

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: Monday – Saturday 10am – 4pm. Closed Sundays.

SMALL ART EXHIBITIONS IN MEETING ROOM

The Museum's Meeting Room has been hosting a regularly changing programme of Art exhibitions since the summer of 2016, during which many individuals, and some groups, have embraced this novel opportunity to see a body of their own work displayed in a public space, overlooking the Cathedral Green.

Showing work here is an attractive proposition, there being no charge to take part. Requirements are that all work must be able to use the hanging system in situ, and available for purchase, at which time all transactions will be handled by the Museum Shop, with 30% of the selling price directed toward the running of the Museum.

The Museum would like to encourage more people to take part in the programme, so if you are making something that can be displayed on a wall, why not get in touch.

"ART OF ELOQUENCE" - AN EXHIBITION BY DEBBIE RICHARDS UNTIL 20 JANUARY



An eclectic exhibition of fine art framed and canvas prints all available to purchase. Deborah Richards is a Photographer that specialises in capturing thought provoking images and limited edition works, covering a range of subjects that are 'life'. From Landscapes and Vintage subjects to Abstracts these are framed prints that will enhance your walls and inspire for many years to come.

Using new and vintage frames as well as contemporary canvases the exhibition will offer a variety of options to suit all.

EXHIBITION ROOM

"REMEMBERING – EXPLORING THE KINDERTRANSPORT 80 YEARS ON" AN EXHIBITION BY SIMON SCHACHTER 27 JANUARY – 8 FEBRUARY

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

27th January is Holocaust Memorial Day, the day for everyone to remember the millions of people killed in the Holocaust and marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp.

HMD 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. This is a significant milestone and is made particularly poignant by dwindling numbers of survivors who are able to share their testimony.

KINDERTRANSPORT

The Kindertransport was a unique humanitarian programme, which ran between November 1938 and September 1939. Approximately 10,000 children, the majority of whom were Jewish, were sent from their homes and families in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia to Great Britain.

Simon Schachter's father, Otto, was one of those 10,000 children, and Simon's artwork explores the places, people and time. His work began as a response to the handful of surviving photos of his Jewish paternal ancestors and previously withheld wartime documentation of their Viennese existence.



Otto, Vienna C.1938

He uses photographs as a starting point, although materials often inspire the ideas and determine the final works. They combine images from the time just prior to the start of WW11 and contemporary photography. Many works contain architectural imagery, which explores the addresses of family relatives. The work merges the time of Otto's childhood with the present day.



Otto and his mother, Vienna

"In some sense the works are a personal exploration of a place in which I was not born, did not grow up in, speak the language of or even have good sentiments about due to the ill treatment of family members. There is still an inexplicable attraction to Vienna which may be due to a genealogical connection.

The Holocaust Memorial Day theme "**Stand Together**" is eternally relevant to the work. If everyone had stood by, Otto would not have made the journey on the Kindertransport – in fact the Kindertransport would not have existed without those who did not "stand by" whilst persecution took place. Some were bravely acting as resisters and rescuers of individuals, and others were taking action against prevailing views and beliefs that saw some people's lives as worth less than others." **Simon Schachter**

"Don't be content in your life just to do no wrong, be prepared every day to try and do something good"- Sir Nicholas Winton, who rescued 669 children from Nazi-occupied Europe.

RURAL PROOFING RESILIENCE WORKSHOPS

Wells & Mendip Museum has participated in a programme of workshops running in 2019 providing guidance for independent Somerset museums in five areas; marketing, business planning, governance, fundraising and finance.

Presentations were given in the morning which provided guidance on matters such as developing responsive marketing strategies, best practice models of governance and creating a fundraising case for support. A practical discussion followed in the afternoon as looking at how we could apply them to our organisation.

The workshops have provided very useful guidance in keeping museum policies up to date in a changing environment. The attendance of other museums in the local area has also been a good opportunity to learn from the different approaches and experiences of others in similar situations, to everyone's benefit.

URTHWORKS BY BEN RIVERS

It is great when the museum's collections can travel to other venues and be seen in different situations by new audiences. Such an opportunity arose when curator Josephine Lanyon asked to borrow material excavated from Wookey Hole Cave to support an exhibition by the contemporary film maker Ben Rivers. One of the three films being shown at Hestercombe House near Taunton is *Look Then Below*, inspired by Mendip caves and the Iron Age settlers who lived in Wookey Hole Cave. Ben's films are amazing – immersive and thought-provoking. Urthworks continues until 9th February 2020 and is well worth a visit – see the Hestercombe House website for more information: www.hestercombe.com/gallery



Photo courtesy of Ben Rivers and Kate MacGarry

WORK ON THE COLLECTIONS



The Collections Working Group volunteers have been beavering away on our project to link records of the collections with the actual items. They have been together the information recorded in registers, notebooks and spreadsheets with the locations of the objects in the galleries and stores and updating numbering and descriptions. The five-year project officially ended in October and individual entries in the database now stand at 29,631 records, an increase of 34% over three years.

From the collections, a Bristol Delft Charger depicting James, First Duke of Monmouth, 1696. Accession number RN.430

CHRISTMAS MARKET

A massive thank you to everyone that came and supported our first Christmas Craft Market. It was a great success with some really lovely stalls, and we managed to raise over £300 which will go towards preserving the museum collections. We are hoping to make the market a regular event and are also looking at holding a craft market sometime in the summer as well.

OTHER EVENTS AT THE MUSEUM

Wednesday 8th January at 7.30pm – “Building a Cathedral” – a talk by Jerry Sampson.
Wells Civic Society

Saturday 25th January 12.30pm – 1.15pm – “Music @ the Museum” – join us for a lunchtime concert, followed by tea/coffee & cakes. Entry to concert by donation.

Tuesday 28th January at 7.30pm - Escape the cold and explore the flowers and wildlife of Crete with Les Cloutman. **Somerset Wildlife Trust**

Saturday 1st February- at 2.30pm “Why Birdwatching in Somerset?” a talk by Brian Roberts-Wray. **Wells Natural History & Archaeological Society**

Wednesday 12th February at 7.30pm – “A Year in the Life” – a talk with Alastair Tighe, Headmaster, Wells Cathedral School. **Wells Civic Society**

Saturday 15th February 12.30pm – 1.15pm - Music @ the Museum” – join us for a lunchtime concert, followed by tea/coffee & cakes. Entry to concert by donation

Tuesday 25th February at 7.30pm – “The Swift – a life on the wing” Peter Bright has been watching Swifts nest in his Mendip house since 2006. He will be sharing his experience and passing on what he has learned. **Somerset Wildlife Trust**



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