

**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)

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

### **First Floor Exhibition Room**

**Until 8 June**

#### **Art exhibition by Draycott Art group**



Draycott Art Club is excited to present an exhibition of new work. The club has been running for 10 years attracting artists from beginners to professionals working in a huge range of media and styles. For more info, please contact:

[draycottartclub.mendip@gmail.com](mailto:draycottartclub.mendip@gmail.com)

Members are aware of the pressures on everyone's finances so there will be work available for every budget including framed pictures, mounted work, prints & cards. **Free entry to exhibition only**

**14 – 23 June**

#### **Artwork by Martin Bentham RWA**

Martin's paintings mainly evolve from the landscape of the Mendip Hills, it's people and their work, but not always. He won 'First Prize' at the Royal Bath & West Show in 2007. The 'Daler-Rowney Oil Painting prize' in the 155th Annual Autumn Exhibition and First and Second Prize in the 'Viewers Choice Award' at the 156th Autumn Exhibition, both at the Royal West of England Academy in Bristol. He was elected as an Academician at RWA in 2009. As well as having had successful exhibitions dating from 1993, Bentham had two shows at the RWA in 2010 and 2012. More recently, in 2014 and 2018, he had two shows at The Bishop's Palace in Wells.



**Free entry to exhibition only**

**30<sup>th</sup> June – 12<sup>th</sup> August**

#### **The Pageant of 1923: “A Celebration of Community”**

The first half of the twentieth century saw a flowering of historical pageants in England, starting with a re-enactment of the history of Sherborne, Dorset in 1905. Pageants provide opportunities for communities to act out the history and folklore associated with their local area, and the tradition lives on in the West Country today: Axbridge Pageant was last held in 2022 and plans are already underway for 2030.



The Wells Pageant took place 100 years ago in July 1923, and the Museum's founder and first curator Herbert Balch played a key role in planning and scripting the event. It was documented by local photographer Bert Phillips, who captured portraits of those who took part, as well as scenes from the Pageant itself. A selection of these will be on display alongside some of the very few objects associated with the Pageant which survive in the Museum's collections.

We are grateful to Jordan Cole of Bath Spa University who has guest-curated this exhibition with support from Museum Trustee Clare Blackmore, and to D H James Ltd and Somerset

Frames who are supporting the production of the exhibition.

**Museum entry fees apply**



## **Ground Floor Meeting Room**

### **7 – 24 June - An Exhibition of Photographic Art**

**“Essence of Wells” by Rose Atkinson** - Rose is a photographic artist from



Wells who uses her camera freely, much like an artist uses a paintbrush to express what her senses feel in the moment of seeing. Elements of light and shade, colour, line and form, inspire images which are more expressionist than representational. Painterly impressions blur the lines between photography and the artist's canvas. In 2022 Rose was awarded an Associateship in Visual Art Photography by the Royal Photographic Society for “Essence of Wells”. Visions of Wells Cathedral

seen through the lens of the mind's eye. Moments in time, where the fine details are diffused and what lingers in the mind is the poetry and humanity of this extraordinary space.

### **“Intimate Landscapes” – Tina Westcott**

Tina is a local photographer who loves to explore with a geographer's eye, eager to discover what is around the next corner. She likes to tell the story of the landscape in a more intimate and sometimes abstract way, capturing light, colour, pattern and detail. She gained her Associateship of the Royal Photographic Society in 2021 with a project entitled “Nature's Reclamation of the Disused Quarries of Mendip” and she also shows images from her current project “The Water's Edge”. **Museum entry fees apply**



## Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June - 10.30am – 3pm Museum Garden Open Day & Plant Sale.

The museum garden looks stunning at the moment. Come along on Saturday and have a look – there will be free admission to the garden and plant sale.

The image is of Gladiolus on the left and Jerusalem Sage on the right. A brilliant combination



## Search & Learn project



This summer will see significant change on the first floor of the museum, made possible thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a bequest from the late Jean Imray. Our volunteer maintenance team have started to decorate the two gallery spaces which will house the new Wells City Galleries, ready for interpretation contractors Far Post Design to start installing new displays over the summer. We will be placing sample display panels in the spaces during June, so if you happen to be in the Museum when these are up, please do take a moment to look at them and feed back!

During June and July members of our volunteer team will be trained alongside students from Bath Spa University in providing tours of the new galleries. We will be taking a storytelling approach, which means that we will be able to offer a range of tours, each unique to the guide who has developed them. We will be offering previews of the tours for Friends of the Museum so if you are not already a Friend, now is the time to become one!

Our next project exhibition “The Pageant of 1923: A Celebration of Community” will be on display in the Exhibition Room 30 June - 12 August 2023. The exhibition has been guest-curated by Jordan Cole as part of her MA Heritage Management programme at Bath Spa University, and you can read more about how she went about this process in the Search & Learn project

blog: [www.wellsmuseum.org.uk/search-and-learn-project](http://www.wellsmuseum.org.uk/search-and-learn-project)

We have also been working with the Wells City Band to develop an exhibition which will be held in the Meeting Room this autumn. This will include items from the archives held by individual band members, as well as items from the Museum store. Further details of the exhibition will be included in the next newsletter.



## Library news

Since the last newsletter, we have seen in the Local Press photos of recent changes in the Library. The May issue of Wells Voice carried a picture of Library assistants at the Cathedral end of the room. Close to the right of the window is the Coleridge Archive with a portrait of Coleridge overhead. It may be coincidence, but recently an A-Level candidate from the Cathedral School has come to use a book on Coleridge from the Archive.

Since then, the Wells Journal for 18 May devoted half a page to a report, by Maxine Irving, featuring a picture of the Museum's famous albatross. This huge bird has been moved from its long-standing place in one of the Museum's galleries - now needed for a new exhibit. What the Library now has is a permanent exhibit incorporating the link between Captain Cook (who knew all about albatrosses), William Wales, the astronomer on the second of Cook's voyages to the southern seas and Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner. In his own account of the second voyage, Wales describes the white water-snakes seen from the ship. Coleridge, in his Rime of the Ancient Mariner, is quoted as follows:

'Beyond the shadow of the ship/I watched the water-snakes. They moved in track of shining white/And when they reared, the elfish light/Fell off in hoary flakes.'. The connection? When Wales returned from the second voyage, he became the mathematics master at Christ's Hospital when Coleridge was a boy there!

Not all the news is about Coleridge and Cook. The Wells Public Library has given us three titles that they are discarding. One we already have - Wells & Glastonbury: A Historical & Topographical Account - but it is so attractive that we have decided to shelve it as both Glastonbury and Wells. The other two are both from the second half of the 19th century. One lists the Somerset clergy of the Wells Archdeaconry from 1311 to the 1730s. The other is Architectural Antiquities of the City of Wells, dating from 1866. Its drawings are delightful. **Stuart Andrews, Hon Librarian**

## **OTHER EVENTS**

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2pm – 3.15pm – a musical concert.** Jenny Bliss, a brilliant and acclaimed violin virtuoso will be playing Baroque violin and Renaissance flute, and singing, with Yair Avigdor on Elizabethan lute and Baroque guitar. Their concert features English and Continental Renaissance and early Baroque music. Jenny is a well known and loved figure in Glastonbury's music scene, where she lives, but plays nationwide. Yair, a well-respected figure in the British lute world, and who also plays with Nigel Kennedy, is just visiting from London. Jenny & Yair have been playing together for twenty years. **Tickets: £13 on the door or from [www.lutenist.co.uk](http://www.lutenist.co.uk) (reference "Wells Concert"). For more info 07936628922**

**Thursday 6 July 10am – 11am & 1.30pm – 2.30pm "The Sand Dragon"** While on holiday Edie and her Daddy find a magical pebble on the beach that can grant you one wish. Can you guess what Edie wished for? Well why not find out by watching Theatrix Arts perform this magical story with songs and music, loads of puppets, changing scenery, and a magic trick or two. Then meet the puppets and create your very own Sand Dragon Puppet.

### **Wells Theatre Festival**

**To book tickets, or for more info, please email: [neil@wellstheatrefestival.org](mailto:neil@wellstheatrefestival.org)**

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