

## Newsletter

Issue 31

January – February 2016

**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](mailto:admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk)

**Winter opening hours** Monday – Saturday 10am – 4pm. Closed Sundays.

During the first few weeks of the New Year there will be some disruption to some of the displays, while 85 year old glazing is replaced with modern toughened and UV-filtering glass. This has been made possible by generous grants from Viridor Credits Environmental Company and the Wells Natural history & Archaeology Society. During this period Museum entry will be FREE.

### “THE ART OF WARFARE”

**23-30 January 2016**

A selection of drawings and paintings dealing with all aspects of warfare as seen by artist, Geoff Dickson. The works will mainly focus on WW1, but will also have aspects showing troops behind the line, humorous illustrations and more modern paintings that have been commissioned by various regiments. Free entry to exhibition.



### **50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF CLOSURE OF SOMERSET & DORSET RAILWAY**

**March – 28 April 2016**  
March 2016 commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of the Somerset & Dorset Railway, and the Museum will be one of the venues fortunate enough to be hosting this travelling exhibition funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, featuring objects, images, text and activities telling the story of the railway, to mark this significant event.

Normal Museum charges apply

### **WELLS CITY ARCHIVES - “Archivist’s Choice”**

November 2015 saw the beginning of a new initiative entitled “Archivist's Choice”, which showcases material from Wells City Archives. A display case in Wells Town Hall presents a changing display of interesting documents from the City Archives, chosen by the City Archivist, Dr Julia Wood. Pop in to the Town Hall when you're passing and have a look at a fascinating piece of Wells history! The case is on the left-hand side of the vestibule.

The Archivist's first choice was this lovely photograph of pupils from Wells Central School. Unfortunately there is no date on the photo, but the clothing suggests the late Victorian or Edwardian period. The original image is postcard-sized and so faded that it is hardly possible to make out the features of the children. Steve Tofts, a volunteer at Wells & Mendip Museum, has miraculously restored it, as you can see.



*A class from Wells Central School © Wells City Archives*

The photo was donated to the Archives by Jean Imray. Her family were local and she was a distinguished former City Archivist and also a long-serving Trustee of the Museum. Sadly she died earlier this year.

If you wish to carry out any research into local or social history, or into your family or house history, you are very welcome to visit the City Archives. The regular Readers' slot is on each Tuesday morning, from 9.30 to 12.00. Visits are by prior appointment only; you can make an appointment by letter, phone, email, or in person. Julia, the City Archivist, is usually in the Museum on Mondays from 9 – 12.30pm, Tuesdays from 9am - 4.00pm and Wednesdays from 9 - 12.30pm. Her email address is [archives@wellsmuseum.org.uk](mailto:archives@wellsmuseum.org.uk).

### **FINDS IDENTIFICATION DAY**

**18 February 11am – 3pm**

The next Finds Identification Days at the Museum will be on Thursday 17 September 11am – 3pm. Laura Burnett, the Finds Liaison Officer for Somerset County Council, is still on maternity leave, but Julie Shoemark will be available to identify your finds from digging your garden or while walking your dog. No charge or booking necessary.

### **WAITROSE “COMMUNITY MATTERS” SCHEME**

We are delighted to report that, thanks to our many supporters voting for us with their green counters, the Museum was awarded a donation of £309 from the Waitrose “Community Matters” scheme. This will go towards repairs and new plants etc., for the Museum garden.

### **HERITAGE DAY Saturday 16 April – put the date in your diaries now.**

The 2016 Heritage Day will take place on Saturday 19 April, and the speakers currently include Charlie & Nancy Hollinrake on **Leighton Medieval Ironworks at Torr Quarry,**

**East Mendip,** Dr Susan Shaw **Rock End & the lost cottages of Cheddar,** Andrew Breeze from the University of Pamplona, Spain on **Banwell – St Patrick’s Somerset Birthplace,** Dr Fiona Fleming formerly from University of Exeter on **Mendip in the Fields of Britannia – Continuity and Change in the Late Roman & Early Medieval Landscape** and Colin Budge on **Early maps and surveyors of Mendip.** Further details to follow

### **OTHER EVENTS**

Wednesday 13 January 7pm – “AGM followed by WCS President, The Rt Revd Bishop Peter Hancock reflects on his year in **Wells Civic Society**”

Saturday 16 January 2.30pm – “**How to Build a Church**” by archaeologist, Jerry Sampson FSA  
Booking essential. 01823 272429 [www.sanhs.org](http://www.sanhs.org)  
**Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society**

Tuesday 26 January 7.30pm - “**Greylake RSPB Reserve**” Reserve Site Manager, Harry Paget-Wilkes will talk about developments in the RSPB Reserve and what we can expect to see on a visit. **Somerset Wildlife Trust**

