

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)

Please Note: The museum will be open on Good Friday and Easter Saturday - 7 & 8 April, but will be closed on Coronation Day - Saturday 6th May 2023

First Floor Exhibition Room

Tuesday 4 April – Friday 14 April

An exhibition by the National Acrylic Painters' Association

The NAPA was formed in 1985. It evolved from the concept that acrylic paint is still largely unrecognized in its own right. Acrylic paint is the 20th Century's positive contribution to painting. It is the only medium that is capable of the widest range of approaches in technique and methods, thus stimulating creativeness and fresh thinking in theory and art ideology, and as such demands that maximum expression should be sought through its versatility. It was intended that the National Acrylic Painters' Association should fulfil this demand, by being a vehicle for collective exhibitions, which aim to promote the excellence and innovation of the medium. **Free entry to exhibition only**



Tuesday 18 April – Saturday 29 April

“Three Views” – an exhibition by Jan Brame, Gill Flack and Wendy Lovegrove



Jan Brame studied printmaking at the Somerset College of Arts & Technology, where she acquired a particular interest in the technique of etching. She draws inspiration for her subject matter mainly from the Somerset countryside. She will often start an etching whilst out on location, then complete it from a photograph. This is because the nature of the medium dictates that most of the work is done in her workshop at her home in Taunton.

Gillian Flack has painted all of her life, inspired by the changing light and moods of the English countryside. She is passionate about her art and seizes every opportunity to pick up her paints and immerse herself in the landscapes she loves,



and resonance she needs, to recreate the tranquility and serenity of the scenes she wishes to depict. Careful observation and a sensitivity to colour are at the heart of the work she produces, which is mainly figurative and seeks to capture the essence of the scene in front of her. Her work has been exhibited in London with the ROI, at the Society of Women Artists and at the Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy. Locally she is a member of the Frome Art Society and the Bruton Art Society.



Wendy Lovegrove has been painting for over fifty years, although she has never had any formal training. During that time, however, she has worked under the tutelage of several professional artists. She likes to paint small and her preferred medium is oil. Her choice of subject matter is eclectic, dictated by an intrinsic quality she finds attractive in something, be it a person, place or landscape; there must be a focal point to which the surrounding

spaces are subordinate and simply stated. She has recently explored the technique of painting in cold wax and oil with a palette knife, which she finds has allowed her to express the subject in a 'looser', more impressionistic style.

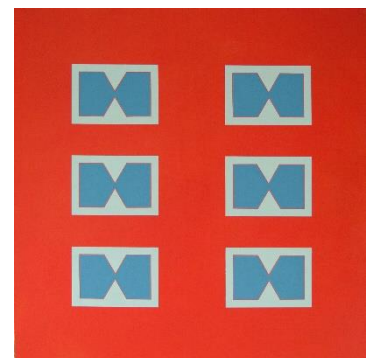
Wendy has exhibited in galleries here in Wells where she now lives, at the Black Swan Gallery in Frome and at the Bath & West Show. In the past she has also shown her work in galleries in Bristol and West Wales.

Free entry to exhibition only.

Tuesday 9 May – Saturday 20 May

Art exhibition by Pennie Elfick & Susan Gradwell

Pennie Elfick: Colour defines mood and atmosphere, their juxtaposition defines space, form, perspective and scale. The simplicity of the images contains a stillness that lies at the heart of something observed and experienced, a synthesis of a moment seen and remembered. The work is created slowly by building up many fine layers of paint; each layer dries before the next is applied. This method of working gives the paintings their depth and luminosity, enabling these surfaces to change with the moving light of the day.



Susan Gradwell: Hand coloured Etchings and Aquatints. Her recent work explores the deconstruction and re-interpretation of aspects of discarded packaging, prior to recycling. The etchings are inspired by these cut or shredded protective layers and their shapes, textures and patterns. The sculptural forms created translate into the basis for the works.

