

Artefacts

THE FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS TRUST MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2014



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Our Chairman

Deborah de Haes



We have a challenge! Our numbers are decreasing. This is not uncommon with membership organisations, it appears, but it is a concern.

Perhaps the amount of information available on social media (Twitter and Facebook for example) is more accessible and more up to date, for some at least, than it is through traditional formats, such as magazines and newsletters. I expect the reasons are many and varied, but I feel this is a challenge we need to address head on and fearlessly.

We can all do our part, particularly by encouraging our friends and family to join the Friends. If you belong to an organisation where you think there may be people interested in becoming members, ring the office for a visit from one of our Ambassadors to talk about the work of the Friends and the benefits of becoming a Friend. The more income we can raise, the more we can support and protect Birmingham's internationally important collections, interpreted in the nine venues.

On other fronts, our work continues strong. We have had another interesting and varied programme of events this past year, with a large number of people attending and the profit contributing significantly to our ability to donate money to support the collections (this year was the best ever). This includes a growing programme of evening events, where a glass of wine and slice of pizza seems to help stimulate debate on interesting subjects. We had another lovely summer garden party at Blakesley Hall and learnt about both healing and harmful herbs growing there.

The amazing and unique Rowland Emmett exhibition in the Gas Hall, with all its whirring and cranking, has sent me back to the 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' film of the late 1960s. It really is extraordinary that many of the ingenious machines which Rowland Emmett developed for the film, are shown only briefly in the film itself. The almost surreal imagination of Emmett, demonstrated in so many of his inventions, is well worth seeing in the Gas Hall, if you can. Emmett inspired a whole generation of artists and filmmakers and it is easy to see why.

A big thank you to all the Friends who responded so quickly and generously to the Spitfire Gallery appeal in the last edition of Artefacts! BMT has been delighted with the response and there is an article elsewhere that updates the position in respect of the Appeal. If you haven't had the chance to donate already, there is still an opportunity.

The re-styled Edwardian Tearooms are now open, so do tell us what you think. There are different seating areas for different types of activity, and there is a much wider range of food and drink choices, including 'barista' style coffee. A good city centre location to meet your friends.

We are delighted that Rita McLean is coming to talk at our Annual Lecture this year on 18 September (more details on page 7). Sir Whitworth Wallis, the first Keeper of the Museum, is a subject she knows well as demonstrated by the fact that she wrote the entry on Whitworth Wallis for last year's update in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. As we enter another significant phase for the collections, it will be fascinating to learn how this first Keeper addressed the equally challenging, although different, circumstances of his era. If you haven't booked already, I urge you to do so.

Lastly, please be aware that work in Paradise Forum, outside BMAG, is likely to start early next year. Despite these works, the museum will remain open. Do encourage people to visit, to buy things in the shop and to patronise the Tearoom. And of course, the same applies to the Heritage Sites too. To avoid sunburn, go to a museum!

May your arts and heritage inspire you this wonderful summer!

With best wishes
Deborah de Haes ■

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Longquan shrine. Stoneware, celadon glaze and gilding. Yongle era, dated 1406. Longquan kilns, Zhejiang province. © The Trustees of the British Museum

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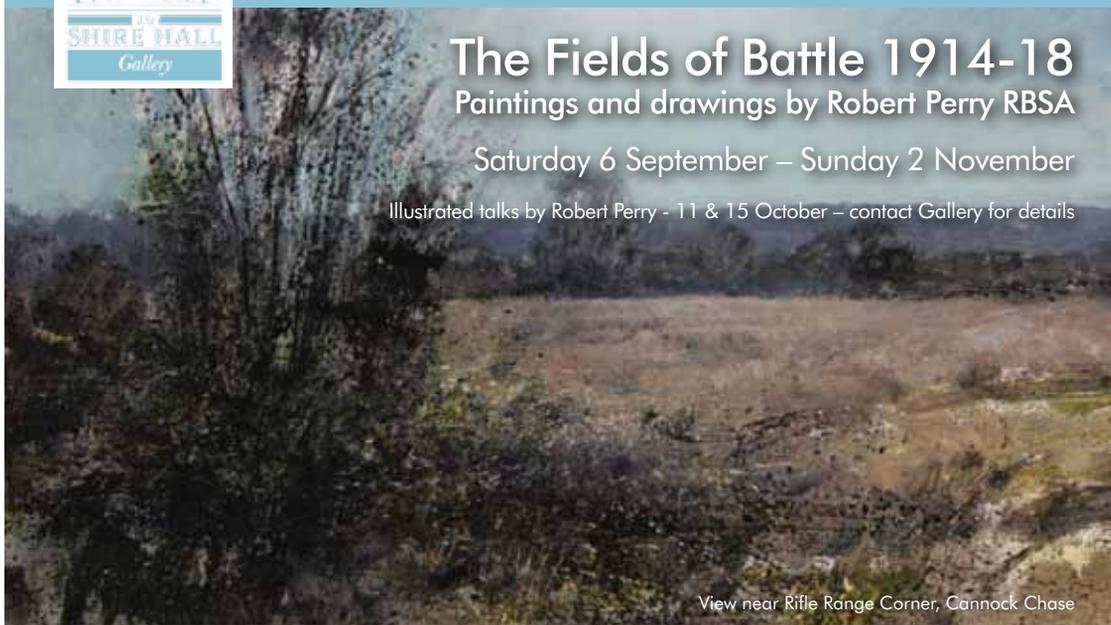
shire hall gallery, stafford

The Fields of Battle 1914-18

Paintings and drawings by Robert Perry RBSA

Saturday 6 September – Sunday 2 November

Illustrated talks by Robert Perry - 11 & 15 October – contact Gallery for details



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Forthcoming Friends' Events

Event Applications

For Friends' Members the event applications will be included as a supplement in the centre of this magazine.

Note: Where applicable, if you are not a member and would like to apply for one of our events, send a letter to the address on page 4 stating the Event Name(s), your name, address, telephone number, how many places, the cost, the pickup point if a coach trip and any other relevant information. Include a cheque for the total amount made out to FB MAG unless otherwise stated. Please also include a S.A.E. for the return of your tickets.

Weekend Away - Newcastle

Friday 26 – Monday 29 September 2014. This event was published in the last edition of Artefacts. However, there are still a few places remaining. Please contact the Friends Office if you are interested or require further details.

RAF Museum Hendon & Kenwood House

Friday 19 September 2014. We shall be visiting the RAF Museum in Hendon in the morning where we will have a short tour of the museum. After that you will be free to explore the Museum which contains aircraft from the founding of the RAF to the present day. The museum is situated on the historic site of Hendon's London Aerodrome in Colindale and tells the story of the RAF through its people and collections.

Afterwards we will travel on to Kenwood House for lunch in the café (not included), and then we will have a tour of the house. The house was remodelled in the 1760s by Robert Adam, the fashionable neo-classical architect. The house stands in 112 acres of landscaped grounds on the edge of Hampstead Heath. Kenwood

is famous for the internationally important collection of paintings bequeathed to the nation by Edward Guinness, 1st Earl of Iveagh. The collection contains paintings by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Gainsborough and Turner.

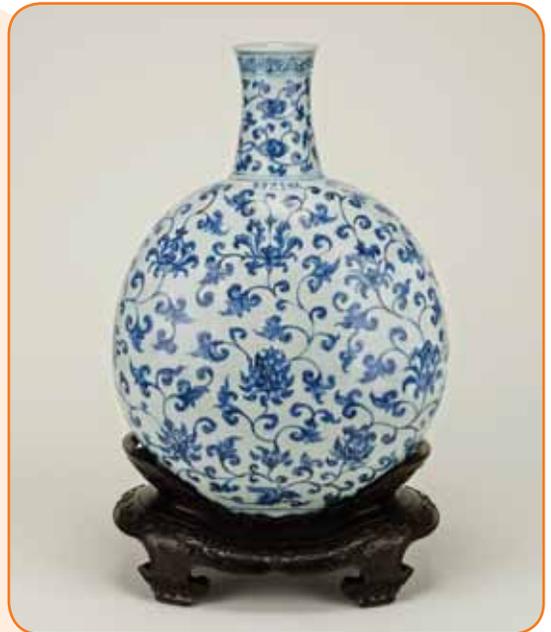
Cost: £33 – Includes coach, driver's tip, tours of the RAF Museum Hendon and tours of Kenwood House.

Pickup Points: Yateley Road @ 7:45am; or Chest Clinic, Gt Charles St @ 8:00am.

This event is open to non-members - see note on page 6.

British Museum – 'Ming: 50 years that changed China' Exhibition

Friday 14 November 2014. This major exhibition will explore a golden age in China's history. Between AD 1400 and 1450, China was a global superpower run by one family – the Ming dynasty – who established



Large porcelain flask painted with underglaze blue decoration of lotus flowers. Made in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi (province), China, 1426 -1435, Ming dynasty Xuande (reign). © The Trustees of the British Museum

Beijing as the capital and built the Forbidden City. During this period, Ming China was thoroughly connected with the outside world. Chinese artists absorbed many fascinating influences, and created some of the most beautiful objects and paintings ever made.

The exhibition will feature a range of these spectacular objects – including exquisite porcelain, gold, jewellery, furniture, paintings, sculptures and textiles – from museums across China and the rest of the world. Many of them have only been very recently discovered and have never been seen outside China.

There will be free time to spend in the British Museum or you could take the short walk to the British Library.

Cost: £35 – Includes coach, driver's tip and entrance to the 'Ming' exhibition at the British Museum.

Pickup Points: Yateley Road @ 7:45am; or Chest Clinic, Gt Charles St @ 8:00am.

This event is open to non-members - see note on page 6.

Friends' Annual Lecture

Thursday 18 September 2014. The Friends' Annual Lecture this year is entitled *"Creating something more than a picture exhibition: the aspirations, anxieties and achievements of Whitworth Wallis; the first director of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery"*. It will be given by Rita McLean, former director of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG). Rita has worked in the museums sector throughout her career. After working in museums in the South East and outer London during the 1980s she joined BMAG in 1990 as Museum Development Officer for Soho House Museum. She subsequently became a member of BMAG's senior management team with responsibility for the management and development of the service's historic house museums and sites. She served as

Director of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery from 2004 to 2012. Rita now works as a museums and heritage consultant. In 2013 she wrote the entry on Sir Whitworth Wallis for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

Sir Whitworth Wallis (1855-1927) became the first Director of Birmingham Art Gallery in 1885 at just twenty-nine years of age. Over forty years, with the support of many of Birmingham's leading philanthropists and industrialists, he played a seminal role in developing the Museum and Art Gallery's collections, exhibition and educational programmes. Whitworth Wallis developed important fine art holdings for the Gallery, including a highly significant and extensive body of works by or associated with Pre-Raphaelite artists which became one of the outstanding collections of its kind both nationally and internationally. His personal desire 'to make Birmingham Art Gallery something more than a picture exhibition' and his mission to develop its 'industrial art collections' ensured the addition of exceptionally strong collections of decorative art. Holding strong views on the educational role of museums and the importance of attracting visitors from the working classes, Wallis placed great emphasis on interpreting objects and the provision of cheap catalogues. He ensured free admission and pioneered Sunday opening. Tracing the story of his career gives a fascinating insight into the establishment and evolution of the city's museum service during its early years – a story of tribulations as well as triumphs.

We will meet in the Round Room at 6:15 pm for tea/coffee and biscuits, and then proceed to the Council Chamber for the lecture at 7:30pm. The cost for the evening will be £13.00.

An Application form is included in this magazine. Please note that this event is open to non-members - see note on page 6. Underground car parking will be available. Please indicate on the application form if required.

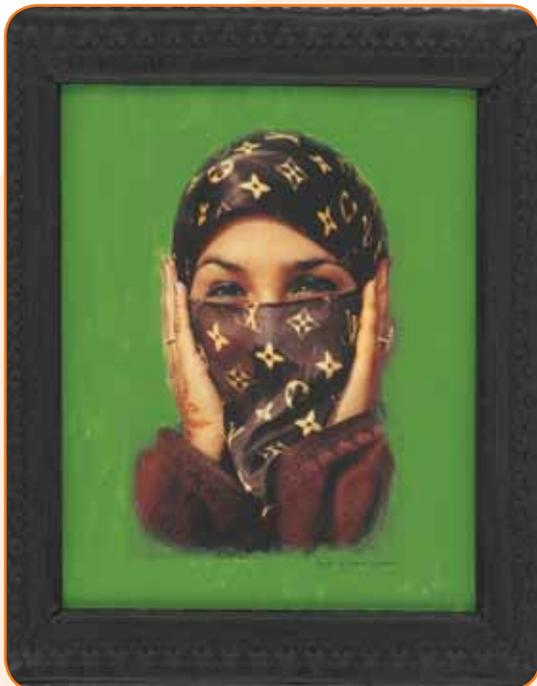
Evening Talks at Edmunds

At 6:30pm we will meet at Edmunds, on the corner of Newhall Street and Edmund Street, for the talk, discussions, a glass of wine and pizza. The talks will finish by 8:30pm.

Cost: £9 (£12 non-members).

“True to Life?’ New Photography from the Middle East’ – Rebecca Bridgman

Tuesday 9 September, 6:30-8:30pm. Join exhibition curator, Rebecca Bridgman, to explore the fascinating photographs in ‘True to Life?’ which narrate personal and political stories from the contemporary Middle East. Discover more about the context of the photographs displayed and consider how the artists have manipulated real life images to transmit a particular message.



Saida in Green, 2000 by Hassan Hajjaj © the artist / Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Art Fund Collection of Middle Eastern Photography at the V&A and the British Museum.

This talk will follow the three main sections of the exhibition, first exploring the Middle East’s long and complex relationship with photography. Subsequently, Rebecca will move on to discuss sections of the exhibition which consider aspects of photography through a thematic lens. Examining topics of representation of women and migration, she will suggest an alternative, perhaps more authentic view, of the Middle East than that often presented to us by Western media.

‘STATIC: Still Life Reconsidered’ – Lisa Beauchamp

Tuesday 30 September, 6:30-8:30pm. Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art, Lisa Beauchamp, will discuss her new display ‘STATIC: Still Life Reconsidered’ – her second Waterhall display which will include over fifty artworks from Birmingham’s collection from the 1800s to the present day.



‘Red and White Still Life’, 1964, by Patrick Caulfield

Bringing together a range of artistic styles across painting, printmaking and sculpture, ‘STATIC’ will reconsider artistic approaches to still life subject matter, arrangement and material, looking at how artists have approached and touched on this genre. Works by Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Howard Hodgkin, Giorgio Morandi, Patrick Caulfield, Jane Harris, William Nicholson, Mary Fedden, Henry Moore, Jim Dine and Henri Fantin-Latour will be included amongst others.



Birmingham Museums Trust will be showcasing three major new contemporary art acquisitions as part of this display: 'Land of Milk and Honey II' by the late West Bromwich born artist Donald Rodney and 'Snacks 4' and 'London Oyster Shells' by London-based young artist Jess Flood-Paddock. This will be the first time that these works have been shown in Birmingham.

'Building the Spitfire Gallery' - Becky Fletcher, Lis Chard-Cooper and Lynsey Rutter

Tuesday 7 October, 6:30-8:30pm. Join Becky Fletcher (Spitfire Project Officer), Lis Chard-Cooper (Science & Industry Curator) and Lynsey Rutter (Participation Co-ordinator) as they give you a sneak peak at what to expect in the exciting new Spitfire Gallery at Thinktank due to open April 2015. Hear about the design process and gallery content, find out more about our Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft and the aviation heritage of the West Midlands and ask your questions.

'Red Carpet' - Pogus Caesar

Tuesday 14 October, 6:30-8:30pm. The black and white photographs taken from the 'Red Carpet' series cover an amazing array of people from the world of arts, politics, sport, music and film. They include a fascinating collection of well-known personalities including Julie Christie, Cliff Richard, Maureen Lipman, Tony Benn, Sebastian Coe, Cathy Tyson and Danny De Vito.



Julie Christie: Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Birmingham UK. From the series 'Red Carpet' 1990 Pogus Caesar/OOM Gallery Archive. All Rights Reserved

Drawn exclusively from OOM Gallery Archive the collection brings together rare and largely unexhibited images, shot in candid style on Pogus Caesar's trademark Canon film camera. Hollywood superstars are never far from Caesar's lens – Will Smith is captured on Broad St, Birmingham; Gary Oldman walks leisurely on a London street; while Minnie Driver wraps up from the cold in Wolverhampton.

Using mainly available light and black and white film, Caesar got up close and personal to his subjects in order to capture these intimate and unexpected moments: *'I was lucky, and being in the right place at the right time helps.'* Other personalities in this vast collection include Tony Christie, Ronan Keating, Girls Aloud, Lenny Henry, Joanna Lumley, Diane Abbott, Benjamin Zephaniah, Ron Atkinson, Mo Farah, Frank Thornton, Jimmy Hill and Sir Anthony Sher. Caesar said: *'usually all hell breaks loose when the celebrity comes into view, other photographers are pushing and jostling for the best position, your feet get trampled and ribs are elbowed - in the end it about the relationship between you and the subject, then a steady hand and click.'*

Please note that those who applied for the 10 July event do not need to reapply.

'New Staffordshire Hoard Gallery' – Pieta Greaves

Tuesday 11 November, 6:30-8:30pm. Opening on 17 October, the new Hoard Gallery will showcase the Hoard as never before, integrating the history, technological and craftsmanship of the Hoard with the conservation and research program which is still ongoing. Key aspects of the new gallery also include a 'treasury' of the most spectacular pieces of the Hoard and a mead hall where families will be able to learn more about the Hoard and play games. Pieta Greaves, BMT's Staffordshire Hoard Conservation Coordinator, will focus on the new Staffordshire Hoard Gallery from conception to delivery, discussing each of the areas within the gallery and the teams of people required to create it.



Friends Guided Tours

These tours are exclusive to Friends and cost £8. Please note that Lunch is not included in these events (see Luncheon Clubs).

Guided Tour (121) 'WW1 Centenary' by Jane Howell



Fridays 10 & 17 October 2014. On this tour we shall be looking at the museum's exhibition commemorating the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1. The exhibition features the stories of men from the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and we shall look at some of these, including Bill Furze who came from Moseley, here in Birmingham. We shall finish by reflecting on the legacy of that war on the areas of France and Belgium where the fighting happened. The photo of the cemetery is of Serre Road 2, not where Bill is, but typical of the views across the Somme.

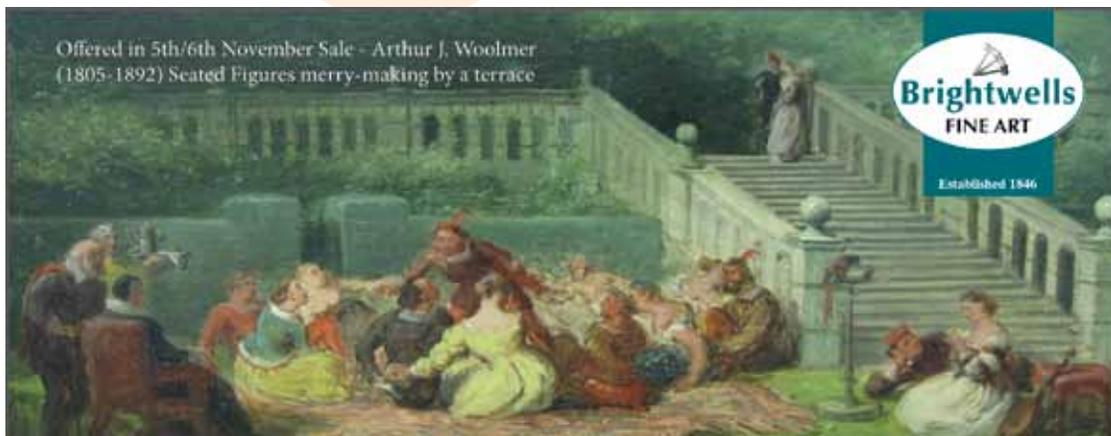
Because part of the 'WW1 Centenary Exhibition' will be on the bridge we are limiting numbers. To compensate we have arranged two dates, please indicate your preference on the Application Form.

We will meet in the Round Room at 11am.

AV Room Talk

'From "Perfidious Albion" to "Our Oldest Ally": Britain's relationship with Portugal at the turn of the 20th Century'

Tuesday 18 November 2014. The alliance between Britain and Portugal reached its lowest ebb in 1890, when the British sent an ultimatum to Portugal which forced the country reduce its colonial ambitions in Africa. Bad relations continued until the end of the 1890s, with Joseph Chamberlain engaging in discussions with the Germans about dividing Portugal's African empire between Britain and Germany. The relationship was revived by the coming of the second Boer War, when Britain found herself facing military defeat at the hands of the Boers, with no friends in Europe and an urgent need for Portugal's help in sending military supplies to



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South Africa. The talk will be illustrated by maps and photographs from the period, and by images of historical documents from the National Archives at Kew.

Cost: £9.

We will meet in the AV Room at the rear of Gas Hall at 10:30am for tea/coffee, the talk will start at 11:00am.

This event is open to non-members - see note on page 6.

Luncheon Clubs

The talks take about an hour and then we go to the Edwardian Tearoom for lunch. (You will need to bring your ticket for the lunch). Luncheon Clubs are exclusive to Friends and cost £14. You may attend the talk without having the lunch at a cost of £9.

'New Staffordshire Hoard Gallery'

by David Symons

Tuesday 2 & Friday 5 December 2014. Tour the new Staffordshire Hoard gallery with Dr David Symons, Curator of Archaeology and Numismatics. David has worked on the gallery from the very beginning and will describe how the displays took shape and discuss the most interesting and significant finds in the exhibition.

Friends will meet in the Round Room at 11:00am.

Special Exhibition View and Talk

'Sound and Silence – Prayer at the Heart of the City of Birmingham' and the BMAG Community Gallery'

Tuesday 21 October, 6:30–8:30pm. This special exhibition view and talk will take place in the BMAG Learning Zone (please use Great Charles St entrance). The BMAG Community Gallery runs an innovative programme of exhibitions developed by Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT), in partnership with local

communities and organisations. In this special evening talk, Richard Statham, Community Engagement Manager at BMT, joined by other community representatives, will talk about the recent Community Gallery programme, including *'Mapping my Journey'* developed with the Transgender community in the West Midlands and *'Home away from Home'* which focused on the stories of people migrating from Mirpur to Birmingham in the 50s and 60s. He will then talk about the new exhibition *'Sound and Silence'*, which opens on 13 September, and explores the experience of prayer and contemplation among Birmingham's six major faith groups: Buddhism; Christianity; Hinduism; Islam; Judaism; and Sikhism.

After the talk, there will then be an opportunity to visit the *'Sound and Silence'* exhibition. Refreshments will be served.

This event is open to non-members - see note on page 6.

Cost: £9 (£12 non-members).

Things to look forward to

The Delights of Budapest

19-24 April 2015. Next year's continental excursion will be to the beautiful city of Budapest. We will tour both Buda and Pest, visiting the main Museums and Galleries. We will also take a coach trip to the Danube Bend, which is a curve of the Danube close to the city of Visegrád, considered to be one of the most beautiful segments of the river. Also included is a Cruise lunch on the Danube, a visit to the State Parliament and the Sissi Palace in Gödöllő. Flights will be from / to Luton. On our outward coach journey we will stop at Wrest (English Heritage), for a look at their glorious gardens and a bite to eat before our flight.

For more details, costs etc contact John Pownall, T: 0121 348 8332. To reserve a place please send a cheque for £100 each, made payable to 'Tailored Travel'.

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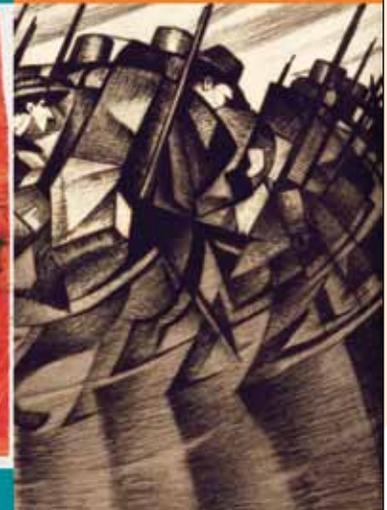
National
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Michael Barlow, 'Michael Barlow', 1981
© National Portrait Gallery, London

REBEL VISIONS

The War Art of CRW Nevinson
24 October 2014 - 25 January 2015





News

From the Volunteers

VOLUNTEERS UPDATE

Our Volunteers are dedicated to promoting the Trust and being involved in its work, and this has been demonstrated by David Foster, our Vice Chair, who won the Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT) 'Volunteer of the Year' Award in June.

Alex Nicholson-Evans (BMT's Volunteer Development Officer) commented: *"David has been volunteering with Birmingham Museums in the Conservation Department based at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery for over 12 years and has been of invaluable support to the Team and the Trust as a whole. We are thrilled to have David as part of our organisation and we are incredibly grateful for the support and commitment shown by our fantastic volunteer team as a whole"*.



David receiving his award

You can watch Simon Cane, Deputy Director of BMT, announcing the winner at: <http://youtu.be/pB3anaXJssY>.

I would like to take this opportunity to pass on the Friends' very best congratulations to David and to provide a little reminder of the work he is involved in for the Friends. David became a Friend in July 2001, a Trustee in 2011, and was appointed Vice Chair in 2013. He can be seen regularly contributing to many aspects of the Museum, and enjoying the exhibition programmes and the events, whilst undertaking his Trustee commitments diligently and effectively. He is a pleasure to work with and everyone was delighted to hear that he had won this award.

If you would like to become a Volunteer or see what opportunities are available, then please contact the Friends Office and leave a message for me, Yvonne Warner, on 0121 348 8330.

The next Volunteers Meeting is on Monday 8 September at 1pm in the Large Meeting Room in BMAG. Key topics will be: Jane Howell (Trustee) speaking on the Friends Diversity agenda and consideration of the future development of our Volunteering agenda. I look forward to seeing you there. ■

Yvonne Warner,
Friends' Trustee with responsibility for Volunteers

WHY I VOLUNTEER FOR THE MUSEUM

I started my volunteering by sitting at the Friends' desk in the Gas Hall. There I found a file with some printouts of paintings, some of which the Friends had either helped the Museum to buy or had bought outright.

When an opportunity arose to help Margaret Boniface, the Friends Honorary Archivist, to finish composing the definitive list of artefacts, purchased either wholly or in part by the Friends, I offered my services, together with David Foster and Elizabeth Donaghue.

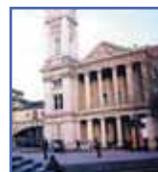
This has proved both a rewarding and frustrating task. Rewarding because it has enabled me to use the Museum's website and record books, and frustrating because, although the majority of the work was straightforward, some of the artefacts had not been recorded sufficiently, and we were thwarted in attempts to find them. Ideally they should all have a file and an entry, either on a card or in a year book. Now they are all put straight onto the website.

Some of the most interesting items I have found were purchased during WW2. They were obviously very sure that we would win! For example a large collection of William Morris hand drawn designs and the accompanying fabrics or wallpapers, a truly beautiful collection.

I find my work very interesting and when we have completed the Friends' records, I hope I will be able to carry on working with the museum's records. ■

Margaret Lister
Friends' Trustee and Volunteer

News From the Office



BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Free entry to special exhibitions in Gas Hall
- Free entry to all our Heritage Sites
- Artefacts magazine four times a year
- Opportunity to join the many Friends' social events and outings

Plus discounts at the following venues (terms and conditions apply):

- BM&AG and Heritage Site shops
- 50% entrance discount to Thinktank at Millennium Point www.thinktank.ac
- Shakespeare Birthplace Trust shops (excluding admission prices) www.shakespeare.org.uk
- Ironbridge Gorge Trust shops providing a minimum of £5 is spent in one transaction. Offer excludes books, certain sales items, admission prices and café/restaurant purchases) www.ironbridge.org.uk
- Potteries Museums & Art Gallery shops/cafés www.museums.stoke.gov.uk

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Available all year round and includes 3 extra months free. A Gift Membership form can be downloaded at <http://www.bmag.org.uk/friends-of-bmag/christmas-gift-membership>. Alternatively, you can complete the standard application form in this magazine with the recipient's details and send it with a covering note giving your own name and contact details.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to our new members: Mr H & Mrs J Lewis, Mrs P Steed, Dr MA & Dr M Coulson, Mrs J Lowndes, Ms AD Ford, Mr B Davenport, Mrs B Thomas, Mrs EA Black, Mrs PA Mitchell, Miss PM Baker, Mr P & Mrs E Mountford, Miss J Bartlett, Miss BA Osborne & Mr R Glen.

Please note that BMT phone numbers have changed, details can be found on the contents page.

APPLICATION FORM: PLEASE WRITE IN CAPITAL LETTERS

Title Name(s)

Address

Postcode Tel. No.

Email address

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY AND ANNUAL RATES (Please tick)

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SINGLE £20 [] **DOUBLE** £30 [] **STUDENT** £15 []

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Please send this completed form, together with your cheque made payable to F.B.M.A.G. to the address on page 4 of Artefacts.

DATA PROTECTION ACT -

For membership and accounting needs your details are held on a computerised Database for Friends' Office use only.



Director's Report

Dr Ellen McAdam

We are in the very early of stages of an exciting new project to redevelop the Museum & Art Gallery.

The Council House and Council House Extension are Grade II* listed, but a combination of wear and tear and piecemeal alterations over the years makes it difficult to operate as a 21st-century museum and gallery. Visitors have difficulty finding the correct entrance and navigating around the building, and behind the scenes there are problems with infrastructure.

Our specialist consultants Bowles Green are leading on an audience research project; which has been generously funded by the Friends. The results will be used to inform interim work to improve signage and the architectural brief for the major project. We have had interesting and useful feedback, both positive and negative, from visitors and non-visitors (who we hope will become visitors). You have seen some of the impact already, in our temporary dressing of the main entrance and the signage for the Waterhall.

The architects John McAslan and Partners are carrying out a masterplanning exercise. This will result in high-level proposals to resolve the difficulties of the present layout and give us a fitting showcase for Birmingham's important collection.

In July, we were successful in our application to Arts Council England, securing our position as a Major partner museum. We are one of four Major partner museums in the West Midlands;

the others are the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, and the Black Country Living Museum in partnership with Culture Coventry. We will receive £3 million over three years to extend the quality and reach of our programmes regionally, nationally and internationally.

In June, we were awarded £84.5K by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund for research into the science of the Staffordshire Hoard. The funding will support two new specialist scientist posts, supporting further research into the Anglo-Saxon treasure. We will be able to offer visitors more opportunities to meet Staffordshire Hoard experts and discover the story of the hoard. Funds for our Spitfire Gallery continue to grow, thanks in part to kind donations from the Friends. There is more news on the Spitfire Gallery elsewhere in Artefacts.

And finally, I hope many of you will visit our newly refurbished Edwardian Tearooms. We have invested in a new professional kitchen, seating, lighting and décor including prints from the collections. The new offer includes table service, high quality loose leaf tea, locally roasted coffee, cakes, lunches, and afternoon teas. The Tearoom will feature a free Book Exchange, where customers can bring and swap books please do contribute your books when you visit. Bon appétit! ■

Dr Ellen McAdam

RBSA



RBSA Gallery presents

A Place for Art

The Story of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists

Wed 8 October - Sat 15 November

Exhibition on show in Galleries 1 & 2

In 1814 the Birmingham Academy of Arts, the forerunner to the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, staged its inaugural exhibition, the first public display of art by local practitioners to be held in Birmingham.

Celebrating two hundred years since this momentous occasion, the exhibition and accompanying catalogue is the first in-depth examination of the Society's extensive and illustrious history. **Free Admission**, donations welcome.

+ Visit rbsa.org.uk to pre-order the catalogue and find out more about the associated events!

Royal Birmingham Society of Artists
RBSA Gallery, 4 Brook Street, St Paul's,
Birmingham, B3 1SA
W www.rbsa.org.uk
T 0121 236 4353



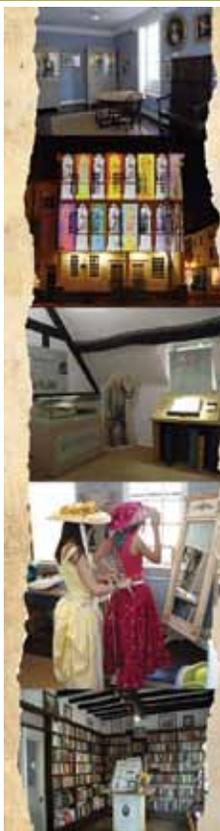
LOTTERY FUNDED

ACCREDITED MUSEUM

Supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

Registered charity no. 52084. Registered company no. 122816.

Image: © David Howell/PPH/ASA, The Old Printers (RHS), Flickr, charcoal and pencil. © Reproduced with permission of the National Gallery. Photo credit: James White.



The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum & Bookshop

Explore the family home that inspired a literary giant

See and Experience...

- Five floors of displays featuring period room settings
- Dr Johnson's famous English Dictionary
- Personal items belonging to Dr Johnson, his family and friends
- Introductory film presentation
- Hands-on activities and dressing up fun for families
- Second-hand bookshop

The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum
Broadmarket Street,
Lichfield WS11 1LQ
call: 01543 264972
email: sjohnson@licfield.gov.uk
www.samueljohnsonbirthplace.org.uk



Free entry, open daily



Visit the last surviving courtyard of Back to Back houses any where in the West Midlands.

Experience the sights, sounds & smells, as well as hearing the stories of four different families who occupied the houses from the 1840's up to the 1970's.

With real coal fires in the grates & the opportunity to do the washing the Victorian way... a visit is must!

All visits are by guided tour only and advance booking is essential to avoid disappointment.

For bookings please telephone: 0121 666 7671

The property is open every day except Mon (apart from Bank Holidays) when we close on the Tues afterwards.

During school term time we are only open from 1pm on Tues, Wed & Thurs. Fri to Sun we are open 10am - 5pm. Last tour leaves at 3.45pm (may be earlier in winter months).

Admission Prices:
Gift Aid Adult (9.00) | Child (4.40) | Family (17.50)
Standard Adult (7.25) | Child (3.90) | Family (15.90)



Birmingham Museum &
Art Gallery

Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, B3 3DH

Opening Hours: Saturday - Thursday 10:00am – 5:00pm and Friday 10:30am – 5:00pm.

Note earlier opening on Sunday.

Contact Number: 0121 348 8000.

Explore over 40 galleries in the Grade II* listed building displaying spectacular art and objects spanning seven centuries.

MARVELLOUS MACHINES: THE WONDERFUL
WORLD OF ROWLAND EMETT

Open daily until 21 September 2014, Gas Hall, Adult: £5, Child (age 3 - 15) £3, Concessions - £3, Family (2 adults + 2 children) - £10, Unwaged - £2.

Curious minds of all ages are invited to step inside the whimsical and wonderful world of machines and cartoons by eccentric English inventor Rowland Emmett, as Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG) hosts the largest ever display of his extraordinary creations. *Marvellous Machines: The Wonderful World of Rowland Emmett* gives visitors a unique opportunity to explore the legacy of this true British icon through his fantastical mechanical contraptions, alongside paintings and cartoons. The quirky moving machines, or automata as they are known, includes items from the film *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, fantastical flying machines and a bicycle for cycling across the moon.

TRUE TO LIFE? – NEW PHOTOGRAPHY
FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

Open daily until 2 November 2014, Free Entry
True to Life? - New Photography from the Middle East encourages visitors to question the authenticity of what appears to be represented in photography, and explores what is real, staged or imaginary. The exhibition features a selection of loaned works from the British Museum and Victoria & Albert (V&A) Museum's fascinating collection of major names and

emerging talents in photography from the Middle East. From Tunisia to Iran, *True to Life?* takes visitors on a journey investigating the role of photography in the Middle East and considers debates surrounding migration and the representation of women.

SYMMETRY IN SCULPTURE – RECENT WORK
BY ZARAH HUSSAIN

Open daily until 2 November 2014. Free Entry

Symmetry in Sculpture presents visitors with intriguing and engaging three-dimensional wall sculptures, which are inspired by the complex patterns emerging from a simple repeating shape as found in Islamic art. This will be the largest display of Hussain's work, who has spent many years perfecting the traditional techniques used to create mathematical geometric art, and adapting them to make works with a contemporary character. The exhibition has been made possible thanks to support from Arts Council England.

WEST MIDLANDS OPEN

25 October 2014 – 15 February 2015. Free entry

BMAG is proud to be hosting the 2014 *West Midlands Open* exhibition. *West Midlands Open* is a biennial public art exhibition, in which both professional and amateur artists from all disciplines can apply to have their work shown in the Gas Hall, Birmingham Museums' largest and most prestigious exhibition space. Works for display will be selected by an expert judging panel, including Turner Prize-nominated artist Roger Hiorns, Exhibitions and Artists' Projects Curator Zoe Lippett from the New Art Gallery Walsall, and Birmingham artist Barbara Walker.

STATIC – STILL LIFE RECONSIDERED

Open daily at the Waterhall until 31 December 2014. Free Entry

STATIC: Still Life Reconsidered is a new display of over fifty artworks from Birmingham's collection dating from the 1800s to the present day. It brings together a range of artistic styles across painting, printmaking and sculpture, *STATIC* reconsiders artistic approaches to still life subject matter, arrangement and material, looking at how artists

have approached and touched on this genre. The display aims to open up a discussion about the genre of still life in its broadest sense, bringing together a mixture of innovative artistic approaches, styles and mediums.

Community Gallery

SOUND AND SILENCE: PRAYER AT THE HEART OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Open daily in the Community Gallery 13 September – 13 December 2014. Free entry

This new exhibition has been developed in partnership with the Museum of World Religions (UK), the Nishkam Centre, the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham, the Birmingham Faith Leaders Group and Birmingham SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education). It has been funded by Birmingham City Council and Arts Council England as well as 'Together in Service.'

Birmingham Museums Heritage Sites

Birmingham Museum's Heritage Sites (Aston Hall, Blakesley Hall, Sarehole Mill and Soho House) will close on Sunday 2 November 2014, but look out for special events and activities at all sites at www.birminghammuseums.org.uk

Aston Hall

*Trinity Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 6JD
Open Tues-Sun 12-4pm until 2 November 2014. Entry charges apply to non-members*

Built by Sir Thomas Holte in 1618-35, Aston Hall is one of Birmingham's most treasured buildings, boasting sumptuous interiors from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Visitors to Aston Hall are invited to discover how the hall and its residents played a key part in our country's history including the English civil war. Aston Hall is

a hugely popular with family audiences and has a packed programme of events and activities throughout the season.

Blakesley Hall

*Blakesley Road, Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8RN
Open Tues-Sun 12-4pm until 2 November 2014. Entry charges apply to non-members*

Set amongst stunning gardens and orchards, Blakesley Hall is an exquisite example of a traditional Tudor home. The timber-framed house was built in 1590 by member of one of Birmingham's leading merchant families, and more than 400 years later, Blakesley remains a haven of beauty and tranquillity.

EXHIBITION: TOM, FRANK AND MAY: BLAKESLEY HALL AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR - A FAMILY'S TALE

Thomas Merry and his wife Elizabeth lived at Blakesley Hall from 1901 to 1932. They had three children Tom, Frank and May, all of whom played part in the struggle of WW1. The exhibition, created in partnership with the descendents of the Merry family will tell this family's war story through displays of original material, uniforms, handling activities and a short film.

Museum of the Jewellery Quarter

*75 – 80 Vyse Street, Hockley, Birmingham, B18 6HA
Open all year round. Tues – Sat 10:30am – 5:00pm.
Closed Sun and Mon except Bank Holidays.
Tour charges apply to non-members*

Visitors to the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter are offered a glimpse into the past, and the chance to experience the workings of a real jewellery manufacturer. When the proprietors of the Smith & Pepper jewellery-manufacturing firm retired in 1981, they ceased trading and locked the door, unaware they would be leaving a time capsule for future generations.

Today the factory is a remarkable museum, which tells the story of the Jewellery Quarter and Birmingham's renowned jewellery and metalworking heritage.

EXHIBITION: THE JEWELLERY QUARTER DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Free entry. Commemorating 100 years since the beginning of the First World War, this exhibition uncovers artefacts, images and oral histories relating to; recruitment of soldiers from the Jewellery Quarter; adaptation of industries in the Jewellery Quarter; the changing role of women in the industry during war years; and employment of ex-soldiers disabled through war injuries.

'A FAMILY CONCERN: THE JEWELLERY QUARTER AT WAR'

9-13 September 2014, at 7:00pm. The Museum of the Jewellery Quarter is hosting a series of special promenade drama performances in the historic setting of the Smith & Pepper factory. Through immersive performance, visitors can meet with the proprietors of the traditional family business and discover how the different members of the family were affected by war, and how skills of those in the jewellery trade were redeployed during the First World War. Performed by Pattern 23 Theatre Company, visitors are invited to go back in time to hear the real stories of people's lives during the First World War. Booking essential – call the booking office on 0121 348 8263. Tickets cost £12 per person. £1.50 booking fee per transaction.

Sarehole Mill

*Cole Bank Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B13 0BD
Open Tues-Sun 12-4pm until 2 November 2014. Entry charges apply to non-members*

Sarehole Mill was the rural childhood playground of author J.R.R. Tolkien, who cited the mill and nearby Moseley Bog as inspiration for his classic works *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Visitors can see a real working watermill in action, and explore fascinating exhibitions telling the 250-year story of the inspirational landmark.

Soho House

Soho Avenue, off Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B18 5LB. Open Tues-Sun 12-4pm until 2 November 2014. Entry charges apply to non-members
Soho House was the elegant home of industrialist and entrepreneur Matthew Boulton from 1766 to 1809. Carefully restored, this Georgian house features period room interiors with fine collections of silver, furniture and paintings. Visitors are invited to explore this stunning building, once a regular meeting place for some of the greatest minds of the 18th century including James Watt, Erasmus Darwin, Josiah Wedgwood and Joseph Priestley.

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

*Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum
Millennium Point, Birmingham, B4 7XG
Open daily 10-5pm. Admission charges apply*
Thinktank offers an extraordinary, fun-packed day out for all the family. From steam engines to intestines, this exciting museum is home to thousands of fascinating objects, and over 200 hands-on displays on science and technology from the past, present and future. This includes a state-of-the-art digital Planetarium, and interactive outdoor Science Garden. With an ever-changing programme of demonstrations, workshops and events there is always something new to discover.

BIRMINGHAM CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE

The first Tuesday of every month from 6:30pm at the Jekyll & Hyde (upstairs Gin Parlour) 28 Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham, B4 6BJ. *Café Scientifique* are informal and lively discussion events around contemporary science issues.

For further details visit www.thinktank.ac

For more information on all events, exhibitions and other activities, visit www.birminghammuseums.org.uk

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or email fbmagmembership@googlemail.com, we will be
pleased to help.

Passion, pleasure and participation in the Arts





In The Area

Exhibitions & Days Out

Barber Institute

University of Birmingham

Edgbaston

Birmingham B15 2TS

United Kingdom

Tel: 0121 414 7333

www.barber.org.uk

LAST IMPRESSIONS

Until 28 September 2014.

From etchings to a plasticine print, Lasting Impressions brings together works that document the renaissance of the portrait print from the early 20th century to the present day. By the late 1800s, printmaking had undergone such monumental technological changes that its status had sunk to that of mere reproduction. However, in response, traditional techniques were revived by many artists, who produced prints that could stand for themselves as works of art. In the later 20th century, more experimental and unorthodox methods were explored, often with dramatic results.

This exhibition explores how artists including Eric Gill, Oskar Kokoschka and Richard Hamilton have used different print processes to convey the personalities and circumstances of sitters as colourful as Quentin Crisp, Lucian Freud, Frank Bruno, Robert Plant - and even an entire House of Commons - and also their relationships with the artist portraying them. The prints will be accompanied by a range of printmaking tools and books from the University's Cadbury Research Library and Research and Cultural Collections, for which some of the artists featured produced illustrations. Co-curated by postgraduate students from the University's Art History, Film and Visual Studies department, the display is the third in a collaborative series with the National Portrait Gallery, London.

CONVERSATIONS

Until 5 October 2014.

Featuring stunning works by Rembrandt, Goya, Cezanne and Picasso, this display spans four centuries of portrait printmaking. It explores the different compositional approaches, styles and techniques adopted by artists that contribute to an evolving dialogue about the purpose and practice of portraiture. Organized to complement the exhibition 'Lasting Impressions', the portraits are arranged in pairs to encourage the comparison of the individual artistic responses to the fundamental challenges of creating a likeness through the print medium.

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

Until 26 October 2014.

To coincide with this summer's display of 17th-century seascapes, this selection of works on paper travels upstream to highlight the importance of rivers in everyday life. Featuring prints and drawings by, or after, artists such as Wenceslas Hollar, Turner, Whistler and Max Klinger, the display explored themes of leisure and entertainment, but also the pervasive impact of rivers on settlement, farming and industry. However, there is more to water than simple functionality, and this display also delves into its symbolic and allegorical nature.

FAITH & FORTUNE

Until Sunday 30 November 2014.

Coins have always provided a stage on which the dramas of religion and politics, statehood and rebellion, marriage and succession, and triumph and desperation are played.

In the early 7th-century, the East Roman Emperor Herakleios requisitioned silver from Constantinople's churches to pay his army. The coins bore the petition 'God help the Romans'. A generation later the leader of the first Muslim Empire, the Umayyad Caliph



James G. Thompson 1922

CONVERSATIONS

Until 5 October 2014.
The Barber Institute

Abd Al-Malik, created a gold coinage emblazoned with Islamic verse, establishing a blueprint for Muslim coinage for centuries. The origins, meanings and manufacturing processes of coinage in the neighbouring Byzantine and early Muslim empires are explored in this exhibition, while both beautiful and sacred, it also reflect how attitudes to depicting religious subjects differ between Islam and Christianity. The relationship between these two empires was characterised by a constant dialogue of trade, intellectual exchange and military confrontation. This display explores how currency was used by each to assert cultural difference and promote its own concept of the divine.

Curated by Rebecca Darley and Daniel Reynolds, with Ali Miynat and Maria Vrij.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Westbourne Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 3TR
Tel: 0121 454 1860
www.birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk

COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sunday 7 September 2014, 11:00am - 4:00pm.
Charity Extravaganza and Country Music Festival for a good cause. Show off your line dancing skills at the Rotary Country Music festival. Tickets in advance £6.00 Adults. £4.50 Concessions. On the day Adults £7.00 Concessions £4.75 to book tickets please call The Gardens on 0121 454 1860. Members Free.

Broadfield Glass House Museum

Compton Drive
Kingswinford
West Midlands
DY6 9NS
Tel: 01384 812745
www.glassmuseum.org.uk

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL AND CRAFT FAYRE

Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 November 2014, 10am – 4pm. This year's Christmas festival takes place across the Stourbridge Glass Quarter attractions at Broadfield House Glass Museum, Red House Glass Cone and Ruskin Glass Centre. Admission is free and the sites are all within a few miles of each other, so it's an ideal day out for the whole family and one that's sure to get everyone into the Christmas spirit.

The Glass Museum has one of the best collections of glass in the world; ranging from the 17th century to the present day and revealing the diversity of glass and the creativity of glassmakers through the ages.

As part of the Christmas festival celebrations, Santa and Mrs Claus will be visiting Broadfield House Glass Museum and children will have the chance to write and post their Christmas wish list, have a go at some Christmas crafts and enjoy some wonderful storytelling. Refreshments are available and charges may apply to some activities. There is a festive trail to take you around the Glass Museum and you can try your hand at decorating a glass bauble with the help of resident glass maker Allister Malcolm.

The gift shop offers an inspiring range of Christmas gifts and decorations to get your Christmas shopping off to a great start before making your way to the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley.



APPLE STORE GALLERY

"Dudley Canal" by Ronald Moore

h.ART - Herefordshire Art Week

Saturday 6 - Sunday 14 September 2014. Visitors can take an afternoon, weekend or even a week to join the art trail and enjoy exclusive FREE access to over 100 venues and more than 200 artists. In addition to discovering, buying or commissioning new artwork and meeting the makers, exploring the glorious Herefordshire countryside en route from venue to venue is an adventure in itself.

Visitors can choose personal encounters with artists in the intimacy of their homes and studios; see group exhibitions in fabulous locations such as manor houses, historic barns, churches and beautiful gardens; and also visit a selection of the county's most wonderful galleries, rural and urban. Some venues also host 'Special Events', distinct experiences such as talks, live demonstrations, workshops and live entertainment.

The new h.Art website allows visitors to follow their favourite artists before and after the event, keeping up to date with new images and news about their events, projects and forthcoming exhibitions.

Some of 2014's highlights include; William Hopkins - artist of the moving image, who'll be capturing all 104 venues on film as he travels from venue to venue on his motorbike, the first person to visit all venues during h.Art week; beautiful litter printing by Megan Evans and elegant blacksmithing from Luis de la Torre, both selected h.Art Young Artist Bursars; vibrant batik artist Manu Song and mother and daughter combo Lit and Kate Betty Smith are just two of the 50 members who're taking part for the first time.

All of 2014's events are FREE admission to visitors. Venues 1 to 100 are open for the full 9-days from 11am to 5pm (though many

open earlier and/or close later). Venues 101 to 104 in our 'Extra Exhibitions' category may have individual opening days and times, these are listed within their entry in the h.Art Guide. Every event also displays symbols to indicate what access and facilities they offer, many of which include refreshments and some of the best homemade cake you'll come across!

Shire Hall

Market Square

Stafford

ST16 2LD

Tel: 01785 278345

ROB POINTON

Until Sunday 31 August. During the summer we will be delighted to have a selection of work on display by this year's Staffordshire Open Art Winner Rob Pointon.

Based in Burslem, the Mother town of the potteries and as a figurative artist, Rob enjoys exploring ways of recreating within his artwork scenes from his own direct experience.

He has an uncompromising approach to every painting that he undertakes whether it be a landscape, a cityscape an urban commission or a life class studio portrait. His strong commitment to painting en plain air with a minimum of studio finishing shows in the finished works which have freshness and vitality.

Birmingham Festival Choral Society
welcomes new singers!

Open Rehearsal Wednesday 3rd September

Details on our website www.bfcs.org.uk

E mail recruitment@bfcs.org.uk if you would like to try us on a later Wednesday.

Gray-Stan

23 August 2014—1 February 2015

Modern luxury glass designed by Mrs Graydon-Stannus between 1926 and 1936.

Broadfield House Glass Museum

Compton Drive, Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 9NS

01384 812745 • www.glassmuseum.org.uk

Open Tuesday - Sunday, 12noon-4pm • FREE



Dudley
Metropolitan Council

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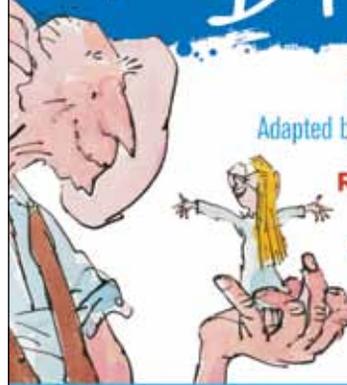
26 November to 24 January 2015

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the family



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Sonia Sabri Company

Please contact Mel Lewis

Tel: 0121 622 3135

Email: mel@ssco.org.co.uk

www.scco.org.uk

Twitter: [soniasabrico](https://twitter.com/soniasabrico)

Facebook: [Sonia Sabri Company](https://www.facebook.com/SoniaSabriCompany)

Sonia Sabri Company (SSCo) captivates Kathak dance in a striking and poignant physicality that is current and exhilarating. Driven by live music, the dialogue between dancer and musician is dramatic, innovative and soul-stirring.

Sonia Sabri Company is one of the leading contemporary South Asian dance and music companies in the UK. They have recently performed at WOMAD and Latitude Festival and are set to perform at various festivals during the summer, as well as touring nationally in the autumn. The company has an international reputation for presenting Kathak dance in a contemporary context, without diluting its integrity.

Create & tour work

Through integrating contemporary inventions and ideas into high quality productions, the Company's work is exciting and relevant to audiences of all ages, experiences and cultural backgrounds. The Company is committed to presenting vibrant work with live music wherever possible with excellent percussion, vocals or soundscapes. We tour work to major venues as well as reach new audiences through rural touring.

Provide learning & participation opportunities

SSCo continues to provide meaningful, multidimensional learning and participatory opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and levels of experience.

Our enjoyable, informative dance, music, crafts and film-making workshops give participants the chance

to develop new creative skills and confidence. We offer a range of exciting workshops, master classes and training for schools, community groups, HE/FE establishments and emerging dancers and musicians.

Collaborate

SSCo works with a number of partners, artists and organisations to create bespoke performances, projects and events. Sonia Sabri has choreographed and directed dance for film and music videos, site specific and unconventional spaces, 'flash mob' performances, festivals and interdisciplinary artforms.

Corporate events

SSCo produces high quality art and entertainment packages for corporate events. Please contact the company for more information.

Forthcoming Tour Dates for Aug – Oct 2014



JUGNI

Saturday 24th August
Belfast Mela
Botanic Gardens
College Park
Belfast BT7 1LP
www.belfastmela.org.uk

Wednesday 29 October
Ivy Arts Centre
University of Surrey
Guildford
Surrey GU2 7XH
01483 686876
www.surrey.ac.uk/arts/whatson
boxoffice@surrey.ac.uk

EKALYA

Saturday 30 & Sunday 31 August
Edinburgh Mela
Leith Links
Edinburgh
www.edinburgh-mela.co.uk/about-us/location/

11th October
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
4a Castletown Road
West Kensington
London W14 9HE
Tel: 020 7381 3086
www.bhavan.net

SALAAM

18th October
Kala Sangam Arts Centre
Ganges Hall, St Peter's House
1 Forster Square, Bradford, BD1 4TY
Tel 01274 303340
www.kalasangam.org

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of contemporary
Indian dance..."**

Ballet Tanz





SONIA SABRI COMPANY

Photograph by Simon Richardson



Kodak No. 1 Brownie

Nazia Ali, Science & Industry Curator, shares a spark of inspiration for the modern camera age.

The cameras of today access the internet to upload photo or video files or sit neatly in the pocket as part of a mobile telephone, ready to shoot at a moment's notice. At the beginning of this revolution of visual media, according to Nazia Ali, was the Kodak Brownie. More than a century ago this handheld camera was at the cutting edge of camera technology and enabled amateur photographers to participate in the marvels of producing the printed "snapshot" for the very first time.

Nazia, who is based at Thinktank, explained that before the invention of the Brownie, photography was reserved for the professionals. However, with the introduction of Kodak's revolutionary new product in the 1900s all this changed as this version attests. This particular model was presented to Birmingham Museums Trust by the Friends in 1993 after its purchase at Birmingham Antiques Market.

It is made from early plastic and cardboard and it used rollfilm rather than photographic plates and operated using a meniscus lens. Whilst this model may not be as compact as contemporary cameras, it is still easily recognisable as such and it seems it has stood the test of time, as Nazia points out: *"It is mechanical, so if you put a roll of film in it now, there's no reason that it shouldn't work."*

She says: *"This is a really interesting piece because we have quite a few cameras on display, but the earlier ones are more interesting for me because of the way the science behind photography has moved on so much from the very basic."*

Used as a way of pinpointing an important "cultural moment", Nazia says: *"The Kodak Brownie is one of the very first cameras for amateur photography as we know*

it today and that is a very nice way of looking at it."

The Kodak Brownie, which is dated from 1903 but which could be earlier, can be found in Store 3 at the Museum Collections Centre alongside a large camera collection, which includes a Kodak Hawkeye Ace Deluxe also acquired via the Friends group. *"Here at Thinktank we have more late-twentieth century cameras on display as a demonstration of early plastics,"* Nazia adds.

Speaking of the relationship between Thinktank and the Friends of Birmingham Museums, Nazia explained that it has been a close one, and that she hoped to continue to forge strong bonds between the two organisations in the future. ■

By Jane Kubiesa





Heritage Site Focus

ThinkTank, Millennium Point,
Curzon Street, Birmingham, B4 7AP.

Opening times: 10am-5pm, seven days a week. Admission charges apply. Friends receive a 50% discount on the entrance charge (on the production of a valid Friends membership card).

Members of the Friends of Birmingham Museums are being offered the unique opportunity to add circus skills to their list of accomplishments. Whilst visitors to Thinktank would usually add 'science buff' and 'natural history aficionado' to their repertoire of interests following a sojourn at the Millennium Point-based site, now, thanks to an innovative learning programme, skills more commonly found under a circus big top have become available.

Kenny Webster, Informal Learning Manager for

Birmingham Museums, confirms: "We are trying something very new this summer and are experimenting with a cross-site programme which started at Thinktank in July." The distinctive thing about the Circus Academy programme is that it not only offers the chance to participate in a circus craft workshop at Thinktank, but also at four other Birmingham Museum Heritage Sites across the city as the series moves from venue to venue, each time showcasing a new skill especially tailored to its host location.



"It's a real experiment for us, we've never tried anything like this before," says Kenny. This new venture is yet another example of Birmingham Museum's ground-breaking take on sharing learning with the public and joins the pioneering role-play space Kids' City, which Kenny describes as "by far our most popular gallery", adding: "It is quite unusual in any museum to have a dedicated early years play space".

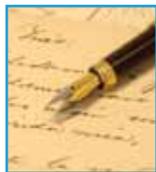
Next on the Informal Learning Manager's list of innovations comes a gallery which is close to his heart: *Medicine Matters*. Kenny helped to redesign this gallery and as a former research biochemist he is naturally drawn to it. Amongst its exhibits is one run in partnership with local universities covering the process of screening for breast cancer. Kenny explains: *"Now an eight-year-old child can go in there and work out from genuine patient data who is almost certainly going to develop breast cancer in the future."* No patient information is revealed and each subject is known by a number. *"We have no idea who Patient Two is, for example, it could be a sixteen-year-old girl or a forty-two-year-old woman or it*

could be a man. One in a hundred cases of breast cancer are in men," Kenny states.

Mechanical and computer-based science interactives, locomotives, working steam engines and a Science Garden are just some of the highlights on offer from Thinktank's four floors, and if that is not enough, the team are also working on a Spitfire exhibit with a little help from the Friends. Kenny says: *"We are redoing our spitfire interpretation at the moment to create a new exhibition about the Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft, the science of flight and the aviation heritage of the West Midlands and the Friends are being asked to contribute stories, family memories and objects."*

To find out more about the Circus Academy workshop series visit www.thinktank.ac/circus. The programme begins with acrobatics at Aston Hall on August 13, juggling skills at Soho House on August 21, followed by events at Blakesley Hall on August 28 and the finale at the Museum Collections Centre on September 14. ■

By Jane Kubiesa



Friends' Diary Dates

September

- 9 * Evening Event – Rebecca Bridgman - 'True to Life?' exhibition
- 18 * Annual Lecture - Rita McLean - 'Creating something more than a picture exhibition'
- 19 * RAF Museum Hendon and Kenwood House
- 26-29 # Newcastle Weekend
- 30 * Evening Event – Lisa Beauchamp – 'STATIC: Still Life Reconsidered'

October

- 7 * Evening Event - Becky Fletcher, Lis Chard-Cooper and Lynsey Rutter - 'Building the Spitfire Gallery'
- 10 * Guided Tour (121) – Jane Howell – 'WW1 Centenary' (1)
- 14 * Evening Event – Pogus Caesar – 'Red Carpet'
- 17 * Guided Tour (121) – Jane Howell – 'WW1 Centenary' (2)
- 21 * Evening Event in BMAG – Richard Statham – "Sound & Silence" and the BMAG Community Gallery'

November

- 11 * Evening Talk - Pieta Greaves – 'New Staffordshire Hoard Gallery'
- 14 * British Museum – 'Ming: 50 years that changed China' Exhibition
- 18 * AV Room Talk – David Johnson - 'From "Perfidious Albion" to "Our Oldest Ally": Britain's relationship with Portugal at the turn of the 20th Century'

December

- 2 * Luncheon Club – David Symons – 'New Staffordshire Hoard Gallery' (1)
- 5 * Luncheon Club – David Symons – 'New Staffordshire Hoard Gallery' (2)

2015 - April

- 19-24 + The Delights of Budapest

- * Details are enclosed with this mailing, and application forms are included in posted versions of this magazine (See note on page 6)
- ** Fully booked, sorry
- + Dates for your diary, no applications in this mailing
- # Included in a previous mailing, but still some places available
- \$ These events are not arranged by the Friends, applications are not included

The next
Arterfacts: the
Autumn 2014
edition will be
published
in October



British Association of Friends of Museums (BAfM) West Midlands Regional Conference

Saturday 5 July 2014. Deborah and Christiaan de Haes, Margaret Lister and I attended the BAfM West Midlands Regional Conference on Saturday 5 July in Shrewsbury, held at the new Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery. The conference topic was 'The Emerging Role of Friends in Museums' and was held in cooperation with The Friends of Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery. Around 30 people attended and talks were given by Gaye Blake-Roberts, Director of The Wedgwood Museum and Deputy Chairman of The Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust; Gemma Dhami, the Museums Development Officer for Worcestershire; and our very own Chair of the Friends of Birmingham Museums, Deborah de Haes. Deborah's talk was entitled: 'How Friends organisations can enhance the work of museums' and she cooked up a very thoughtful menu of suggestions for the positive roles that Friends can fulfil for the museums which they support. Deborah talked about the potential for real opportunities in the relationship between Friends organisations and their museums, whilst recognising the potential for tensions. She described the three key crucial roles for Friends illustrating it with food combinations:

1. "adding spice": offering honest opinions and piloting new things, often at their own risk rather than the museum's (melon and ginger);
2. "accessing the flavour": providing information to make the museum more accessible, and supporting their work through fundraising (cheese and chutney); and
3. "better together": being ambassadors for the

museum, reaching out to new audiences to extend the museum's presence in their local communities (chocolate profiteroles).

Deborah explained that, in the future, the evolving relationship between Friends and their museums will result in the need for Friends organisations to be more flexible and open to new ideas. However, she underlined that the vital role is for the Friends to stay loyal. The presentation was very well-received, and provoked animated questions and discussions. The three presentations were followed by a short session on BAfM matters and then we were treated to a tour of the new Shrewsbury Museum – a wonderful new space which is thoroughly worth a visit. This was the first regional conference arranged by BAfM in the West Midlands for some time, and provided a useful and interesting day with an opportunity for discussion and networking. We would like to thank David Waterhouse, our BAfM Regional Coordinator, for organising the day! A full report on the conference will be published in the autumn issue of the BAfM journal. ■

By Melissa Page
Friends Administrator



