

**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 18 October - Avalon Stitchers**



Avalon Stitchers are a group who meet monthly in Ashcott Village Hall. They offer a varied workshop programme, including traditional hand embroidery, machine embroidery and textile art. Social stitch sessions are run alongside the workshops - with plenty of tea, coffee and biscuits available!

They present an exhibition of members work every two years - the aim being to give members the opportunity to showcase the work they have completed - either at tutored workshops or on their own initiative. It also allows them to meet people who are interested in textile art and perhaps encourage them to join. So come along and see their work and have a chat with some of their members. **Free entry to exhibition only**

#### **21<sup>st</sup> Oct – 1<sup>st</sup> Nov – Quartet of Artists**

##### **Four artists from Somerset coming together to show their work**

The artists all paint in different ways, making for exciting contrasts, but they have in common a love of Somerset and its countryside from which they derive their inspiration.

**Jan Brame**'s first love is etching, but she is now exploring the possibilities of oils in her figurative landscapes and portraits.

**Shena Bulcock** likes to experiment with collage to create atmospheric pieces full of texture which invite further study and reflection.

**Gillian Flack** favours working en plein air to capture the ever-changing effects of light and weather on her landscapes.

**Wendy Lovegrove**'s evocative oil paintings are small and poignant, fully realising the potential of her subject matter. **Free entry to exhibition only**



#### **6<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November “Strange Biology” by Robin Gray**

Robin Gray's next exhibition in the museum will feature three aspects of this highly successful artist's work. The main area will be composed of the colourful and interesting abstract paintings. These paintings are carefully constructed but they are totally unplanned. One feature of 'Strange Biology' is that they can be hung any way round. Alongside these paintings will be the Dot and Line drawings that have become very popular recently.



In addition to these two 'abstract' styles, will be a small number of Gray's famous caving subjects, pictures that are very suitable for the museum which has a great area devoted to cave exploration.

Robin has also decided to include a small number of very early works showing important developments in the artist's artistic life. He was one of the country's first artist to work in acrylic paint and was awarded the contemporary art prize in 2018 by the National Association of Painters in Acrylic.

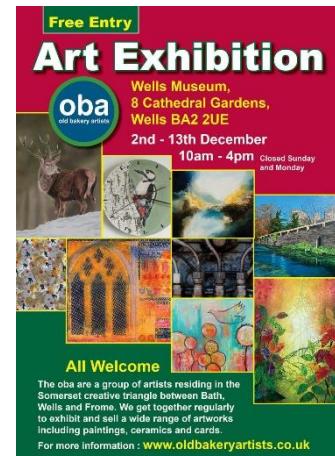
**Free entry to exhibition only**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> December – The Old Bakery Artists

The OBA are very pleased to be back at the museum for a further two-week exhibition this year. The artists have been very busy and there will be much new work to be seen. They are thrilled to be able to support the museum and contribute to the culture of Wells. Paintings and creative gifts will be available daily for purchase. The artists will be in attendance each day and some will be at work during the exhibition.

We hope to see you all and maybe provide a unique something for the festive season.

**Free entry to exhibition only**

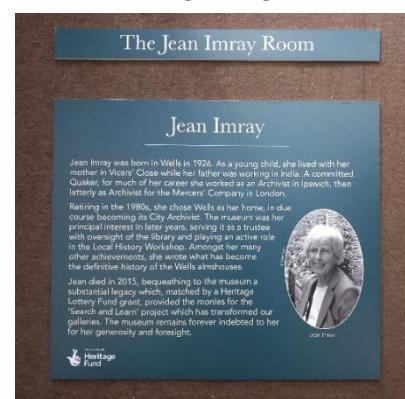


## Ground Floor – The Jean Imray Room

Following a complete refurbishment including the installation of a new lighting system, the museum's Meeting Room reopened under a new name.

The room has been renamed in memory of Jean Imray, a trustee and long-time supporter of the museum, who passed away in 2015, and who bequeathed a substantial legacy to us, which along with a National Lottery Heritage grant funded our recent "Search & Learn" project, transforming our galleries.

