

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

16 – 20 April - Art exhibition by Holcombe Art Group

This exhibition will feature paintings using the medium of acrylic paints on canvas and board and some mixed media.

The subject matter of the paintings is varied, from family portraits, local scenes with several depicting views within the City of Wells, to landscapes and other subjects from around the world.

Inspiration has been taken from local scenes, and from photographs taken by group members on their travels, either in the course of work or holiday enjoyment.

Some paintings show the progression from beginner to more accomplished artist.

Free entry to exhibition



30 April – 11 May – Art exhibition by Chris Mottram



Chris is a West Country artist living in Bristol. He studied fine Art & Design at Colchester College of Art in Essex and later at the National School of Art in Sydney, Australia. He draws inspiration from nature and landscape, and our rich heritage. Chris has exhibited work for The Bath Society of Artists and has also had a work accepted for the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Most of the paintings that will be on display are oil on canvas. **Free entry to exhibition**

14 – 25 May – Art exhibition by Draycott Art Club

Come and see the group's exhibition and perhaps purchase some very affordable art made by experienced and not so experienced but very enthusiastic artists. You will find many different media used, from acrylic to watercolour and from pastel to charcoal. Some quite large work to smaller but well-crafted pieces, covering landscape, still life, life drawing and portraiture.



Our stewards are more than happy to talk to you about the work and answer any questions that you may have. They could possibly even encourage you to join our club and use those skills that you might not have used since school days and forgotten that you even had. Framed and unframed work, plus cards and other art will be available for purchase. **Free entry to exhibition**

Ground Floor Meeting Room

19 March – 30 April - “Within These Walls”

A museum garden exhibition



Spring is in the air and our latest temporary exhibition in the Meeting Room focuses on the museum's garden.

Since 2019 a team of dedicated volunteers have rejuvenated this peaceful and sheltered oasis in the medieval heart of Wells, which recently won a Gold Award from Wells in Bloom.

The garden is now an integral part of the museum's facilities and can be hired for functions,

local societies and interest groups – a valuable community asset.

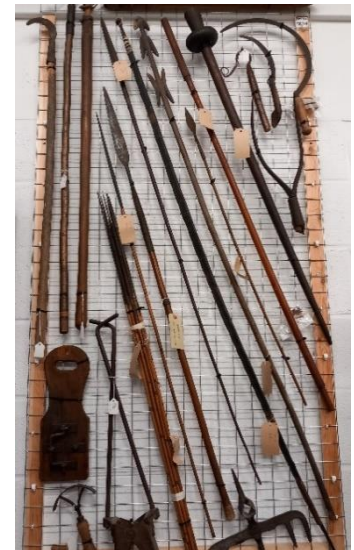
The exhibition documents this journey and explains the garden's historic context - and the team's plans for the future. **Museum entry fees apply**

From the Curator

Mesh mish mash, or is it?

It is well known that most museums have most of their collections in storage, and this museum is no exception. To maximise precious, and finite, storage space, we place like-with-like, and when it comes to spears, poles, tools with handles etc, wall-mounted mesh provides an efficient way of getting items such as these off shelves where they would traditionally be housed. The system is only suitable for lightweight and sturdy artefacts.

Because items are not stored by context or function you often get unusual juxtapositions, such as 19th century West Country agricultural flails and sheep crooks mounted beside ethnic Malayan spears, but it looks all right! The Malayan material was given to the museum by the local Harte family during the 1930s and 1940s. The museum is grateful to have such a handy group of maintenance volunteers who made the mesh racking. **David Walker, Curator**



Wall-mounted mesh storage

Search & Learn project

We are delighted to announce that our newly refurbished displays are now fully open to the public! The two Wells City Galleries (together with a complementary display on the ground floor) and Herbert Balch's Study were formally declared open on 14 March by historian Tony Scrase, at an event attended by the Mayor of Wells, Councillor Tany Pullin.



Tony Scrase opening the galleries

This work was made possible thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a bequest from the late Jean Imray – but also thanks to our volunteer maintenance team who have put in a huge number of hours over the past year, working alongside our contractors, Far Post Design.

On 22 March we welcomed our local MP, The Rt Hon James Heapey to the museum, and in the evening held a celebratory event for the museum's Friends and volunteers, including our special team of volunteer invigilators who have stepped up to enable the museum to borrow *The Tea Party*, an oil painting by the artist Richard Collins (d1732), from The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths in London.

The painting will be on display until 11 April as part of the exhibition "*Smashed in the Cellar*", which has been guest-curated by Vicky Dawson and made possible thanks to additional funding secured from Arts Council England. The exhibition has been inspired by a remarkable collection of pottery that was excavated from the museum garden in the 1990s, and also features work by artist Duncan Cameron. Do come and see it if you haven't already!

Our latest community exhibition "*Within These Walls*" which explores and celebrates the development of the museum's garden, continues until 27 April.

We are currently working with curator Josephine Lanyon on a new exhibition "*Out of Time*", which will be on display during the summer. Drawings by Herbert Balch will be showcased alongside works by artists Ben Rivers and Emma Stibbon, inspired by the museum's collections and the landscape of the Mendip Hills.

Finally, we are looking forward to welcoming back artist Sara Dudman, who will be offering a weekly art course during July and August. This series of creative workshops will focus on some of the approaches towards conservation, restoration and preservation of objects within the museum collections. Further details and information on how to apply will be advertised soon.

Victoria Northwood, Search & Learn Project Manager



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Library News

There are two pieces of news. The first is the receipt of a collection of boxes for our large collection of historic newspapers which hitherto have stood in tall piles in the Attic. The acquisition of boxes has enabled Andrew Haynes who is responsible for the newspapers - and for almost everything else in the Attic – to engage in arranging the newspapers in manageable collections in the boxes. Andrew feels that we shall need more boxes to complete the task, so it is fortunate that Kate Parr of the Local Studies Libraries of the South West Heritage Trust has explained that re-boxing is an ongoing process.

The second piece of news is that the Hon. Librarian has arranged to purchase another 25 copies of "*The Changing Shops of Wells 1796 - 2018*" – after exhausting

the first 100 copies on first printing. Copies are now available in the Museum shop, priced at £9.50 **Stuart Andrews, Hon. Librarian**

Other events at the museum

Thursday 11 April 10am – 12.30pm – “An Introduction to AI” Learn to unleash AI’s power at this summit. This event hopes to demystify AI and equip business leaders and owners with strategies to harness cutting edge technologies for the future. Go to <https://wellsbusinessforum.uk/ai-summits> for more info and to register for a place. **Wells Business Forum**

Tuesday 16 April at 7.30pm “Swans & Wildlife at the Bishop’s Palace” - A talk by Moira Anderson. A light-hearted look at life on the moat throughout the year showing how nature is wonderful and totally unpredictable! Some background about the swans on the moat, the annual cycle of the swans’ life and what other wildlife people might expect to see. There will also be some “behind the scenes” and personal stories about the swans. **Wells & District Wildlife Group**

Saturday 11 May at 7.30pm – “Mercury’s Magnetosphere” a talk by Simon Toogood . Long-standing WMA member, Simon Toogood (MPhys, Leicester) is about to embark on his PhD also at Leicester University. His talk will describe his MPhys research project on the magnetosphere of Mercury using data from NASA’s MESSENGER spacecraft, the first mission to ever go into orbit around the closest planet to the sun. **Wells & Mendip Astronomers**

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:
Natalie Fewer, Volunteer Co-Ordinator wmmvolunteers@gmail.com

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