

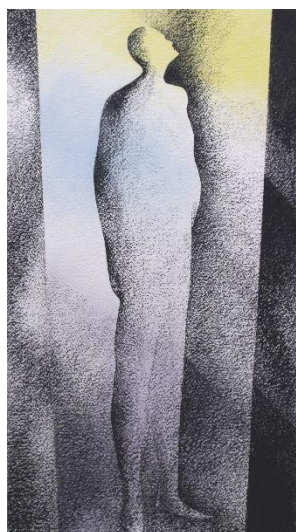
Welcome to Wells & Mendip Museum's newsletter with information about exhibitions, talks, events and developments at the Museum. If you would like to receive a copy by e-mail please contact admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk

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

EXHIBITIONS

In our first floor Exhibition Room

“EXPRESSIONS OF AWAKENING” – ART EXHIBITION BY JONATHAN MIDDLEMISS UNTIL SATURDAY 28 AUGUST 2021



“At its best our creative work activates and gives new life to the universal Symbols that lie dormant in the unconscious” Jung

Jonathan Middlemiss is an established artist in ceramics, land art and painting. His career in ceramic vessels and sculpture spans over forty years with international awards and museum placements, and he is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics. His first studies of metaphysical symbols were explored in ceramics but more recently through drawing and painting. His Land Art projects on our relationship to the environment as a mythic path to the unconscious were supported by the Arts Council between 2002 and 2007. This body of work, with different approaches and in appropriate media, explores the way symbols offer a doorway to other states of consciousness.

His book entitled “Expressions of Awakening” will be published soon. You are invited to leave your name and contact email in the visitor's book if you are

interested. “Meet the artist” - 28th August 12.00 to 4.00. **Free entry to exhibition only**

Talk by the artist at 2.00 p.m. Contact: info@middlemissart.com

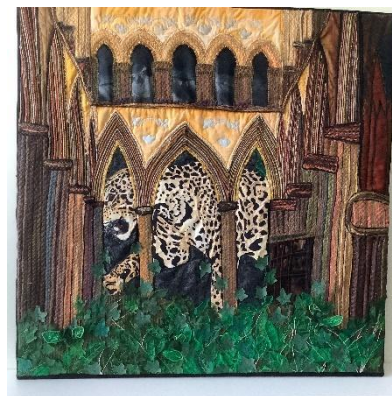
IRVING EMBROIDERIES

TUESDAY 7 - SATURDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

“New, exciting work by participants at 'Irving Embroideries'.

Following their highly successful diploma exhibition in the museum two years ago, the students have been working on projects of their own and whilst hampered by covid restrictions have produced some outstanding, innovative embroideries which showcase a wealth of creative talent. If you think of embroidery as lazy daisy on tablecloths think again - this bears no relation - it is modern and vibrant. Each piece has been individually designed by its maker and is therefore unique.

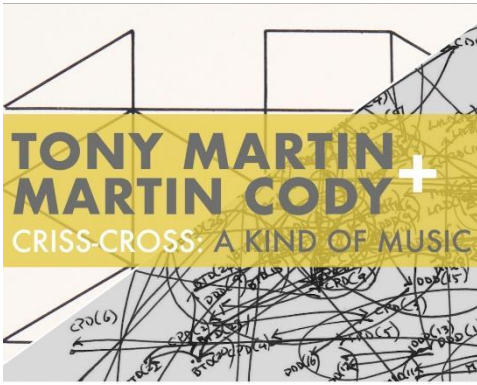
Admission to the exhibition is free - come and enjoy!



“CRISS CROSS: A KIND OF MUSIC”

**DRAWINGS AND PRINTS BY TONY MARTIN & MARTIN CODY
SATURDAY 18 SEPTEMBER – SATURDAY 2 OCTOBER**

Tony Martin is an artist living and working in Somerset. He has exhibited regularly for more than three decades. His most recent collaboration - Like the Dewfall - was with poet John F. Deane.



A Kind of Music is an ongoing series of drawings and prints. The works often begin with self-imposed rules working in tandem with improvised decisions.