Free entry to exhibition only



Wednesday 24 May – Thursday 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. Please contact draycottartclub.mendip@gmail.com For more info. 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

Ground Floor Meeting Room

Wednesday 5 April – Friday 21 April
"Time & Place"



An exhibition exploring Wells today, tomorrow and yesterday through individual and collaborative sketchbooks and drawings. The exhibition includes responses to the collections of Wells & Mendip Museum by participants in a 10-week course led by artist Sara Dudman RWA. Organised in partnership with Somerset Art Works with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. **Normal museum entry fees apply.**



Monday 24 April – Saturday 29 April
Rotary International postcard exhibition



Rotary International is one of the largest humanitarian organisations in the world. They are playing a major role in the elimination of Polio around the world and are deeply engaged in supplying medical and water aid to Ukraine, through their international network. Locally they have helped Ukrainian families with laptops and car repairs to enable them to find employment, and many other local projects including purchasing and supporting a minibus for Heads Up mental health charity. This exhibition will include postcards created "free of charge" by a host of different artists, and is being held to support Rotary International's

"Supporting Humanitarian Projects Through Art". The postcards will be on sale for £20 each and all proceeds will go to charity.

Wednesday 3 May – Saturday 3 June
A photography exhibition by Jack Hardin

Jack Hardin BA (Hons) Creative Arts is a photographer and longtime resident of Wells and the surrounding area. He is inspired by the almost unrivalled image-making opportunities of the British Isles,



particularly of the South West. His specialties are landscape and related, light and mood, still life.... And whatever catches the critical eye.

Normal museum entry fees apply.

From the Curator

Parchment map of Parham Plantation, Antigua

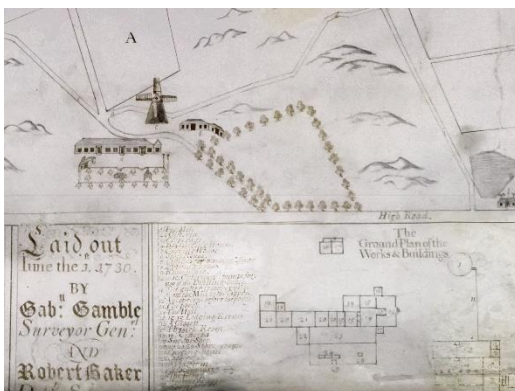
A new chapter has begun in a story which started in the 17th century. It is a complex story, and we join it over 50 years ago in Wells. In the Summer of 1969 two schoolboys at the Wells Cathedral School were exploring the stables of the Cedars, a mansion in the Liberty which was once the home of the Tudway family before it became part of Cathedral School.

Amazingly, in an attic space above the stables they found a trunk containing Tudway property.

The Tudway family were wealthy merchants. They moved to Wells in the 18th century where they were substantial landowners and employers. Individual family members became mayors, judges, and Members of Parliament. The Tudways built fine houses and supported local institutions financially.

The trunk and its contents were duly returned to the local branch of the family, the Tudway-Quilters. In an unusual turn of events, the boys were rewarded for reporting their find by being allowed to keep selected items from the chest!

Much of the Tudways' income came from growing and processing sugar on their plantations on the Caribbean island of Antigua where enslaved people worked, and one of the boys kept a parchment map of the Tudways' plantation at Parham on Antigua.



The existence of the map came to the attention of the Wells and Transatlantic Slavery Histories, Perspectives and Legacies group. This is a group of institutions and individuals which came together in 2021 to explore how Wells is connected to transatlantic slavery, and the museum is a member. The owner has generously now given the map to the museum, for which we are most grateful.

Parham Plantation map with thanks to Steve Tofts

Items which were kept by the other boy, a pair of shackles and a brass dog collar, came into this museum by a different route about 20 years ago. He also gave further items from this second group, three slave collars, to the Heinz History Centre at Pittsburgh, USA.

The map has not yet been studied in detail, but it shows Parham Plantation in 1730, surveyed for the owners Mrs Rachel Tudway and Clement Tudway Esq. The

plantation at that time had the 'great house', a mill and other buildings associated with processing the sugar cane, cart tracks, a church, and 'negro' houses. The map arrived back in Wells just in time for the Wells & Transatlantic Slavery conference held recently at the Cedars, which was organised by Wells Cathedral. One of the speakers, Stephanie Mathivet, has researched the Tudway family and she showed images of Parham and Parham Plantation during her talk.