Saturday 6 February 2.30pm - “**Pottery from the Garden**” with David Dawson. During the building work taking place at the Museum’s rear garden, a large quantity of pottery was discovered. David has studied both its age and origins and will share his findings.  
**Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society**

Wednesday 10 February 7pm - “**Community Radio – its role in local life**”. Director and presenter of GFM, Allan Trinder, and colleagues will talk about the local radio station – its work in the community and plans for the future. **Wells Civic Society**

Saturday 20 February 2.30pm - “**Somerset Towers**” by archaeologist, Jerry Sampson FSA.  
Booking Essential 01823 272429 [www.sanhs.org](http://www.sanhs.org)  
**Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society**

Tuesday 23 February 7.30pm - “**Forgotten Little Creatures**” Natural photographer, Victoria Hillman will use images taken within a 30 mile radius from her home in Frome to encourage people to look more closely at smaller plants and animals, and will describe her adventures on this project. **Somerset Wildlife Trust**

Friday 4 March 7.30pm - AGM, chaired by new President, the Rt Revd Peter Hancock, Bishop of Bath & Wells, followed by “**From the Sacred to the Profane**”, the fascinating world of Misericords with Hugh Roberts. **Wells natural History & Archaeological Society**

Wednesday 9 March 7pm - “**Wells – a Dementia Friendly City**”. Bridget Harvey, manager of “Heads Up” (a charity supporting people with dementia and other mental health issues) and chair, Wendy Attridge will talk about the project and its progress to date. **Wells Civic Society**

Saturday 12 March 2.30pm - “**Decoration, Furnishings and Iconoclasm**” by archaeologist, Jerry Sampson FSA. Booking Essential 01823 272429 [www.sanhs.org](http://www.sanhs.org)  
**Somerset Archaeological and natural History Society**

Tuesday 22 March 7.30pm - “**Peregrine Falcons**” A talk by a member of the Hawk and Owl Trust in Bath about their work. **Somerset Wildlife Trust**

**SUPPORT THE MUSEUM - RECYCLE YOUR INKJET CARTRIDGES** **Recycle  Charity**

Register with [Recycle4Charity.co.uk](http://Recycle4Charity.co.uk) and then request freepost bags to return your old inkjet cartridges. For each usable cartridge, £1 will be donated to the Museum - so just send off your items and help the Museum with little effort. Alternatively, just drop your cartridges off at the Museum and we will send them off for you.

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& Visitor Information Service  
 "Home of Wells City Archives"

## Newsletter

Issue 32

March - April 2016

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### **Summer opening hours (from Friday 25 March)**

Monday – Saturday 10am – 5pm. Closed Sundays.

### **JEAN IMRAY LEGACY**

The Museum has recently received the largest legacy in the 84 years since it opened in 1932. It was left to the museum in the will of former Museum Trustee Jean Imray. Jean had been the archivist for the Mercers Company in London, before moving to Wells to become the archivist for the Wells City Council. Jean was also one of the founder members of the History Round Wells research group. This legacy will enable the museum to support the publication of the history of the Wells Almshouses later in the year. This was a project that Jean was working on until her death last year. The legacy will also enable the museum to create completely new exhibitions and displays about the history of the City of Wells itself over the coming years.



### **50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF CLOSURE OF SOMERSET & DORSET RAILWAY 10 March – 28 April 2016**

March 2016 commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of the Somerset & Dorset Railway, and the Museum will be one of the venues fortunate enough to be hosting this travelling exhibition funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, featuring objects, images, text and family activities telling the story of the railway, to mark this significant event.

Normal Museum charges apply

### **2016 ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE Saturday 19 March**

SANHS Annual Conference is this year being organized in conjunction with the Weston-super-Mare Archaeological and Natural History Society at the Blakehay Theatre, Weston-super-Mare. The keynote speaker will be:

Dr Jodie Lewis on *From Round barrows to Roman Britain – Recent research and excavation on North Hill, Priddy.*

Other speakers will include:

Dr Michael Costen and Pip Osborne on ChewtonMendip,

Neil Rushton on Uphill, and

Jane Hill on Hinckley Point.

Admission £15. Booking in advance at SANHS Online Shop at [www.SANHS.org](http://www.SANHS.org) or email; [programme@sanhs.org](mailto:programme@sanhs.org) or tel: 01823 272429



**“MEET THE SWAN” WORKSHOP**  
**Wednesday 30 March 1pm – 4pm**

Did you know that the original swan that was taught to ring the Palace Moat bell by the daughter of the Bishop Hervey, Miss Eden, is in the Wells and Mendip Museum?

The museum will be running a creative workshop for children aged 8 to 12 years, where they will “Meet the Swan” and then have a chance to write a poem and make a collage or painting depicting the Swans of Wells.