The pieces are made in a spirit of intention and invention, with a nod to the influence of jazz and classic music. What seems like restriction gives way to the sheer pleasure of making an inky line, improvising a form or changing a planned composition.

Martin Cody is primarily a sculptor, living and working in Somerset and is a former John Moores Fellow in Sculpture at Liverpool School of Art and Design.

In 'CrissCross' drawings, ink lines make energetic tracks from point to point across a delineated area of paper. Lines loop back into each other, forming tangles and knots. The beginning and ending of every track is affirmed with a notation, comprising of three letters and the number of moves.

This joint exhibition combines the prints and drawings to create CrissCross: A Kind of Music. The overall look of linear construction is complimentary while the energies of each set contrast. Examples of work can be viewed at: www.tonymartinart.com and www.martincodysculpture.com
Free entry to exhibition only

ANTHONY GORMLEY'S NEW WORK "DOUBT" COMES TO WELLS

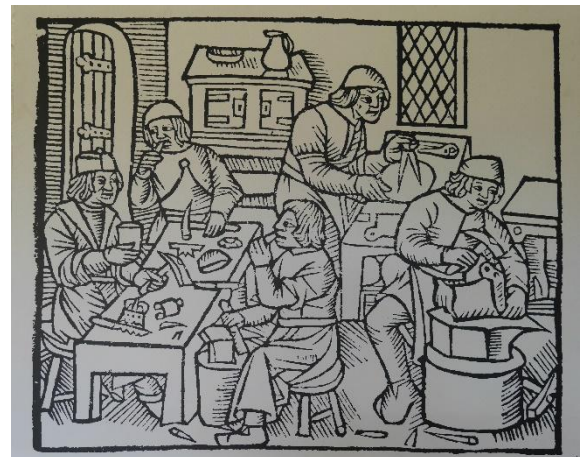
The sculpture is just over life size and will be installed in Niche 338 on the lowest tier of the West Front of Wells Cathedral on 26 August, just in time for the Bank Holiday weekend.

The Project Factory raised the money to have the work installed in a collaboration between Wells Cathedral and the Gormley Studio in London. It will be in dialogue with the remaining statues of the West Front of Wells Cathedral for 18 months.

Although the sculpture is modestly sized by Gormley standards, great care has been taken to ensure that there is no impact on the fabric of the cathedral. The project has been given the go-ahead by the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England, the body that oversees the care and conservation of Church of England cathedrals, and by Historic England.

Castings of Stone Carvings

To celebrate the installation, the museum is mounting a temporary display of five Plaster of Paris castings of stone carvings which are usually kept in store. The display will be in one of our galleries with a view of the cathedral. Plaster of Paris castings of figures on the West Front and the interior of the cathedral were made for the Great Exhibition of 1851, held at the Crystal Palace in London's Hyde Park. This celebration of medieval stonemasonry allowed visitors to see the details of the carvings close up. The museum's permanent Statuary display has several of these castings, including the four capitals that tell the story of the fruit stealers.



The interior of the cathedral is decorated with the elaborate carvings of Medieval stonemasons. Individual masons had considerable leeway over the style and subject of their work, as long as the carvings were of the asked-for size.

The carvings produced during the late-twelfth to early-thirteenth century are highly original. They speak of the human condition by telling a story, or through humour. The highly skilled craftsmanship confidently conveys movement and emotion.

HERITAGE WELLS BROCHURE

As part of the fundraising initiative for the wider Gormley Project, Project Factory has produced a 32-page visitor brochure for Wells Heritage Partners. It is titled 'Heritage Wells: An introduction to the Historic Sites of Wells', with a foreword by Annie Maw, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset. It will be on sale for £4.50 at the heritage sites and will benefit the community projects launched by the Gormley Project.

WILLOW WORKSHOPS

Willow Weaving at the Wells and Mendip Museum



Learn some basic skills and complete some beginners projects: a wreath base, bird feeder, or a small container - no experience necessary - we will work in small groups of four, in the garden weather permitting - all materials included - £12 per person. To book your place email tandemarts2@gmail.com Dates : Wed Sept 1st, Tuesday Sept 7th, Fri Sept 17th, Tue Sept 21st Times : 10-11.45am /12.15-2.00pm /2.15-4pm

In September, the museum will be hosting 4 days of willow workshops where you will be able to learn some basic skills and complete some beginner's projects such as a wreath base, a bird feeder or a small container. No experience is necessary.

The workshops will run 10am – 11.45am, 12.15pm – 2pm & 2.15pm – 4pm on Wednesday 1st, Tuesday 7th, Friday 17th and Tuesday 21st September and will be held in the garden weather permitting, otherwise in the Lecture Hall.

£12 per person – all materials included.

To book a place, please email [<tandemarts2@gmail.com>](mailto:tandemarts2@gmail.com)

FINDS IDENTIFICATION DAY

Saturday 16 October 11am – 3pm

Maria Kneafsey, the Finds Liaison Officer for Somerset County Council, will be available to identify your finds from digging your garden or while walking your dog.

To book a free place, please email Maria [<finds@swheritage.org.uk>](mailto:finds@swheritage.org.uk)

FROM THE CURATOR

We've had a busy few months at the museum, getting it ready to reopen to the public, and organising and taking part in events and activities.

The garden looks wonderful, due to the hard work of the Garden volunteers and we were so pleased to open it officially with garden open days in May. We are taking our first bookings for the garden as a venue, including the Wells WI who met there last week.

Our first exhibition since we were allowed to open post-pandemic, Photographs of Somerset & Bath Lunatic Asylum, was a huge success. Many visitors were able to find out more about their family histories, and both the museum and the Friends of the Mendip Hospital Cemetery learned a lot from hearing from the visitors.

We've had some interesting items donated to the museum recently, including this Edward 1st 'long cross' silver penny, found in a garden in Wells. It was part of the 'new coinage' of 1279, minted in York by the Archbishop's mint which operated between 1281 and 1300.



Images: both sides of the penny, one showing the king, the other the 'long cross'

A long cross coin has on its reverse side a cross that extends to the rim. Coinage at the time was subject to the crime of 'clipping', cutting a small strip of metal off the edge. These clippings could then be melted down into bullion. The long cross design was introduced to prevent this, as if any

of the cross ends were cut off, the coin was no longer legal tender. It looks as if this coin has been clipped.

We enjoyed taking part in the Wake up Wells Community day on the 24th July. It was great to see and meet so many new faces and old friends.

I'd like to thank all the museum volunteers and friends for all your hard work - you are too many to mention here, but you know who you are and that you are valued.

NEWS FROM WELLS CITY ARCHIVES

The Archivist started work again in May, having been on furlough since November. She is now able to respond to written enquiries, and she and Jonathan, her Assistant, have begun working through the many enquiries which have accumulated while she was on furlough. She has also been checking the physical condition of the most important items in the historic collection. At present, Wells City Archives remains closed to the public because of the pandemic, but the Archivist is making plans for a safe

re-opening and hopes this will be possible relatively soon. There is a waiting list dating back to the period when the Museum had to close to the public because of the pandemic.

In response to an invitation to contribute a piece to Wells Heritage Partners' brochure about the city, the Archivist has written the section on "The Water of Wells"

As reported in the last newsletter, throughout the period of the coronavirus pandemic, significant work by volunteers has continued on several important volunteer Archives projects. The Archivist is extremely grateful to the volunteers working on these for their generous contribution of time and effort, which has made possible a vast amount of progress during an extremely difficult time. Whilst on furlough, the Archivist participated in some of these projects on a voluntary basis "ScraseBase" (a database of Wells property histories as researched by Tony Scrase) – Development work on this project has continued. We are now at the stage of reviewing the database for consistency, queries raised, and accuracy. And Tony Scrase has been writing introductory notes. The next stage will be to prepare the database for release online for free consultation by members of the public. Many of the sources for this database are contained in the O. A fascinating article promoting ScraseBase and written by Museum Trustee Clare Blackmore appeared in the June 2021 issue of *Wells Voice*. It is entitled "When rent could be paid with red roses".