The Wells & Transatlantic Slavery group has produced a self-guided trail to historic sites linking the City of Wells to transatlantic slavery and will also publish a website on this subject. The trail is available at the museum reception. The museum features in the trail, as Joseph Lovell was one of the previous residents of the house which is now the museum. He was a prominent solicitor who managed the affairs of the plantation-owning Tudway and Dickinson families.

Search & Learn project

Since February the Search & Learn project, made possible thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a bequest from the late Jean Inray, has made significant progress.

Our building contractors Biggs have been on site working to refurbish the former study of the museum's founder Herbert Balch, with a view to creating a new space for visitors to enjoy. Our interpretation contractors Far Post Design have been working closely with Curator David Walker to develop designs for the Balch Study and new City Galleries on the first floor, and those of you who have visited the museum in recent weeks will have noticed that the two galleries leading to the Geology Room are now almost empty and ready for fit out. Thanks go to our wonderful volunteer maintenance team and caretakers for achieving this! We anticipate that the new interpretation will be in place by the end of the summer, and there will be an update in the next Newsletter.

We have been working closely with our partners Somerset Art Works on two projects which seek to as inspiration for creativity. 'Time & Place', an art course led by artist Sara Dudman RWA, has been held weekly at the museum since the end of January, and the 14 regular participants have explored a range of different collections and media. There will be an opportunity to come and see the work they have created, individually and collaboratively, in an exhibition which will run 5-21 April.



Between April and June 2023 artists Sally Dempsey and Jade Ogden will be running a series of creative workshops at Heads Up Somerset, a Wells based charity which provides activity-based learning and development for adults across the Mendip area who are affected by mental health issues, including those with dementia and learning disabilities. The workshops will be inspired by the elements of the museum's collections and result in a collaborative artwork which we hope to display within the museum in due course.

We are delighted to be hosting our second student placement from Bath Spa University. Jordan Cole is working with a group of museum volunteers to develop an exhibition which takes as its starting point the Wells Pageant which took place 100 years ago this summer, 24-25 July 1923. The exhibition will run 30 June - 12 August 2023.

Do you own, or know of, any items which relate to the 1923 Pageant? Was anyone in your family involved? We would love to hear from you at searchlearnwells@gmail.com - or come along to our next Community Day which will be on the theme of Carnival. There will be an opportunity to show us your personal memorabilia, and a team from Somerset Film will be on hand to record your memories of Wells Carnival. This event will be held in the Lecture Hall 11am - 3pm on Saturday 13 May and is open to all.

Library News

Staffing

We are still short of Library Assistants. The times available are: Wednesday 10.30am – 1pm or 1pm – 4pm, Thursday 1pm – 4pm, and Friday 10.30am – 1pm

Prior library experience is not needed - just a love of books.

Helping a United States University

The University of Colorado asked for a photocopy of the WNHAS 25- page paper of 1963/64 on 'Hole Ground Roman Building at Wookey Hole' by W.W. Ashworth and Miss D.M. Crampton. We duly obliged for the modest sum of £15 or its dollar equivalent.

Advertising the Coleridge Archive

The shelves in the Library to the right of the window now carry more than 90 volumes, runs of the *Coleridge Bulletin* and *The Wordsworth Circle* and 14 ring-folders of articles and images. A photograph is expected to appear in the May issue of *Wells Voice* and a revised inventory (including the additions since Covid) will be circulated to the Taunton Museum, the Bristol Reference Library and (most importantly) the Coleridge Cottage at Nether Stowey - where more than half the collection of books previously lived. Meanwhile the Museum Website will be similarly updated. **Stuart Andrews, Honorary Librarian**

The Carbon Literacy Project

Museums Development England, in partnership with Manchester Museum and The Carbon Literacy Project has developed a new online course currently being rolled out to Museum Development teams across England. It is part of their larger Roots and Branches Project, supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England

In the Autumn of 2022, our museum Chair and one of our trustees took the course which is designed to give an understanding of what climate change is, the scale of its effects, and how museums fit into the local, national and global picture at setting an example to follow and a driving force behind reducing carbon emissions. The classes were delivered through Zoom with staff from other South West museums taking part. Sessions covered types of greenhouse gas, impact of

climate change locally and globally, ways to reduce emissions personally and in the workplace, and action planning for reducing our carbon footprint.