At the end of the afternoon there will be a “Show and Tell” so that parents and friends can see the completed work.

If the workshop is successful the children’s ideas will be used in another workshop in the summer so that they can create a swan mosaic for the museum garden.

Tickets £5 available at the Museum. Booking Essential.

This event is sponsored by The Swan Hotel, Wells Civic Society and the Wells Journal.

**MENDIP HILLS HERITAGE DAY**  
**Saturday 16 April 10am – 4pm**

The 2016 Heritage Day’ speakers currently include:

Charlie & Nancy Hollinrake on **Leighton Medieval Ironworks at Torr Quarry, East Mendip,**

Dr Susan Shaw on **Rock End & the lost cottages of Cheddar,**

Andrew Breeze from the University of Pamplona, Spain on **Banwell – St Patrick’s Somerset Birthplace,**

Dr Fiona Fleming formerly from University of Exeter on **Mendip in the Fields of Britannia – Continuity and Change in the Late Roman & Early Medieval Landscape,**

Colin Budge on **Early maps and surveyors of Mendip,** and

Barry lane on the **Excavation of a deer park lodge on Westbury**



## OTHER EVENTS

### MARCH

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm - AGM followed by "From the Sacred to the Profane – the fascinating "World of Misericords" **Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society**

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am - "**Marx and Marxism**" by with Colin Stott **Philosophy Group**

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> at 7pm - "**Wells – a Dementia friendly City**" Bridget Harvey, manager of *Heads Up*, a charity supporting people with dementia and other mental health issues, and chair, Wendy Attridge, will talk about the project and its progress to date. Wells **Civic Society**

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> at 2.30pm - "**Decoration, Furnishings and Iconoclasm**" by archaeologist, Jerry Sampson FSA. Booking Essential 01823 272429 [www.sanhs.org](http://www.sanhs.org)  
**Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm - "**Peregrine Falcons**" A talk from a member of the Hawk & Owl Trust in Bath about their work. **Somerset Wildlife Trust**

### APRIL

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2pm - "**Swifts**" with Ray Overall. Ray is one of the team who have studied the swifts in the tower of Oxford Museum since 1948. The first study was turned into a book by David Lack entitled "Swifts in a Tower" in 1954, which fascinated a whole generation of ornithologists. Ray's talk will include a short video made more recently as part of the ongoing research. **Wells Natural History & Archaeology Society**

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am – "**Scepticism and Sci-Fi – Evil Demons from Descartes to BBC 4**" - **Philosophy Group**

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> at 2pm – "**The Carved Bench Ends of Somerset**" by archaeologist, Jerry Sampson FSA. Booking Essential 01823 272429 [www.sanhs.org](http://www.sanhs.org)  
**Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society**

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm - "**Life and Times of a Village Grocer**". John Bartle has many humorous stories and recollections of his life as a grocer in Wells.  
**Wells Civic Society**

## SUPPORT THE MUSEUM - RECYCLE YOUR INKJET CARTRIDGES **Recycle Charity**

Register with [Recycle4Charity.co.uk](http://Recycle4Charity.co.uk) and then request freepost bags to return your old inkjet cartridges. For each usable cartridge, £1 will be donated to the Museum - so just send off your items and help the Museum with little effort. Alternatively, just drop your cartridges off at the Museum and we will send them off for you.

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# Newsletter

Issue 33

April 2016

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## SPECIAL EDITION

**Summer opening hours** Monday – Saturday 10am – 5pm. Closed Sundays.

### SOMERSET: ST PATRICK'S BIRTHPLACE

Somerset is famous as birthplace of the philosopher John Locke, the novelist Henry Fielding, and the comedian John Cleese. Now it can add someone else to the list: St Patrick, who converted the Irish to Christianity. That at least is the claim to be made at Wells and Mendip Museum's Heritage Day by Dr Andrew Breeze of the University of Navarre, Spain.

'St Patrick left an account of his early life where he said that his father had an estate at "Bannaventa", yet nobody has known where this was. But he left some clues in the text.'

'So scholars agree that his father's home must have been in west Britain, was in a heavily Romanized district, and lay near a major city,' he continued. 'The evidence rules out somewhere on the Clyde or near Hadrian's Wall, as some have suggested. A place near the Bristol Channel is the only one that suits the facts. It was a fertile region with an urban centre at Bath, yet in the years about 400 was open to attack by Irish pirates, like the ones who enslaved Patrick when he was sixteen.'

The Yeovil historian Harry Jelley argued in the 1990s that the only spot in this area which can be identified as St Patrick's 'Bannaventa' is Banwell. Dr Breeze agrees.

'Harry Jelley solved a problem that has baffled historians for centuries, but hardly anyone noticed his work,' he said. 'What I am doing at Wells is to strengthen his case by looking at other place names and make it better known.'

Dr Breeze believes that, after this year's Heritage Day, all the history books will have to be changed. 'We can be sure that St Patrick came from Banwell, and his writings give us a glimpse of Roman Britain during the fifth century. Somerset will have a new historical document, casting light on life there sixteen hundred years ago.'

He ended with this comment. 'On 17 March, people all over the world celebrate St Patrick with holidays and parades. From now on, we can be certain that the man remembered that day was born and bred in Somerset. It is something that Somerset people can now feel very proud of indeed.'

**Come along and hear the full story. Book now!**

### **MENDIP HILLS HERITAGE DAY**

**Saturday 16 April 10am – 4pm**

The 2016 Heritage Day' speakers currently include Charlie & Nancy Hollinrake on

**Leighton Medieval Ironworks at Torr Quarry, East Mendip,** Dr Susan Shaw **Rock End & the**

**lost cottages of Cheddar,** Andrew Breeze from the University of Pamplona, Spain on

**Banwell – St Patrick's Somerset Birthplace,**

Dr Fiona Fleming formerly from University of

Exeter on **Mendip in the Fields of Britannia – Continuity and Change in the Late**

**Roman & Early Medieval Landscape,** Colin Budge on **Early maps and surveyors of**

**Mendip,** and Barry Lane on the **Excavation of a 17<sup>th</sup> century deer park lodge in Westbury**



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## Newsletter

Issue 34

May - June 2016

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### Summer opening hours

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### A Special Day!



Monday 25 April brought two surprises! Firstly, prompted by Wells Journal photographer Jason Bryant, Shepton Mallet artist Martin Alford presented the museum with a stunning oil portrait of the late Harry Patch. This now hangs in the Lecture Room foyer alongside other Harry Patch panels. The Trustees are very grateful indeed for this donation.

Later in the day three exceptionally detailed models of ships at the battle of Jutland in 1916 – HMS Agincourt, HMS Canada and the German SMS Lutzow - arrived from modelmaker Robin Trott, also of Shepton Mallet! Naval historian Richard Witcombe, who has already contributed much to the *Wells Remembers* exhibition and had spent many months looking for such models, brought them along and added them to the displays. Again the Trustees are extremely grateful for such a special loan.



### ART EXHIBITION BY MICHAEL CREED

7 – 21 May



This exhibition is a series of collaged images made from waste material collected from the Museum, material found on paths, in hedgerows and printed matter. The artist's aim is to examine the expressive potential of waste material and discarded work items like gloves - to show that this matter does indeed have strong artistic merit, and to re-evaluate our own notions of aesthetics.

## FINDS IDENTIFICATION DAY

**5 May 11am - 3pm**

The next Finds Identification Days at the Museum will be on Thursday 5 May 11am – 3pm. Julie Shoemark, the Finds Liaison Officer for Somerset County Council, will be available to identify your finds from digging your garden or while walking your dog. No charge or booking necessary

## CAVING PHOTO COMPETITION & EXHIBITION

**30 May until end of June**

The Third Mendip Cave Photography Exhibition will be held from 30 May until the end of June, with an awards evening on June 3rd in the Museum at 7 pm. This is an opportunity to see some extraordinary images of the underworld of Mendip including the life and archaeology that can be seen beneath the hills. Mendip caves are well known for their variety and this exhibition features a number of caves both well known and obscure.



Photo is of Hunter's Lodge Inn Sink discovered in the last 15 years and containing noteworthy bone deposits.

## “SIMPLE AND BEAUTIFUL”

**Domestic needlework samplers from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

**11 June – 2 July**



This exhibition from the museum's extensive collection of samplers shows the skilled and beautiful needlework made in the home largely by children as young as 7 years old. The show will also include a large commissioned needlework panel illustrating the local legend of Bishop Jocelin and the Worminster Dragon, and also a small selection of modern domestic embroidery.

This exhibition complements *The Ornate & The Beautiful* on show at the Bishop's Palace featuring embroidered textiles and vestments from the collections of Downside Abbey and Wells Cathedral until 31 August.

## OTHER EVENTS

### MAY

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm – **“Mercury – An Elusive World Revealed”** a talk by WMA Chairman, Chris Starr FRAS FBIS. Following the transit of Mercury across the face of the Sun on 9<sup>th</sup> May, and the recent completion of NASA's 'Messenger' mission to the Solar System's innermost planet, this talk examines how our knowledge of this elusive world has changed since ancient times. It also looks ahead to the revolutionary joint European Japanese BepiColombo science mission which will launch early next year, and which will study this small but complex cousin of our Earth. **Wells and Mendip Astronomers**

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> at 2pm – **“Liturgy and Pastime – some uses of the Church and Churchyard”** by archaeologist, Jerry Sampson FSA. Booking Essential 01823 272429 [www.sanhs.org](http://www.sanhs.org) **Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society**

Wednesday 13th at 7.30pm - **“Life and Times of a Village Grocer”**. John Barkle has many humorous stories and recollections of his life as a grocer in Wells.

**Wells Civic Society**

## **JUNE**

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> 10am – 4pm **A Wildlife Event** including stalls from various conservation and wildlife organizations, including RSPB, AONB, Somerset Wildlife | Trust etc., plus beekeepers and compost champions. Light refreshments will be on sale. Free Entry

### **SUPPORT THE MUSEUM - RECYCLE YOUR INKJET CARTRIDGES**

**Recycle  Charity**

Register with [Recycle4Charity.co.uk](https://www.recycle4charity.co.uk) and then request freepost bags to return your old inkjet cartridges. For each usable cartridge, £1 will be donated to the Museum - so just send off your items and help the Museum with little effort. Alternatively, just drop your cartridges off at the Museum and we will send them off for you.

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## Newsletter

Issue 35

July – August 2016

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### Summer opening hours

Monday – Saturday 10am – 5pm. Closed Sundays.

### RUPERT THOROGOOD



Last week we learnt of the sudden and sad passing of the Museum’s volunteer electrician. Rupert Thorogood (C.Eng., FIEE ) was a Professional Telecommunications Engineer who had worked in international telecommunications for 35 years with Cable and Wireless plc, in many different countries. After retiring from Cable and Wireless he became a Consultant with the UK Home Office, to assist in their work on lawful interception. He was a founder member of the ETSI Lawful Interception Technical Committee and was their secretary for ten years and had also been Company Secretary for the Radio Society of Great Britain from 2006.

Rupert had been with the Museum for many years and his hard work, endless enthusiasm and support will be greatly missed. Our warmest thoughts go to his family.

### ACREDITATION

The Museum has now received full accreditation from the Art Council. This means that we have met the strict standards set out nationally which enable development and progress. It will raise the profile of the Museum and will assist in both the planning and future applications for funding.

### HONORARY CURATOR

Barry Lane, has resigned as Honorary Curator, a post in which he has devoted time, energy and expertise for many years. He will remain as a Trustee, but his foresight in the development of the Museum’s collections and its visitor experience will be sadly missed.

We have, however, great pleasure in welcoming David Walker as his successor. David has come to know the Museum well over the years in his role as Curatorial Advisor, and has also worked with Somerset Museums, the South West Heritage Fund and the Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury.

## WELLS CITY ARCHIVES

A very significant fifth anniversary is being celebrated at the Wells and Mendip Museum. In 2011 the Wells City Archive was moved from the cramped jail cells beneath the Town Hall to a modern storage facility at the museum. In 2013 the City Archives reading room was opened, resulting in many visits and enquiries covering a variety of subjects including a hanging in medieval wells, the history of Victorian beerhouses as well as many enquiries relating to family history. The City Archivist, Dr Julia Wood, has done an amazing job in encouraging local people to use the Archives, and an ongoing program of digitisation will ensure that the archives will continue to be accessible. Everybody is welcome to use the Wells City Archives. To make an appointment please contact Julia Wood on 01749 673477, or email [archives@wellsmuseum.org.uk](mailto:archives@wellsmuseum.org.uk)

Another exciting announcement to make: volunteer Bob Love, who put together the fascinating Museum display on Wells City Police, is now Dr Bob Love. He has just been awarded a Ph.D. by the University of Leicester for his research on the history of policing in Somerset during the 1830s, 40s and 50s. He carried out much of his research in Wells City Archives and used Wells City Police as one of the case studies for his thesis. We offer him our warm congratulations. He will generously be donating a copy of his thesis to the Museum's Library, so that it is easily accessible for anyone who wishes to consult it.

## "WELLS REMEMBERS"

For the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Jutland, one of our volunteers managed to track down some beautiful models of ships which participated in the battle and which are now displayed in the exhibition - two British battleships, HMS Agincourt and HMS Canada, and a German battle-cruiser SMS Lutzow. These were made by Robin Trott, a local model Maker who lives in Shepton Mallet. The stories for 2016 include two sailors who served at Jutland: Christian Denning and Arthur Comer.



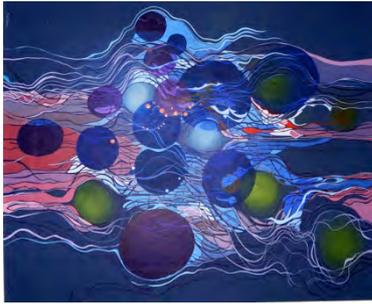
We also mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Somme and again our stories include two local soldiers who lost their lives: William Western of Union Street and Ted Allen of St Thomas Street. To mark the enormous sacrifice of this battle we have erected an image of the memorial at Tyne Cot cemetery so that visitors are able to reflect on this as they emerge from the noise of the trench.

Another volunteer has been building a replica tank which is frozen in the act of overrunning one end of the trench. A number of schools who have visited the exhibition have been working on their own projects and we hope to display examples of their work over the summer.

The Wells Remembers Exhibition would not have been what it is without the hard work and flexibility of our colleague Rupert Thorogood, who made all the sound, light and motion possible. He will be deeply missed and remembered by each of us as we pass through these evocative spaces"

## EXHIBITION OF NEW PAINTINGS BY ROBIN GRAY

Until 23 July



We welcome return of well known abstract painter, Robin Gray. He is known for a unique style of work which has been described by the art world as 'Organic Abstract'.

Many of the works are very large and many of the works have no titles, but all are meticulous in their execution and enjoy a unique and exciting use of colour.

### CURATOR'S CHOICE

This strange-looking exhibit will shortly be on display on the Ground floor of the Museum.

This truly historic item, which is on loan from the Swan hotel, will be on view from July 7th, and visitors are invited to guess what it is.

Museum volunteers will be on hand to provide a few clues.



### FINDS IDENTIFICATION DAY

**11 August 11am - 3pm**

The next Finds Identification Days at the Museum will be on Thursday 11 August 11am – 3pm. Laura Burnett, the Finds Liaison Officer for Somerset County Council, will be available to identify your finds from digging your garden or while walking your dog. No charge or booking necessary

### DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!

#### HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

**10 -13 September**

**England's biggest free heritage festival!**



A date for your diaries: **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September**, 10.00-16.00. Come along then to Wells Town Hall, to see a display on "Crime and Punishment in Victorian Wells". Free entry too! The Museum's wonderful volunteer Archives Box Listing Group will be displaying their findings from listing the Petty Sessions papers from 1850-1874 – a very rare collection of previously uncatalogued documents. The Petty Sessions was the equivalent of today's Magistrate's Court. We've come across all sorts of intriguing cases. One features a woman accusing another of throwing a toad at her face! Exhibition topics will include "The Demon Drink" and "Villains or Victims?", and a mapping of crime distribution in Wells then (when St Thomas' Street was notorious).

There will be other local history displays too, put on specially for Heritage Open Day. They will include more from the City Archives, plus a local railway display by Wells Railway Fraternity, one by Richard Green on Wells markets, and local postcards from the collection of Jeffrey Allen. There will also be guided tours at Wells Museum by our Honorary Curator, David Walker. More details in our next newsletter.

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## Newsletter

Issue 36

August – September 2016

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### Summer opening hours

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### SMALL ART EXHIBITIONS IN MEETING ROOM

Peter Coate, a prominent local artist, has long held an ambition to find a display area in Wells where artists from across the region can showcase their work. We are pleased to be able to provide this facility, with the intention that it will be a regularly changing exhibition to allow as many artists to exhibit as possible.

#### Currently the art on show is by Priscilla Sorapure

Normal museum entry charges apply

If you are interested in exhibiting in this area, or for more details, please email your contact details to: Christine Quinn [admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk](mailto:admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk).

### THE NEXT EXHIBITIONS IN OUR MAIN EXHIBITION ROOM ARE -

6 – 20 August – Mendip Art Group

10 – 24 September – Wells Art Group

Free Entry to these exhibitions only!



### CURATOR'S CHOICE

This strange-looking exhibit is on display on the Ground floor of the Museum. This truly historic item is on loan from the Swan hotel, and our visitors are invited to guess what it is.

Museum volunteers will be on hand to provide a few clues.

### FINDS IDENTIFICATION DAY

**11 August 11am - 3pm**

The next Finds Identification Days at the Museum will be on Thursday 11 August 11am – 3pm. Laura Burnett, the Finds Liaison Officer for Somerset County Council, will be available to identify your finds from digging your garden or while walking your dog. No charge or booking necessary

### THE REREDOS PROJECT

**8 September – Mid October**

As part of this summer's Reredos Project at St Cuthbert's church, specialist conservators Lynne Humphries and Emma Norris will be assessing a collection of painted medieval sculpture from the church in a workshop at



Wells and Mendip Museum – a rare opportunity for visitors to see the sculptures, which are normally in storage.

The project focuses on two large stone medieval reredos frameworks in the church, and around 420 broken pieces of the sculpture once contained in them. Dismantled and hidden in the walls of the church during the Reformation, they were rediscovered as recently as 1848. Because they were hidden for so long, much of their medieval paint has survived intact, offering a unique glimpse into the richly decorated medieval church interior.