The Patrick Brown Slide Collection – Work has also continued on listing this large collection of slides of Wells properties, which are being identified and listed in an Excel spreadsheet

Historic photos of the High Street from the collection have been contributed to the Museum's forthcoming Schools project. This image shows the old Palace Cinema building on Priory Road; its site is now a car park.

Petty Sessions – Work has proceeded on adding to the database the details covering the final part of this rare nineteenth-century collection.



*Photograph by Patrick Brown,
Image © Wells City Council Archives*

Jean's Imray's book on the Wells Almshouses – The Archivist has, while on furlough, been voluntarily editing, typesetting, sourcing illustrations, and coordinating the completion and printing of Jean Imray's book on the history of the almshouses. Jean is a former Museum Trustee and was also the first City Archivist. We are delighted to announce that the book will be published later this year by Wells & Mendip Museum. Ten copies will be printed and bound and donated to local libraries, archives and the Almshouses themselves; three of them will go to the national deposit

libraries. The book will also be published as a PDF, which will be downloadable for free from the Museum's website. The publication date will be announced nearer the time!

Finally, we wish Archives and Museum volunteer Sarah Villiers all the very best for her new life in Bristol. She will be hugely missed by the Archivist and the Archives volunteer team, as well as by many others. She has contributed an inestimable amount to the City Archives, working on numerous Archives development projects almost since she first arrived in Wells, always with great enthusiasm, flair, energy and commitment. Thank you, Sarah! **Julia Wood, Wells City Archivist**

LIBRARY NEWS

Acquisitions 2020

There were 24 new titles most of which are listed on an A4 sheet available in the Library. Please take one if you are interested. The list does not include a further 20 titles presented by the Librarian (together with long runs of the *Coleridge Bulletin* and *The Wordsworth Circle*) as the nucleus of the new project of a Coleridge Archive.

Coleridge Archive: new additions

ANDREWS, Stuart, *The Lake Poets in Prose: ConnectingThreads* (2021). Presented by the Author. (Details on the Museum website).

ROE, Nicholas, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: the Radical Years* 2nd edition 2018. Presented by the Author.

A full account of the development of the Archive will appear in the next newsletter, together with the launching of an associated exhibition.

Library "Occasional Paper"

Eric Preston (one of our Library Assistants) has written a short essay in our "Occasional Papers" series. It is a study of Wells Members of Parliament from 1295 to the present day and is shelved at Wells 7 (Box) in the Museum Library.

The Shops of Wells

Eric Preston reminds us of his earlier illustrated booklet on Wells shops over the centuries. He writes: "In 2018, before the Coronavirus hit us all and the Museum was closed, I did some research on the history of Wells shops in the main streets and published *The Changing Shops of Wells 1796-2018*. This booklet is still on sale in the Museum shop at £9.50 and was published with the support of the Curator, Archivist and Librarian. More than half of the print run was sold soon after publication, but as a result of the Museum's closure it has been rather lost sight of during lockdown. The booklet includes details of each numbered shop in High Street, Sadler Street, Queen Street and Broad Street, with the names of the business at various dates up to 2018. There are 'then and now' photographs and brief notes on many of the shops."

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Visitor Survey Assistance

For several years now the museum has participated in 'Visitor Insights', a programme run by the South West Museums Development Partnership to gather data on museum visitors. We find it extremely useful to know the demographic profile of our visitors, where they have traveled from etc, and SWMDP use this information to advocate the economic and social importance of the heritage sector to the region.

Visitors can respond to the survey on paper forms or digitally using an Ipad provided by SWMDP. Jon Chivers manages this for the museum, but this year SWMDP are asking for two people from each museum to be involved. If you would like to help with this, or for more information, please contact the museum manager

Volunteer Shop Manager

We are currently looking for a volunteer shop manager for our museum gift shop. Various duties. Approx. 6 hours per week. Retail experience an advantage but not essential as training will be given. For more information and an application form, please contact the museum manager.

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM

Even though the museum is open, don't forget the great posts on both our Facebook and Instagram pages. If you have either of these accounts, we would love you to "like" and "share" our posts so that they may reach a much wider audience. If you do not have either of these accounts, you can still enjoy these daily posts via the links at the bottom of the "Join & Support" page on our website.



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