with our interpretative functions and ask us to consider perhaps ethical, cultural or ecological factors in ways that institutions of display habitually deflect us from. It is the very ‘out-of-time’ness of these conventions that disrupt our assumptions and by disabling linear readings provide a new frame for storytelling.

Free entry to exhibition only

Tuesday 14 February – Saturday 25 February

Art exhibition by Christopher Mottram



Chris Mottram is a West Country Artist living in Bristol. He studied fine Art & Design at Colchester College of Art in Essex and later at the National School of Art in Sydney, Australia.

He draws inspiration from Nature and Landscape and our rich heritage and has exhibited work for The Bath Society of Artists and also had a work accepted for the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition.

Most of his paintings on display are oil on Canvas.

Free entry to exhibition only

Tuesday 7 March – Saturday 25 March

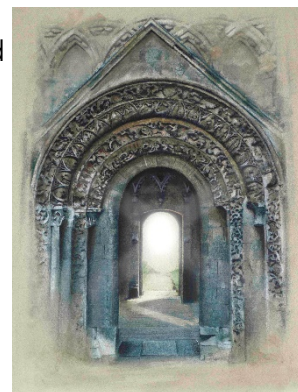
“Art of Transitional Spaces” – an exhibition by local artists

Marianne Lowen King, Freddie Bird, & Lorraine Reilly Millington

These three Somerset based artists met up and realised they share a common theme in the imagery they create. Interested in the art of transitional spaces, their work is about creating in the observer, moments of personal revelation, of helping bring about a different state of being. It is about the experience.

In building up their library of sketched and photographed reference material for their work, they journey to coastal paths and seashores, moorlands, river systems, along ley lines, and to ancient or ecclesiastical places. It is about pilgrimages but is not limited to being pilgrims. Keeping wonder uppermost, these three artists represent the subjects of their awe and wonder.

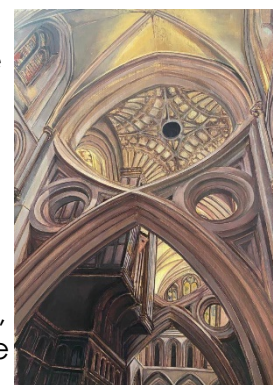
Marianne Lowen King has been a designer, artist and filmmaker for more than twenty years, born in Surrey & living in Somerset, she specialises in ink and acrylic pieces of sacred places. Capturing the spirit of place is at the heart of her work. Marianne is drawn to certain locations through her love of ancient land & its architecture, pilgrim routes & ecclesiastic spaces. By trying to capture the invisible weave of culture and unique sense of place in her work, Marianne hopes that her pieces trigger a connection between its soul and the observer. As a storyteller using moving pictures and trained in television, film & design, her creative thought process tends to be in 'cinematic mode', visualising in muted colours with dramatic lighting and heavenly skies and creating a composition that is awe inspiring & tells its story. Her influences are film directors, cinematographers, film music composers ... whose epic visions and worlds are a constant inspiration.



Freddie Bird is an artist specialising in large and detailed monochrome landscapes, interested in tone, scale, and light and dark. These wild places connect us today back through myths and legends, almost to a time of magic. The relationship between observer and image shifts, as the observer finds they are drawn into, dwelling in, the image. The imagery reflects walking coastal paths and seashore, remote waterfalls, moor, and ancient woodland. His landscape is not peopled; it does not impose a time, fashion, or age on the viewer. So the viewer can enter the landscape, and see it as part of a journey in front of them, with junctions, decisions to take, and choices of pathways ahead. It is about the emergent experience. After a period in the 1980s being taught oil painting, with particular interest in colourist landscape, it is line, tone, and scale that emerge as central to his work today, and if it has to be labelled sits within the school of Imaginative Realism. His influences are varied. They meander through the storytelling imagery of Alfred Bestall, and Mervyn Peake, back through Edmund Dulac, Arthur Rackham, Alphonse Mucha, and Gustave Doré. Image makers, revealers of stories, of the imagination.



Lorraine Reilly Millington is a Galway-born artist and musician based in Wells who has worked within multiple mediums and whose creative output across the board is built around contrasts: old versus new, dark versus light, order versus disorder, the immense versus the barely visible. Her recent paintings reflect the breath taking enormity and undeniable, soaring beauty of Gothic architecture, drawing out the character of these ancient interiors - remarkably often hand-crafted - and the impact of light, throughout the day and night, on the colours, tones and shadows created by the stonework within. Lorraine's work contemplates the power and mysticism of these gravity-defying superstructures, the spirituality that resounds within the walls and ceilings themselves, irrespective of theology or particular belief systems.