The conservators will be inspecting the fragments closely, investigating the materials and techniques the medieval craftsmen used. The sculptures are incredibly fragile and haven't been shown to the public for several decades

There will be an accompanying display exploring the history of the two reredos and the story of their creation, destruction and rediscovery.

There will be free workshops as part of the **Heritage Open Days** at 11.15am, 2.15pm & 3.15pm on Thursday & Friday 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> September, the project will then be on display until Mid October.

## HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

8 – 11 September

England's biggest free heritage festival!



**Thursday & Friday 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> at 11am** – The Museum's Honorary Curator, David Walker will be offering a free guided tour of the Museum and also the stores which are not usually open to the public except by appointment.

**Thursday & Friday 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> at 11.15am, 2.15pm & 3.15pm** – Free Reredos project workshops at the Museum

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> 10am – 4pm** - A free display on "Crime and Punishment in Victorian Wells" at Wells Town hall. The Museum's wonderful volunteer Archives Box Listing Group will be displaying their findings from listing the Petty Sessions papers from 1850-1874 – a very rare collection of previously uncatalogued documents. The Petty Sessions was the equivalent of today's Magistrate's Court.

There will be other local history displays too, put on specially for Heritage Open Day. They will include more from the City Archives, plus a local railway display by Wells Railway Fraternity, one by Richard Green on Wells markets, and local postcards from the collection of Jeffrey Allen.

Full details of events can be found at [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

## CARETAKER VACANCY

The Museum is currently looking for a part-time caretaker to start at the end of August. Minimum 5 hours per week. Duties will include closing the Museum on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and alternate weekends. Some lifting involved. Applicant must be local. For more info please contact Christine Quinn

*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 let us know at [admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk](mailto:admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk)*

**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](mailto:admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk)

## Winter opening hours

Monday – Saturday 10am – 4pm. Closed Sundays.

## SMALL ART EXHIBITIONS IN MEETING ROOM

Peter Coate, a prominent local artist, has long held an ambition to find a display area in Wells where artists from across the region can showcase their work.

We are pleased to be able to provide this facility, with the intention that it will be a regularly changing exhibition to allow as many artists to exhibit as possible.

**Normal museum entry charges apply**

If you are interested in exhibiting in this area, or for more details, please email your contact details to: Christine Quinn [admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk](mailto:admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk).

## CURRENT EXHIBITIONS IN MEETING ROOM UNTIL 28 NOVEMBER

"iD Artists" was formed in 2012 to allow a group of interdisciplinary artists to exhibit together. They currently have 6 artists, working in a range of disciplines including painting, mixed media, printmaking, ceramics, textiles and book arts.



## 30 NOVEMBER – 6 FEBRUARY



Art exhibition by **Barbara Duncan**

Barbara has painted as an amateur for many years, painting landscapes almost exclusively, with locations varying from Northumberland to France, and here in Wells. **Normal entry fees apply.**

## KNOW YOUR PLACE – WEST OF ENGLAND

'Know Your Place' is a digital heritage mapping project that started in Bristol, and building on the success of this the project is being extended to cover the West of England. Images from Wells & Mendip Museum and Wells City Archives will be included in a travelling exhibition to promote this. The exhibition will be coming to the Bishop's Palace in the next few months so I'm sure many of you will see it there.

See: [www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-and-galleries/know-your-place-west-of-england](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/museums-and-galleries/know-your-place-west-of-england)

## “UNDER LOCK AND KEY”

Gruesome items from a historic Wells inn have been loaned to the Museum. Found on the premises of the City Arms Hotel, the artefacts are a reminder of the building's earlier role as City Gaol between 1660 and 1808. The objects are surrounded in mystery - the iron framed “Scavenger's Daughter” is an item of torture associated with the Middle Ages. Other items, lengths of chain and a heavy iron weight, are what you would expect for preventing the escape of prisoners.

Also of interest is H.E. Balch's record card in the Museum's library. He notes that the City Arms served as the City Gaol, and that there were 'gallows, stocks, a pillory and ducking-stool, and, also, some head-gear for scolds.'

The Museum is very grateful to the City Arms for their loan.



## ART EXHIBITION BY DEREK NICE & ELIZABETH HAND

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**



Artists Derek Nice and Liz Hand will be presenting an exhibition of paintings and sculpture inspired by architectural fragments and iconography from sacred sites, in this country and beyond. The idea came to life while Liz was travelling in Cambodia. The exciting discovery that many of the ancient temples of Angkor Wat were built at the same time as Wells Cathedral, led to an exploration of shared spirituality across time and distance. This is now manifest in the two artists' work through their use of the semi-abstract qualities of colour, shape, symbol and surface. **FREE ENTRY TO EXHIBITION ONLY.**

## RESEARCH VISITS

The Museum has hosted several research visits over the last few months. We are always pleased to make collections available to researchers; we learn more about the collections in our care and the profile of the Museum is raised in academic circles. Matt Knight, PhD Researcher from the University of Exeter visited the Museum to record and inspect our special items of metalwork.

