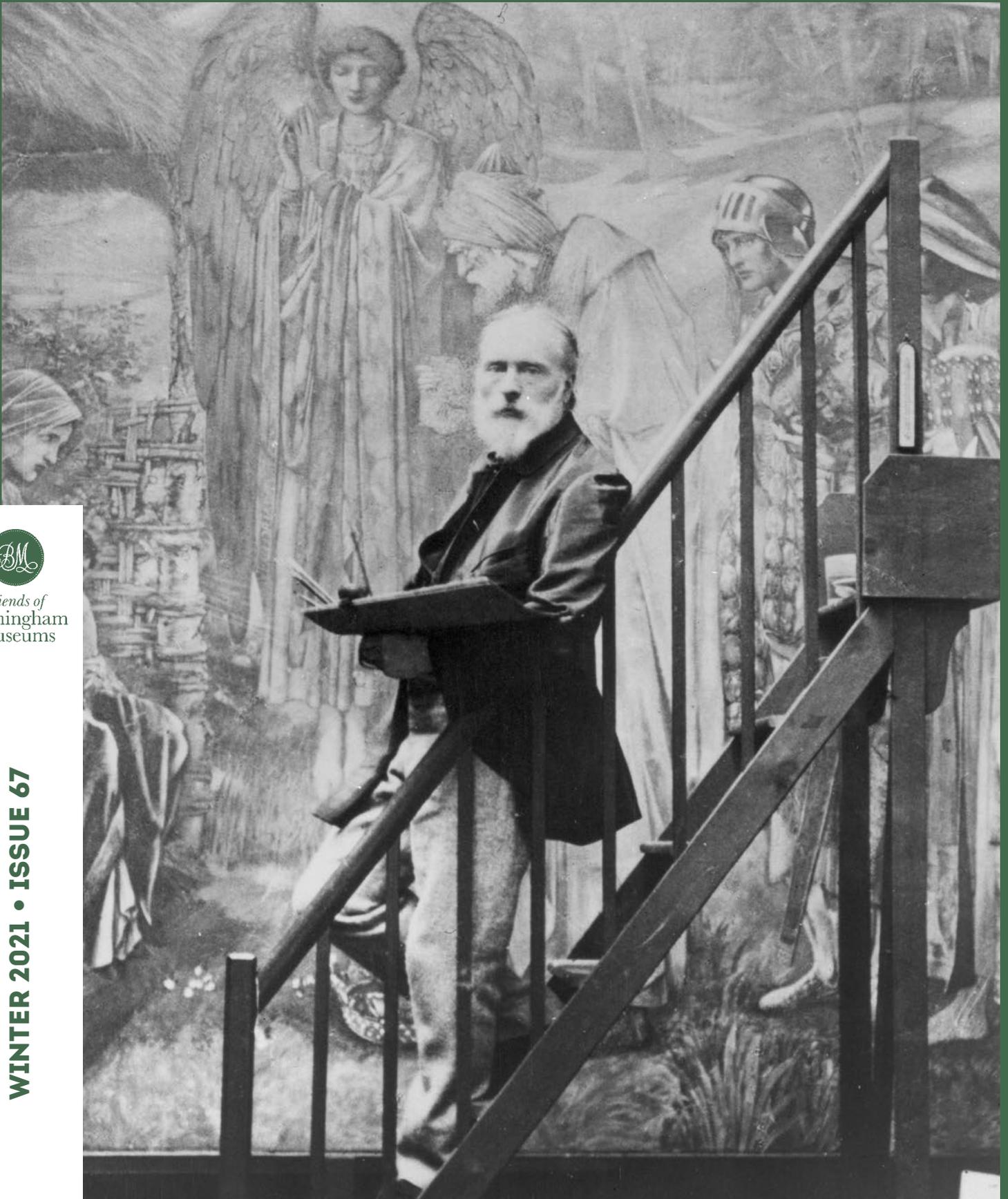


ARTEFACTS



Friends of
Birmingham
Museums

WINTER 2021 • ISSUE 67

BAfM

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION
OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS

FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS MAGAZINE

BIRMINGHAM

A woman in a yellow tutu is holding a nutcracker in front of a Christmas tree. The tree is decorated with red and gold ornaments and lights. There are several wrapped gifts at the base of the tree. The background is a dark, starry night sky with falling snow.

Director Carlos Acosta

The Nutcracker

20 November –
11 December

H BIRMINGHAM
HIPPODROME

birminghamhippodrome.com

 Birmingham
City Council

 ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

ROYAL BALLET

Karla Doorbar as Clara. © Richard Battye

EDITOR'S NOTE

BY MELISSA HUGHES

When I started my maternity leave in February 2020, I couldn't have imagined that *Artefacts* would not be published again until now, nineteen months later, due to a global pandemic. Lockdown started a couple of weeks after our daughter, Tamara, was born and it made for an extraordinarily strange time to be introducing a little person to the world!

I am delighted that *Artefacts* is back and I hope you enjoy it. You will probably notice a number of differences due to the lack of both Friends' events and Birmingham Museums' events. However, we are delighted to be holding our Friends' AGM on 4th November and a Christmas Party on 11th December. We hope to see some of you there! And we are planning to organise more events for our Members in the Spring, so please do watch this space.

CHAIR'S OBSERVATIONS	04
FRIENDS' EVENTS	05
NEWS FROM THE OFFICE	06
NEWS FROM THE VOLUNTEERS	07
REPORT FROM BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS	08
THE BIRMINGHAM & MIDLAND INSTITUTE	09
CHANGING BIRMINGHAM - ITS PEOPLE AND PLACES: HOLTE ENDERS	10
ASTON RETOLD	12
RECENT ACQUISITIONS: SOUVENIR 9 (QUEEN VICTORIA), 2019	14
ART THROUGH THE AGES: THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM	16
THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY: BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS	18
BMAG BEAR'S BIG ADVENTURE	19
BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS - WHAT'S ON	20
IN THE AREA	24
FRIENDS' QUIZ	31
FOCUS: THE ALEXANDRA'S 120TH BIRTHDAY PARTY	32
FRIENDS' CROSSWORD	34

CONTACTS

PETER MILES CHAIR

Email: committee.fbmag@gmail.com

SARAH FARNAN MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Email: fbmagmembership@gmail.com

MELISSA HUGHES ADMINISTRATOR AND ARTEFACTS EDITOR

Email: melissa.page.fbmag@gmail.com

JANE HOWELL EVENTS ORGANISER

Email: janehowell997@gmail.com

FRIENDS' OFFICE

Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery
c/o Birmingham and Midland Institute
9 Margaret St, Birmingham B3 3BS
Tel: 0121 348 8330
Website: www.fbmt.org.uk
Reg. Charity No. 528895

DESIGNED AND PRODUCED BY **PW MEDIA & PUBLISHING LTD**

GRAPHIC DESIGN **PAUL BLYTH**

PRINTED BY **STEPHENS & GEORGE**

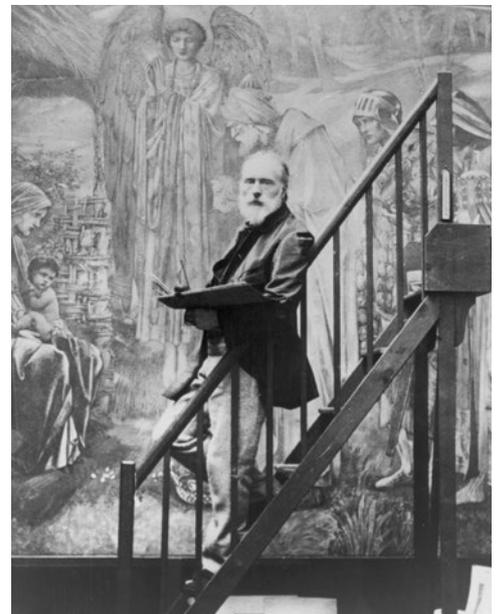
ADVERTISING SALES

JO WILLIAMS

Email: jo@pw-media.co.uk
Tel: 01905 727902

ON THE COVER

Edward Burne-Jones at work
on *The Star of Bethlehem* (1989P26);
Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust.





CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

BY PETER MILES

Ninety years ago the Keeper of the Gallery, S.C. Kaines-Smith, wrote to the Treasurer of the City Council, Mr JR Johnson: 'I am hoping that we may get together... a very large number of small subscriptions, and I am proposing that these subscriptions should be made payable to you for the Friends of the Gallery Fund Account.' An alliance of subscribers who wanted to make their own independent contribution to the success of the City council-owned museum formed the Friends as a charity independent of the council. Ninety years on, this is still our vision today.

At the first General Meeting of the subscribers to the Association of the Friends of the Gallery, which was held at the Art Gallery on Wednesday 1st July 1931, it was resolved that the name of the association be known as 'The Friends of the Gallery'. There were 124 members and the Friends had £150 to spend. John Humphreys, Esq - the Chair; Alderman W. A Cadbury - Chair of the Art Gallery Committee; and S.C. Kaines-Smith, Esq. - the Secretary were present at the meeting.

They voted to purchase the following items:

- a portrait miniature of Mumtaz Mahal, the favourite Queen of Shah Jahan (Members will know this image as it was used on our Membership cards for our 80th anniversary year);
- a Sardonyx Cameo by Schmidt from the middle of the 19th century; and
- *Cyclamen*, a painting by Florence Engelbach.

The cost of these three acquisitions came to a total of £61 – 15s – 0d. By the end of the financial year a further fourteen items had been purchased for the sum of £210 – 18s – 0d. This year, ninety years ago, saw the start of our support of the Gallery, which has manifested itself in many forms.

Last year saw my fiftieth year as a Friend and I have had much fun during this time. I have made many friends and enjoyed working with all the staff. The social side really took off in the late fifties. Then, the highlight of the year was the Friends' Ball. This was a grand white tie event with dancing in the banquetting suite of the Council House. Entertainment was in the Round Room with one year marked by the appearance of Flanders and Swann. And dinner was spread out in the galleries themselves. Nowadays I think that the conservators might have something to say about that! As the membership grew, members of the Friends catered for the gallery's private views. It was always very 'cordon bleu'.

My first experience of getting involved was helping with 'Bellini Parties'. These were organised by Glennys Wild, the then Keeper



Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints and Donor, 1505,
By Giovanni Bellini; Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust,
licensed under CC0

and Madeline Aston, Social Secretary, to raise funds towards the purchase of *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints and Donor* by Giovanni Bellini. So successful were the Friends that the World Federation of Friends held their European meeting in Birmingham – a feather in the cap for the Museum and Art Gallery.

Over the years we have been proud of our successes, demonstrated and supported by the wide range of activities which we have had to offer, our team of energetic volunteers, our professionally published magazine and the strength of our relationship with the Museums we were formed to support.

We have been most fortunate in having a wealth of dedicated volunteers of the past 90 years and I pay tribute to them for making us so successful.

It has been a joy to be part of it and I look forward to the future. ■



THE FRIENDS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday 11th December 2021

Please note the change of time to 1pm - 4pm

At The Birmingham & Midland Institute,
9 Margaret St, Birmingham B3 3BS

Organised by Jane Howell

When we cancelled all the Friends' events in March 2020 I promised our Members that we would have a party as soon as we could. So this is that party! We are excited to be able to celebrate our 90th Birthday year and to have a chance to catch up with friends (with a little f!). It will be a celebration of our ongoing support for our city's museums, support which started ninety years ago in 1931!

Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT) need to raise £120,000 for two high-profile conservation projects: the re-glazing of Edward Burne-Jones' *Star of Bethlehem*, and the cleaning and relining of the city's six Morris & Co *Holy Grail Tapestries*. £39,000 has already been raised with donations from The Pilgrim Trust, Tru Vue - AND £15,000 from us - The Friends. There is still £81,000 left to raise for the specialist conservation of these well-loved treasures. We need your help and generosity to raise this money!

Victoria Osborne, BMT's Curator of Fine Art, will give a presentation on *The Star of Bethlehem* and BMAG Bear (see article on p19) will be auctioned in aid of the Conservation Fund. You will get a chance to meet the Friends' new fundraising mascot - Grail Bear! Light refreshments will available during the afternoon. Please come along!

Tickets cost £15 and will be on sale from 1st November. You will be able to purchase e-tickets on BMT's website birminghammuseums.org.uk (under What's On). Please purchase your tickets online if possible. We will send a link to those Members who are on email when they go on sale. If you do not have access to the internet then please send a cheque, payable to 'FBMAG', for £15 per ticket and send it along with a SAE to the Friends' new address:



Friends of Birmingham Museums,
c/o Birmingham and Midland Institute,
9 Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS.

Please note that hand sanitiser will be available and attendees will be encouraged to wear masks. The BMI is cleaned on a regular basis. It is expected that attendees will be vaccinated but this will not be checked. This event is being arranged jointly with BMT and so attendance will not be limited to members of the Friends.

NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

We are delighted to welcome Sarah Farnan, our new Membership Secretary, who has taken over from Lynda Perrin. Please continue to send any Membership correspondence to her at the usual email address: fbmagmembership@googlemail.com. The Friends' office is staffed on Monday mornings.

Due to the closure of BMAG until 2022 while essential electrical upgrade work of Birmingham's Council House complex takes place, the postal address for Friends correspondence has changed. Please send all correspondence to: Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, c/o Birmingham and Midland Institute, 9 Margaret St, Birmingham B3 3BS.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Free entry to all Birmingham Museums' Historic properties
- *Artefacts* magazine and the Friends' E-Newsletter
- The opportunity to join the Friends' social events and outings (NB. These had to be put on hold due to Covid-19, but we are delighted that they are now continuing with the AGM and the Friends Christmas Party)
- 10% discount at the Birmingham and Midland Institute's Coffee Lounge on production of a valid Friends membership card

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

- BMAG and Historic properties shops and cafés
- 50% entrance discount to Thinktank at Millennium Point: www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank
- 10% discount off purchases in both the shop and the café at Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and Gladstone Pottery Museum: www.stokemuseums.org.uk

CHRISTMAS GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Gift membership is available all year round and includes 3 extra months free. Christmas Gift Membership (valid 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2023) could make an ideal present for a friend or relative. A Gift Membership form can be downloaded at www.fbmt.org.uk/subscriptions/. Alternatively, you can use the standard application form in this magazine. Complete the form with the recipient's details and send it with a covering note giving your own name and contact details. Please ensure the form reaches us by Friday 3rd December at the latest.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to our new members who have joined since the last edition of *Artefacts* in February 2020: Mr D Merry & Ms M Werson; Miss SO Hill; Mrs A Bond; Mrs GA Tomblin; Sir John & Lady Jenkins; Mr SJ Hartland; Mrs RM McCarthy; and Miss CMT Blake.

FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS APPLICATION FORM

Title:	
Full Name:	
Address:	
Tel:	Mobile:
Email:	
Where did you pick up this copy of <i>Artefacts</i> ?:	

I enclose a cheque for £ or I have transferred £ to

PLEASE WRITE IN CAPITAL LETTERS

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY AND ANNUAL RATES

(Please tick)

SINGLE £32

DOUBLE £48
(full rate includes 2 children under 16)

CONCESSIONARY RATES

SINGLE £21

DOUBLE £32

STUDENT £15

SORT CODE 30-00-06
A/C NO 00248432

Please sign below and send to: Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, c/o Birmingham and Midland Institute, 9 Margaret St, Birmingham B3 3BS, together with your cheque (if applicable) to be made payable to 'FBMAG'

giftaid it

Boost your membership subscription/donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick this box: I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Friends of Birmingham Museums (trading as FBMAG). I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature:	Date:
------------	-------

DATA PROTECTION Your details are held securely by the Friends Office for administrative purposes only. Your email address will only be used for occasional contact. If you are willing to be contacted by post or email about appeals for donations, please give your permission
I can be contacted about donations for Birmingham Museums: Yes No



ABOVE: Some of our veterans working on the bikes in the MCC

It has been a busy few months since I took on the role of Interim Volunteer Manager at Birmingham Museums Trust earlier this summer. I've thoroughly enjoyed it so far and it has been great to get to know everyone and start to meet our brilliant volunteers face to face.

I hit the ground running in July and was able to organise a group of 23 volunteers from across the Trust to support filming with the BBC Antiques Roadshow team at Aston Hall. Volunteers were on hand with sash and boater to make sure the event ran as smoothly as possible. From welcoming contributors to hosting refreshments, appearing as fabulous extras to giving impromptu tours of the Hall for the roadshow's experts, the volunteers all played a valuable part over two very long filming days.

We were also able to schedule in our first Volunteer Explore Day since the pandemic and to invite our volunteers to Thinktank to see all the changes that had been made over lockdown. Learning and Access Manager Andrew Fowles presented the new vision for BMT to the group and led a fantastic consultation session. It sparked some interesting discussion and has given us plenty to think about for the future. Natural Science Curator Lukas Large also treated us to a brilliant tour of the new 'Our Changing Planet' gallery.

More latterly in September we hosted our Staff and Volunteer Summer Picnic at Aston Hall. The weather just about held out and it was great to get staff and volunteers back together in the beautiful grounds of the Hall. The catering team provided

a delicious spread and there were garden games and a photo studio for everyone to enjoy.

Alongside these events we have of course been welcoming teams back onsite. Our green fingered gardeners have been working hard across Sarehole, Blakesley and Aston to keep our gardens blooming and beautiful. We have also been able to welcome back volunteers to Aston and Blakesley in our new Costumed Heritage Interpreter roles, sharing their knowledge of the sites via spotlight tours whilst dressed for the occasion in period costume. Thinktank hosted over 30 young volunteers for its short-term Summer Activities placements this summer and the team delivered some fantastic Object Handling and badge making activities which proved very popular! This year we've also launched our 'Volunteering for Veterans' project, a wellbeing and conservation project working with veterans of the armed forces. The team are based at the Museum Collection Centre and are working hard to conserve the motorbike collection with the aim to get one back out on display at Thinktank. Alongside this we've kept online volunteering going strong and have a great team supporting Documentation Registrar Misaho Washizu in gathering artist research to support the collection.

Whilst we don't know what this winter will bring, we're hoping to welcome back more and more teams onsite and not lose momentum. I'd like to end with a big thank you to all our volunteers for your continued support from everyone here at Birmingham Museums. We really couldn't do it without you! ■

NEWS FROM THE VOLUNTEERS

BY JENNIFER SHUFFLEBOTHAM



HELLO TO THE FRIENDS

ZAK MENSAH, CO-CEO,
BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS TRUST

It has been nearly a year since Sara Wajid and I took on our roles as Co-CEOs of Birmingham Museums Trust. And it has been quite a journey!

We have been talking to our Friends about our emerging vision that Birmingham Museums generate hope, social trust and belonging. Our ideas continue to develop and be tested and we hope to have a final vision by the end of the year. We will ensure our Friends continue to be part of our journey.

A key part of our vision is our commitment to devote as much passion and energy to protecting the environment as we do to preserving Birmingham's collections and historic buildings. Recently at Thinktank's 20th Birthday Party I was delighted to announce our Climate Pledge. Birmingham Museums are committed to reducing our total emissions and to get to net zero by 2040. If, however, on our journey we discover new ways to do it quicker – we will!

I know many of you are missing your regular visits to our Museum & Art Gallery as it undergoes a maintenance programme that will last until 2024. I can share that we plan to open some of our galleries in Spring 2022 with exciting new displays that will reflect the stories and characters of the people and city of Birmingham

today. The decant of the Museum & Art Gallery is leading to some unique opportunities to examine the collections in storage. I loved seeing this incredible Japanese Scroll being unrolled.

We are also delighted to be working once again with Vanley Burke to produce his new exhibition at Soho House Museum, which will also open in Spring 2022. A number of new exhibitions are being planned over the next few years using the city's collections, involving major artists and local partners, I look forward to being able to share more with you all soon.

And finally we are very grateful that the Friends of Birmingham Museums Trust have pledged funds to support the conservation of two of our most high-profile and well-loved treasures. The work involves the re-glazing of the *Star of Bethlehem*, Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) and the cleaning and relining of the *Holy Grail Tapestries*. The fundraising continues to help make these vital conservation projects a reality – look out for an article elsewhere in this magazine to find out more about these artworks. ■



Section of the 15m Japanese scroll depicting the Latter Three Years War at Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery;
Photo credit: Birmingham Museums Trust



THE BIRMINGHAM & MIDLAND INSTITUTE

The Birmingham & Midland Institute (BMI) has been at the heart of Birmingham's cultural life for almost 170 years. It was founded by an Act of Parliament in 1854 for the 'Diffusion and Advancement of Science, Literature and Art amongst all Classes of Persons resident in Birmingham and Midland Counties'.

Charles Dickens was the Institute's 16th President in 1869, and Sir Arthur Sullivan was its 35th President in 1888. Joining these, and another 165 notable incumbents, is the current, and 168th President, Sir David Cannadine. The Institute is managed by a Board of Governors of 25.

During the late nineteenth century, the Institute played a leading role in the introduction of scientific and technical education in Birmingham until the state gradually took over its functions. It was thus the forerunner of many educational bodies such as the Birmingham Conservatoire and Aston University.

The Institute has been located in Margaret Street since 1966, in a Grade II* listed building completed in the Jacobean style in 1899 to designs by F. Barry Peacock of architects firm Cossins & Peacock. The Institute has a thriving programme of cultural and educational activities, which includes a wide spectrum of arts and science lectures, exhibitions and concerts. The building is also a venue for many externally-organised events and can be booked for conferences and meetings. The Institute also owns and runs the BMI Library which traces its origins back to 1779. The Library collection is gradually growing through the regular purchase of new books, principally in the fields of humanities and modern fiction.

The BMI has longstanding associations with a number of independent societies who use the premises for their activities and meetings. Affiliated societies have kindred interests and include the Birmingham Philatelic Society, Midland Ancestors and The Victorian Society, to name but a few. The BMI is also exploring a new partnership with Ex Cathedra, a leading choir and early music ensemble based in Birmingham. It performs choral music spanning the 15th to 21st centuries, and regularly commissions new works.

The Board of Governors is in the process of commissioning a Viability Study as to how best to conserve, restore and refurbish the building and to re-purpose it for a new generation of users that is both sustainable and offers a tangible benefit to the cultural life of the people of Birmingham and the Midlands. The Institute is about to embark upon an exciting new chapter in its history.

For more information about the BMI, please visit the website: www.bmi.org.uk. ■

By Stephen Hartland
Honorary Secretary of the Birmingham & Midland Institute



CHANGING BIRMINGHAM ~ ITS PEOPLE AND PLACES

HOLTE ENDERS

Adjacent to a famous football ground is a magnificent piece of Jacobean architecture, Aston Hall. They both share something in common - the 'Holte' name. The Holte family association with Aston Hall dates from 1631 when Sir Thomas Holte moved into the new Hall he had commissioned, until 1817 when the Hall had to be sold to pay debts. However, the name carries on in the Holte End stand of Villa Park.