At the end of the course all participants had to make a personal and group pledge, or action, to help reduce their carbon emissions. In order to gain a better understanding of where the pledges could be made for the museum, we looked at what the museum already does to reduce its carbon footprint. We already make a real positive difference by not employing waste contractors, but separating and recycling our own museum waste, including composting the garden waste. We also have a procurement policy where we try to obtain as many materials and items from local suppliers as possible thus reducing the carbon footprint of what we buy. Lastly, as a museum, when a display is changed or furniture is disposed of, everything is carefully examined to see where it can be reused, recycled or upcycled for later use. For example pine table tops are cut up and reused as replacement floor boards. Waste is kept to an absolute minimum to save the museum money.

We have been working on installing a new electronic point of sales till system into the shop which has involved a full stock take and digitalising the stock we have onto the system, so going ahead we intend to analyse the stock in the shop and look for ways to reduce its carbon footprint by researching suppliers we already use, looking for new local suppliers and other national ones who are ethical and green in what they sell or how they make it. It is hoped in the future that there will be a display in the shop detailing what we do as a museum to be green so that we can show how the course has had a positive effect on how we operate and move forward.

South West Museums is looking at rolling out more Carbon Literacy training so that those who have already attended the above course can train others on how to be carbon literate. They will begin this later in the year. The course has shown how small changes on the personal or business level can have really positive effects.

Other Events at the museum

Friday 14 April at 7.30pm – “Westbury: Villa Rustica” – an excavation in progress by Andrew Buchanan. Since 2020 the Westbury Society Archaeology Group has been excavating a recently discovered Romano British building. It is believed to be the owner's home of a farmstead, and the size of the house, plus finds so far, indicate a degree of wealth, though not sufficient to afford a mosaic floor. Despite being fairly modest compared to some Somerset villas of a similar period, it is revealing useful information about the lives of local people 1700 years ago.

Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society

Saturday 13th May at 7.30pm Classical guitar concert by “duo”

To celebrate the launch of their 6th CD in April the talented pair of classical guitarists who perform as **duo** are touring the UK, and are delighted to appear in Wells for the first time. Their biggest musical influence is flamenco and they will play their own compositions from the new CD together with well-known pieces.

The dazzling fingerwork and energy will exhilarate the audience and make them see acoustic guitars in a different light! The seated concert in the Lecture Hall starts at 7.30pm and will finish at 9.30pm, with a limited cash bar in the interval. Tickets are £16 and available online (from 13th April) by going to duoguitarmusic.com/live and clicking the Wells ticket button or, if you prefer, you may purchase on the door.

Saturday 20 May at 7.30pm in person and online “Observing Venus and Mercury” by David Arditti, BAA President. To coincide with Venus' greatest eastern elongation in early June, British Astronomical Association President, David Arditti, will tell us about what can be seen on these inner planetary neighbours. The phases of Venus are a wonderful sight through a telescope and David is an expert observer. Visitors are very welcome. For those attending online, Billetto tickets are available at <https://billetto.co.uk/e/wma-david-arditti-tickets-736631> Members can obtain free tickets by requesting a member access code through our usual email address wellsmendipastro@gmail.com Members - free. Visitors: Adult - £5; Family rate - £7.50; Students - £3

Saturday, Sunday & Monday 27 – 29 May – “Cosmati Patterns” The Wells Institute for Sophia in Education will be running a course that will focus on cosmatesque patterns such as those found in the cosmati pavement in Westminster Abbey. This course will approach the geometric design of some of the pavement's patterns and its underlying layout, as well as focus upon its spiritual and cosmological meaning. Participants will draw cosmati patterns with compasses and ruler as well as make a small sample of cosmatesque mosaic. There will also be illustrated talks about the pavement. **For more details or to book a place, please contact: Tom Bree wiseinwells@gmail.com**

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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