**The Jean Imray Room** is available to hire for small exhibitions and meetings. For more information, costs and availability, please contact the museum manager <[admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk](mailto:admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk)>



## Until 31<sup>st</sup> October - Menhir photographic exhibition



Menhir considers how landscapes are shaped by a combination of geological process and human actions. Commissioned by the Mendip Hills National Landscape Team and Seed Sedgemoor, artist Elizabeth Woodger explores the Mendip Hills' special qualities and unique features. It blends the human with the geological by printing photographs onto local rock specimens and then photographing these embedded then photographing these embedded in the environment. **Free entry to exhibition only**

## Richard Lovegrove

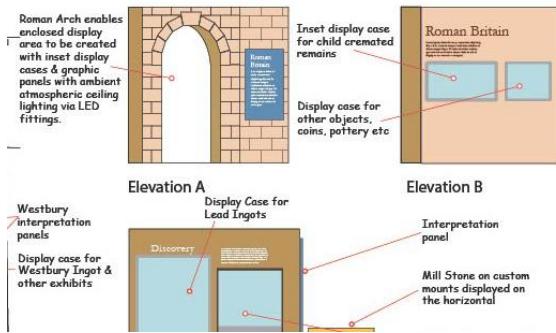
We were shocked and saddened by the very sudden passing of Richard on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. He had been at the museum for many years, as a volunteer in the library and then as a trustee with responsibility for the maintenance of the building and garden.

He was an invaluable member of the team and will be greatly missed by all.



## From the Curator

### Coming Soon – Roman Mendip!



We are excited to announce that we have started work on a new permanent display at the museum about Roman Mendip, replacing the current lead ingot displays. It will focus on the significance of Roman lead mining in the Mendip area, and to show what life was like for the miners, the occupying Romans, and the communities which grew up around the mining.

The new display will address the demand from our visitors and from schools for more Roman material in the displays and be supported by a range of Roman related events and activities. We hope it will open in Easter 2026!

## Fire Engine Bell

The museum has several bells in the collections, and this is one of the more unusual! Originally the bell was mounted on one of the first City of Wells fire engines. However, when the fire engine was replaced in the early 20th Century, the bell was used on the shop door of No. 8 Market Place and remained there until the shop closed in the 1960s. Customers could ring the bell to call the assistant if she were not in the shop to serve them.

The proprietor of the shop was Bert Phillips whose business was Phillips City Photographic Studio, which occupied both 8 and 10 Market Place. He was a member of the Wells Fire Brigade and a founder member of Wells City Carnival. The Phillips photographic collection was donated to the Museum by Mrs Hilda Southwood.

The Wells Fire Station was located in the Market Place positioned at the end of what is now the Ask Restaurant. The building still has the original frontage. For the shop the bell was fixed onto a wooden fitting with a carved bear on top. Why a bear remains a mystery! **David Walker, Hon. Curator**



## Crocheters and knitters wanted!

We are looking at additional ways to communicate with our visitors and dare I say more fun! We would like to use small crocheted or knitted figures or fossils to use in the displays for trails and to link items which are housed in different galleries. Fossil

ammonites and ichthyosaurs come to mind, as do Roman legionnaires and their wives! Please get in touch if you think you can help with this.

## **Schools Learning**

Following Katherine Webber's work on schools learning as part of the Search & Learn project, sterling work by Tanya Tyreman and Amy Lowe has made elements of the learning offer to schools available. We now have Key Stage 1 and 2 resources on our website which can be downloaded by teachers to support their visits. See:  
<https://www.wellsmuseum.org.uk/learning-programme>

## **News from the Library**

Two new names have appeared in the Museum Library during the last weeks of 2025. The Cathedral Librarian, Jolene Stevens, has used two titles in the Museum Library: ("Notes and Queries" to the latest version) and a complete run of SANHS (Somerset archaeology and natural history). The other name is Yona Schwalba-Goodwin.

The last months of 2025 have seen a large number of books offered to the Museum which are not needed and will be sold in order to for titles that are wanted.

Meanwhile, in the Coleridge Archive, five books on Charles Lamb have appeared: *The Letters of Charles Lamb* in 2 volumes (first published in 1909)

*The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* Ed. E.V. Lucas (From the Friends of Coleridge Coleridge Cottage, Nether Stowey 2922).

*Companion to Charles Lamb: A Guide to People and Places 1760-1847* by Claude A. Prance (189)

*A Portrait of Charles Lamb* by David Cecal, Constable: London.

**Stuart Andrews, Hon. Librarian**

## **News from the museum garden**

You will all be aware of the sad passing of Richard Lovegrove who ran the skilled maintenance and installation team at the museum. We gardeners call them the "Merry Men". They, in turn, affectionately referred to Richard as Captain Mainwaring.

The current development of the garden began with a chance meeting between my wife, Marianne and Richard in the Autumn of 2019. Richard was trying to dig a bed next to the front entrance. Richard had many skills but gardening was not one of them. "I could help you with that" said Marianne. Six years have passed since then and what you see now has had the keen support and encouragement of Richard as liaison with the museum trustees and curator.

Many thanks, Richard on behalf of all the gardeners.

**Norman Adams**

Richard (in his signature boiler suit) supervising. October 2020.

## Half term events for Halloween

### Halloween Trail

**25<sup>th</sup> October – 1<sup>st</sup> November**

Collect your trail sheet, and hunt for spooky clues and solve the riddles around the museum. Return your sheet for a Halloween prize.

Fun for children of all ages

**Included in museum entry**



### Halloween Art Competition

Age groups: Under 4s, 5-12 yrs & 13-17 yrs.

Create a pumpkin themed poster. One winner in each age group will win a FREE annual family entry ticket to the museum, plus a gift.

Plus – Every child that brings in a poster will get 1 free child entry with a paying adult during half term week.

Bring your poster in but don't forget to add your name, age & contact details on the back.

All posters will be displayed in our Jean Imray Room throughout November.

Winners will be notified after half term.



### Italian Wine Tasting

**Saturday 22 November 7pm – 10pm**

The Museum will be hosting a wine tasting event, and you are invited to join us to sample a curated selection of fine Italian wines. The evening will feature:

- A guided tasting of both red and white wines from across Italy
- Insights from our guest sommelier, Caroline Sharley of the Giggling Grape
- Bread and cheeses to accompany the wine
- A raffle with some exciting prizes
- A post-tasting bar
- Exclusive discounts on featured bottles



Tickets will shortly be going on sale at £35 per person. You can reserve a place before tickets are generally available by mailing [admin@wellsmuseum.org](mailto:admin@wellsmuseum.org) with the words Wine Tasting in the subject line.

### Other events in the museum

**Tues 28<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm – “The Red List of Threatened Species** – a talk by Howard Peters on what the red list is and how species get on it.

**Wells & District Wildlife Group**

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November – 11am – 1pm Print & Book Sale**

Sale of interesting surplus books and photographic prints by Caroline Bagias  
**Free entry to sale.**

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm – “Nature Recovery on the Mendip Hills”** – a talk by Tim Haselden, The Project Development Officer for the Mendip Hills National Landscape Team. **Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society**

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm – “Members Night”** – An opportunity for members to make short presentations or table top displays about their latest passion in astronomy and space exploration, A wide variety of topics. All Welcome.

### **Wells & Mendip Astronomers**

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 11am – 3pm Finds Identification Day.** Laura Beckwith, 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 place, please email Laura [laura.beckwith@swheritage.org.uk](mailto:laura.beckwith@swheritage.org.uk)

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm – “The Wildlife of Avalon Marshes”** by Alison Uren. Alison will talk about her new book which is an overview of the birds, mammals, flora, reptiles, amphibians and insects of the Avalon Marshes

### **Wells & District Wildlife Group**

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm – “Christmas Crackers: Feasts & Banquets at the Bishop’s Palace”** – a talk by Dr. Mark Hutchinson. Mark, the Chairman of the WNHAS explores the delights that were put in front of the Bishop and his entourage. (Please note this is our festive talk at the museum – so expect mince pies and mulled wine!)

### **Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society**



### **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December 11am – 3pm – Christmas Craft Market.**

Handmade gifts, decorations and treats from local artisans. Raffle & Tombola, Festive decoration making workshop. Refreshments available.

#### **Free entry to the museum for the day!**

For more information or to book a pitch, please contact [<admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk>](mailto:<admin@wellsmuseum.org.uk>)

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