Dr Frederick Foulds is researching Neanderthal use of the Axe Valley in the Middle Palaeolithic period, including reanalysis of artefacts from Mendip cave sites.

Ben Moon, undertaking a PhD at the University of Bristol, recently visited the collection, particularly focussing on the taxonomy of the Toarcian and Late Jurassic material. You can read more about their work on the museum website:

[www.wellsmuseum.org.uk/research](http://www.wellsmuseum.org.uk/research)

## FINDS IDENTIFICATION DAY

**24 NOVEMBER 11am – 3pm**

The next Finds Identification Days at the Museum will be on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November. Laura Burnett, the Finds Liaison Officer for Somerset County Council, will be available to identify your finds from digging your garden or while walking your dog.

**No charge or booking necessary**

## OTHER MUSEUM EVENTS:

### NOVEMBER

**Sat 5<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm - "The Vikings in South-West England"** - Derek Gore, Honorary Fellow, University of Exeter, Department of Archaeology, will present his findings on the Vikings in South-West England. In recent years more information has been gathered about the impact on the local area by the Viking invasions.

**Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society**

**Mon 7<sup>th</sup> 10.30am - "What Shall we tell the Kids?"** from John Dewey's "Philosophy of Education", presented by Colin Stott. Wells **Philosophy Group**

**Sundays - 13<sup>th</sup> Nov, 29 Jan, 26 Feb, 26 Mar, 7 May & 4 June 10am – 4.30pm**

**Wells Double Bass Academy** will be running workshops featuring a range of double bass activities, including technique, bowing skills, bass orchestra, performance opportunities, bass quartets, new repertoire and commissions, sight-reading and concerts, and is open to all bassists of all ages and abilities. A yearly subscription fee of £10 is payable and each workshop will cost £10 (child), £15 (adult).

**For more info:** 01963 370051 Email: [doublebass@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:doublebass@tiscali.co.uk)

**Tues 22<sup>nd</sup> 7pm - "Bristol Zoo Wildlife Conservation"** – Dan Cragg talks about the work Bristol Zoo have been doing on conservation, in particular with the Blue Eyed Black lemur, African Penguins and Fruit Bats **Somerset Wildlife Trust**

### DECEMBER

**Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> 7.30pm - "The Archives of Downside Abbey"** – Tim Hopkinson-Ball has been undertaking the task of cataloguing and organising the archives for the past few years. He will give an illustrated talk on his fascinating finds. His talk will be followed by a Christmas party for which all food donations will be very welcome.

**Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society**

**Tues 6<sup>th</sup> 9.30am – 5pm - "A Colourful History/A Bright Future" - Celebrating the Reredos Project at St. Cuthbert's** - Summer investigations into the two magnificent 15-Century-painted reredos frameworks and the 420 pieces of broken sculpture which once populated them are now complete. On Tuesday 6th December, there will be a day of presentations and discussions - open to all- will share the project's findings and start the conversation about the sculptures' future. The cataloguing work, undertaken by archaeologist, Jerry Sampson, sheds light on the original composition and structure of the two reredoses.

What can the iconography tell us about the nature of worship in the 15C church? How and when were they destroyed?



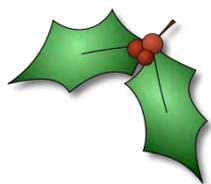
Conservators Lynne Humphries and Emma Norris will describe their close analysis of the polychromy of the sculptures and architectural elements and consider how these delicate and fragmented treasures might be prepared for display. In the afternoon, a series of guest speakers will introduce ideas for future display and interpretation of these exceptional artefacts, and consider the ways in which they fit into the life of church today.

Tickets cost £15 each and will include a buffet lunch. They can be purchased online at <[www.acolourfulhistory.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.acolourfulhistory.eventbrite.co.uk)

For further information about the project, visit: [www.reredosproject.wordpress.com](http://www.reredosproject.wordpress.com)

### **ROTARY CLUB REINDEER PARADE – Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December**

The Museum will be accepting entries for the children's Poetry and Art competitions until **4pm on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November**.



### **CHRISTMAS CLOSING**

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**THE MUSEUM WILL CLOSE AT 4pm ON SATURDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER AND WILL RE-OPEN AT 10am ON TUSDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY 2017**

**The Museum would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support this year and to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year!**

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