The artists will each be resident throughout the exhibition. **Fee entry to exhibition only.**

Ground Floor Meeting Room

This exhibition has been extended until 25th January “Making the Mural” – A photographic exhibition

As part of the museum's Search & Learn project, supported by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this exhibition will feature photographs taken by Ann Cook showing the processes involved in creating our wonderful new ceramic mural. **Included in museum entry fee**



Thursday 2 February (from 1.30pm) – Saturday 25 February

An exhibition of all genres taken by the members of the Midsomerset Camera Club

In their 48th season, this is a friendly group of people who share an interest in photography. Members all have differing levels of ability, but also have a desire to learn more. They welcome photographers of all levels of experience from beginner to professional. They are based at the Victoria club in Street, and have regular weekly meetings on Tuesdays , starting at 7.30pm . There is an interesting programme of photographic speakers, etc. www.midsomersetcameraclub.org.uk **Included in museum entry fee**

Half-term Creative Family Workshop

Friday 17 February 10am - 3.30pm

Explore the fascinating world of cyanotype printing to create a beautiful family portrait. Join artist Richard Tomlinson to combine digital photography, paper cutting and traditional photographic processes to create a truly unique work of art. Suitable for age 6 upwards. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



This is a drop-in event - last entry 3pm.

SOW
someset
art works



Made possible with
**Heritage
Fund**

From the Curator

We have now drawn a line under the list of Accessions to the museum during last year. 73 items, or groups of items, were accessioned into the collections. 30 of these were newly acquired material, and 43 were items already in the collections but not previously documented to current standards.

The material new to the collections was wide-ranging, from cave archaeology to sport. Brimble Pit Swallet is on the escarpment above Westbury-sub-Mendip, and we now hold the possibly Neolithic and Bronze Age animal remains excavated there by Dr Willie Stanton in the 1990s. Brimble Pit is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Also acquired was the Sports Blazer and associated photographs and records of schoolboy cricketer G.B. Godfrey, pupil at Boys' Blue School, Wells during the 1930s.

We were also really pleased to receive some 1940s scenes of Wells in an album of watercolours and drawings of Wells by Harrold Bottomley, Blue School teacher and Wells resident. They are skilfully painted from a time before the many changes of the post-World War Two era, including the nationalisation of the railways in 1947.



In this painting an August 1946 Bank Holiday queue has built up outside the Railway Hotel (now the Sherston Inn), Priory Road, Wells. In Victorian times there were two railway stations at Priory Road, the terminus of the Somerset Central Railway branch from Glastonbury, and the terminus of the East Somerset Railway from Witham. By 1946 a spur line linked the old ESR to the new station at Tucker Street, where the Great Western Railway 'Strawberry Line' ran north to Yatton.

News from our Library

Staffing

We are still short of two Library Assistants. Sessions available are either morning or afternoon Tuesday to Friday. Previous experience is not essential as it is possible to learn on the job. If interested, please leave a note in my pigeon hole

Annual statistics compared with 2021

(a) Users of Library for research in 2021 [30]; in 2022 [60]

(b) No. of books added (brackets show number of the total added to the Coleridge Archive) in 2021: 44 [10]; in 2022: 63 [55]

Historic Newspapers

Copies of the lying in state of Her Majesty the Queen and of the accession of Charles III have been added.

Coleridge Archive

Now that the Coleridge Archive is in the Library itself and more accessible, we have started the new year by adding six more titles:

(a) two separate collections of letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth

(b) two books which I wrote 20 years ago which I find to my surprise has several chapters on Coleridge, namely *The British Periodical Press and the French Revolution 1789-99* (Coleridge wrote at various times for the *Morning Post*, *Morning Chronicle* and *the Courier*). Even more strangely, the other book was *Unitarian Radicalism: Political Rhetoric 1770-1814* (Coleridge was a Unitarian in his youth).

(c) Also Unitarian was the contemporary Anna Letitia Barbauld about whom William McCarthy wrote two books including one of a selection of her poetry and prose which he edited together with Elizabeth Kraft.

The Coleridge Archive now contains at least 100 books – to say nothing about pamphlets and individual articles. **Stuart Andrews, Hon. Librarian**

Other events at the museum

Saturday 28 January 7pm – 10pm – Jeff Allen & Geoffrey Dickson will be signing their new book about Wells “**Code Name “Cromwell” – The Defence of Wells, Somerset 1940 – 1944.** Copies of the book will be on sale and there will be an open auction of the original illustrations by Geoffrey Dickson. Cash Only!

Friday 3 February at 2.30pm – “Lead Mining on Mendip in the Roman and Victorian Periods” by Steve Tofts. Steve has been a long-time volunteer at the Museum as well as other local groups. His association with these has led to an interest in the local lead mines and their importance to the local economy throughout history.

Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society

Friday 3 March at 7.30pm – “Limestone Plants” by David Walker. David is the Hon. Curator at the Museum and has been a keen member of local caving clubs for many years. Unsurprisingly, his interest in the caves found in areas of limestone has also led to the plants found there. This will be followed by the AGM

Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society

Come and join our team!

Front of House volunteers needed

Our Front of House volunteers co-ordinate the smooth running of the reception area by extending a warm and informative welcome to all our visitors.

This is a key role and ideal for anyone who likes to work in a varied, customer orientated environment, and who are happy working as part of a team but are equally happy to work alone if necessary. Computer literacy an advantage.

For more information or an application form, please contact:
Christine Fewer, Museum Manager at: admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk



#wells.museum



facebook.com/wellsandmendipmuseum

Data protection and email addresses. If you have received this newsletter by email we clearly hold your email address. If you do not wish to receive information in this way, please unsubscribe using the link included in the email. If you receive this newsletter by post and no longer wish to do so, please contact the Museum Manager on 01749 673477 or admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk