

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

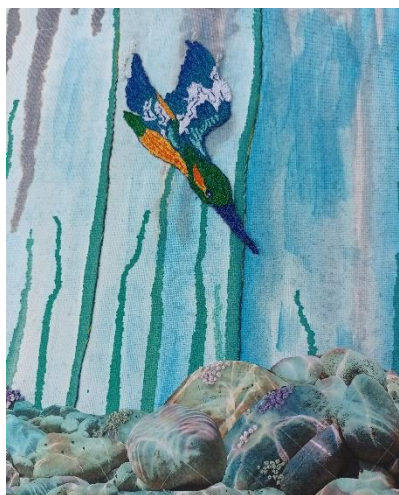
Until Saturday 12 August – “The Pageant of 1923: A Celebration of Community”

Last chance to see our exhibition marking the centenary of the Wells Pageant, guest-curated by Jordan Cole of Bath Spa University. The exhibition features photographs by local photographer Bert Phillips alongside some of the very few objects associated with the Pageant which survive in the Museum's collections. Jordan has also re-created three of the costumes which featured in the original pageant – we would love to know what happened to all the originals! This exhibition is part of the Search & Learn project, made possible thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the late Jean Imray. **Free entry to exhibition only**



Tuesday 5 – Saturday 9 September

A modern textile exhibition by “Sew Together”



This is the group's 3rd exhibition at the museum. The previous two were very well received, but people were disappointed that the work was not for sale. This time they have decided to go for a selling exhibition; so if you are looking for a contemporary piece (or even if you are not) please come and see the amazing variety of work that they will have on display. Each piece is individually designed and crafted by the maker rendering it unique.

The variety of techniques used encompass the whole gambit of textile art from traditional hand stitching to modern mixed media enhanced by machine. Some designs are representational and recognisable, others are purely abstract but somewhere in the fifty or so exhibits we feel sure there will be at least one that appeals to you! Come and enjoy!

Free entry to exhibition only

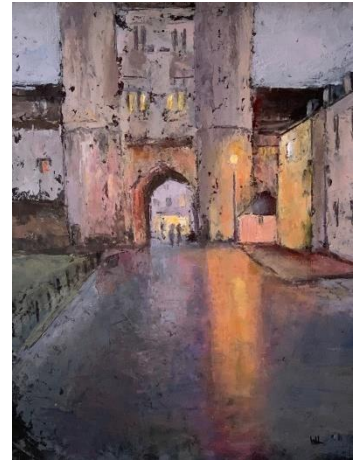
Tuesday 12 – Saturday 23 September

Art exhibition by Wells Art Group

Wells Painting Group was founded in 1969 by popular local artist Pauline Phillips. After meeting in the Blue School for many years, the group moved to St Thomas' Church Hall where it meets regularly. Group members paint a wide and varied range of subjects in all mediums.

The paintings are for sale and there will be cards available to purchase. For more Info; tel 07968050526.

Free entry to exhibition only



From Wednesday 27 September

“Clay, Paint and Transformation” an exhibition by Philippa Threlfall & Anneke Dissevelt of work inspired by the museum

Philippa Threlfall - Philippa has lived and worked for a long time in her Black Dog Studios in Wells. She trained as an illustrator and ceramicist and has been illustrating in clay and paint all her working life. As a trustee of the



museum, she has been able to use the building and its contents as the inspiration for this exhibition. Before starting work, she drew many of the artefacts and these drawings form part of the exhibition. Working in both paint and clay, and depending on the subject matter, she has found herself taking very different approaches: accurately figurative and abstract, decorative and illustrative. Paintings and ceramic panels in a similar idiom are also on display.

ANNEKE DISSEVEL - Anneke lives in North Devon. Her work, showing how she has become fascinated by the possibilities of clay its many forms has not been seen in Wells before. She has been playing with clay for 20-odd years. For her it is about play, the results happy accidents. She loves the flow and freedom of it and does not particularly plan what she makes. Frankly the clay tends to decide for itself. Ending up with objects that are functional with a twist.

She makes plates, platters and vases, switching to buttons and beads for a bit after the cupboard collapsed. Figurines, and recently the head on display. Some pieces live in friends' houses when they seemed to belong with that person. Currently she is into little boxes. Everyone needs a little box for trinkets. **Free entry to exhibition only**



Ground Floor Meeting Room

Saturday 9 - Thursday 28 September
“Welcome to the Brown Moth Café”



A collaborative installation featuring printmaking, textiles and clay work created by people experiencing mental health difficulties, dementia and learning disabilities, in response to a collection of items and stories from the museum. “You will see many moths, vessels, cups, saucers, memories, patterns and thoughts woven into our piece, and we hope it transports you and gives you the feeling of being welcomed into a friendly tea-gathering”.

(Jade Ogden and Sally Dempsey – artists).

This work has been created in partnership with Somerset Art Works and HeadsUp Somerset, and made possible

thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the late Jean Imray.

Free Entry to exhibition only

Search and Learn project

The project has entered an exciting new phase, with the new Wells City Galleries starting to take shape on the first floor of the museum. The area is currently closed off for safety reasons, but we will be posting photos on the project's Instagram account (@searchlearnwells) so do take a look! We will be offering preview tours of the new galleries in the autumn, and dates will be advertised nearer the time. The new galleries will also help to inform a new learning programme which is being developed for the museum by consultant Katherine Webber – you can find out more about her work elsewhere in this newsletter.



We have also completed work to refurbish the former study of the museum's founder Herbert Balch, which is located adjacent to the Balch Room. This space will be interpreted for the first time and opened to the public towards the end of the year. In the meantime we have worked with Somerset Film to create a short film celebrating Herbert Balch, which is now available on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/6h-zCGgK5GA> Our next film will be on the subject of the Wells Carnival, so if you have memories which you would like to share please do get in touch with Project Manager Victoria Northwood at searchlearnwells@gmail.com.

Earlier this year we invited local people to 'get to know your museum', asking the question 'have you ever walked past the museum on Cathedral Green and wondered what's inside?'... Erica, Gemma, Lisa and Sue took up the challenge and partnered up with museum volunteers Sue, Jon, Jeff and Annie to explore the collections during the course of May and June, with input from our Hon Curator

David Walker. The resulting creative outputs were curated by artist Jan Ollis, who was on hand to advise, support and encourage throughout.



Over the past few months we have been working with Somerset Art Works to deliver a series of workshops at HeadsUp Somerset inspired by the museum collections. Artists Jade Ogden and Sally Dempsey have created a collaborative artwork featuring printmaking, textiles and clay work created by people experiencing mental health difficulties, dementia and learning disabilities, titled "Welcome to the Brown Moth Café". It will be on display at the Cathedral as part of Wells Art Contemporary 5 August to 2 September, and will then be on display within the museum as part of Somerset Art Weeks.

An important part of the Search & Learn project has been the digitisation of glass plate negatives in the Phillips Collection. Our Collections Manager Matt Williams has been working behind the scenes to photograph the portrait series, and transfer each negative into archival quality storage. His work on the project will end in August, but will be continued by the volunteer team who have been working alongside him.

From the Curator

Work is now well underway to install the new Wells City galleries on the first floor of the museum. We had to empty these beforehand, including the contents of several old pinewood cases.



One of the items was the top of an occasional table, decorated with marquetry veneer. It was made by W.H.Jewell, cabinet maker, of Hereford Street, Christchurch, New Zealand.

The types of wood are New Zealand species, such as the redwood Kauri, and the durable hardwood Totara, used in Maori carving.

It came into the museum in 1895. Underneath the table top is a key to the various woods used. Unfortunately, the drawing doesn't quite match the pattern!



News from the museum's library

Miscellaneous additions to book stock

J. H. Parker, *The Architectural Antiquities of the City of Wells* (1816)

F. W. Weaver *Somerset Incumbents from the Hugo MSS in the British Museum* (1889)

Oliver Kent, *China comes to Wells* (Wells & Mendip Museum 2022)

Traditional Manufactories and Plant Nurseries (Wells & Mendip Museum 2021)
Swans of Wells (Bishops' Palace and supporting businesses) presented by Terry Pearce (2022)

Selected additions to the Coleridge Archive in the additional Ring-folder 15

Michael Raiger, "Kubla Khan"

Tim Fulford, "*Brethren in Lore: Thalaba, "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan"*"

Helen Boyes. *Romanticism and Methodism* (reviewed only)

Stuart Andrews, "Robert Southey and the Fate of Spanish Democracy 1811-1821" (newly published in *Wordsworth Circle*, June 2023)

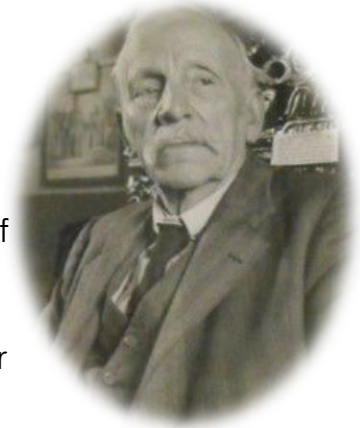
Stuart Andrews, "Poets at Odds: Coleridge and Wordsworth" (newly published in *Coleridge Bulletin*, July 2023) **Honorary Librarian: Stuart Andrews**

Learning at the Wells and Mendip Museum

Learning update and how you can help inspire the next generation!

'**Search and Learn**', the motto of the museum's founder Herbert Balch and the title of the museum's project to re-tell the stories of Wells, is also the perfect description for the museum's learning programme for schools.

How better to inspire children and young people than by nurturing their curiosity. The new gallery displays, artefacts and archives offer an ideal opportunity to encourage children and young people to explore, investigate and question to learn more about the past. There is a wealth of material to choose from. Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Wyndham Fund, the development of the museum's schools programme for the Wells City Galleries is now underway.



In line with the new gallery displays, the focus of the schools' programme will be the history of Wells and its inhabitants. The programme is being developed with both the National Curriculum and the curricula of local schools in mind. Local history has an important role to play as it helps make history relevant to the lives of children as well as developing a greater understanding and hopefully pride in their local community.

However, to maximise the potential the museum has to offer **we need your help!** There are a variety of ways you can support the museum:

Become a Learning Volunteer

If you don't fancy facilitating activities or delivering workshops still read on! We are looking for volunteers to facilitate the workshops and activities however we may also need volunteers to undertake a variety of supporting roles or activities 'behind the scenes'. Specific learning volunteer roles for the museum will be finalised over the next few weeks however examples could include: support with research to

create education materials; illustration for resources; making dressing up costumes; checking loans boxes and resources; meeting and greeting school groups when they arrive at the museum or simply 'spreading the word' to family and friends who have connections with local schools.

If you would like to find out more, please email: searchlearneducation@gmail.com

Do you work or teach in a local school?

We are looking for teachers to join our Teacher's Focus Group. We appreciate the demands on teachers' time so meetings will be kept to a minimum. Our first meeting will be in the Autumn Term when you will have the opportunity to attend a private view of the new galleries. We want to ensure our learning offer supports the curricula of our local schools and the interests and needs of their pupils. Members of the focus group will therefore help inform and select the topics and activities for the museum's loan boxes, workshops and trails. For further information please email: searchlearneducation@gmail.com **Katherine Webber, Learning Officer**

Other events at the museum

Saturday 12 August & Saturday 2 September 12.30pm – 1.30pm & 2.30pm – 3.30pm A concert by multi-instrumentalist and singer, Jenny Bliss

Following her last successful concert at the museum, Jenny will be holding one concert a month until the end of the year. She will be performing on Violin, viola da Gamba and other instruments, as well as singing in a recital of solo pieces. A specialist in early music, she will play a varied programme of music from the medieval, renaissance and the baroque.

Tickets: £12 on the door, or from www.jennybliss.co.uk

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

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