FAR LEFT: Portrait Of Mary Elizabeth Bracebridge (nee Holte) and her daughter Mary Holte Bracebridge, 1784, By George Romney; Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0

LEFT: Portrait of Elizabeth Holte (nee King), 1636; Cornelius Johnson; Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0

ABOVE: Aston Hall The Long Gallery, 1847, By Katherine Muirhead; Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0

The Holte family would make a fitting topic for a TV mini series with all its dramas! One individual stands out for sheer aplomb and that is the previously mentioned Sir Thomas Holte, Baronet (1575-1654). Knighted by King James I on his procession through England, procuring the new honour of Baronet, Sir Thomas Holte was a major figure amongst the gentry of Warwickshire in his new grand residence of Aston Hall. A number of scandals are associated with Sir Thomas, including an allegation of murder relating to his cook, but one for which we do have documentary evidence is Sir Thomas' bitter rift with his eldest surviving son, Edward (1600-1645) over his marriage. Edward had a position at Court, secured by his father. Whilst he was there Edward met and married Elizabeth King (presumably for love), a Bishop's daughter with good social connections but no wealth. Sir Thomas did not approve and was unforgiving, writing him out of his inheritance and denying him any support. Such was the notoriety of this family dispute that King Charles I intervened personally and wrote to Sir Thomas: 'We consider that a blessing and many comforts will follow the daughter of soe reverend and good a man'. At one point in the drama Sir Thomas was put under house arrest in London by Charles I for continuing with the vendetta against the express wishes of the King. Tragically the conflict remained unresolved when Edward died of a fever at Oxford having fought and been wounded at the battle of Edgehill on the Royalist side. The sad circumstances are summed up by his brother-in-law's elegy to Edward:

*'When the tough root becomes unnatural,
And to his branches doth that sap deny
Which them with life and verdure should supply.
For parent's shame, let it forgotten be,
And may the sad example die with thee.'*

Moving on a number of generations we come to the sixth and last Baronet, Sir Charles Holte (1721-1782) with his wife Anne (1734-1799) and daughter Mary Elizabeth (1759-1817). Charles had inherited the estates on the death of his brother Sir Lister Holte and overnight he became a wealthy man. He was respected figure in the area and was elected as one of the Warwickshire MPs, with much support from the electors of Birmingham who to some extent saw him as representing their interests, a reversal of the usual relations between the town and the Holte family. Unfortunately for his daughter Mary, a bitter dispute between the brothers meant that, on her father's death, she was at the end of a long line of people who could inherit the estates. Despite this her husband was able to raise a number of loans as the possibility of inheritance came closer, but lost the money in failed business ventures putting the family heavily into debt. In the end there was an agreement to overturn Sir Lister's will by a Private Act of Parliament and the Holte estates were sold in eight separate lots in 1817, allowing Mary to pay off the family's debts but ending this chapter of Aston Hall and its association with the Holte family.

To see where these dramas of love and strife were played out, along with many other historic events including a civil war siege, why not drop by and visit Aston Hall, with its delightful café in the restored stable block – but not, of course, on a match day! www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/aston. ■

By Jim Wells
Friends Trustee

For background reading and further details and illustrations see our website: <https://fbmt.org.uk/publications>



ASTON RETOLD

Aston Hall, one of Birmingham's most iconic buildings, reopened this Summer with new displays that bring the Hall's rich history to life. Kimberley Biddle, Museum Manager tells us what makes Aston Hall so special.

It's hard to believe but in the shadows of the concrete jungle of Spaghetti Junction and the largest football stadium in the West Midlands - Villa Park - sits one of Birmingham's most iconic buildings.

Just a few miles from Birmingham city centre and a stone's throw from the A38 Expressway is the magnificent Aston Hall – a Grade I listed 17th century mansion. And its location is just one of the things that makes it so special, according to Kimberley Biddle, Museum Team Manager at Aston Hall: "Its location definitely makes Aston Hall so unexpected and unique. Situated next to a seven-lane motorway, a premier league football stadium, rows of terrace houses and an industrial estate is a very theatrical and fairy tale like mansion that has survived 400 years of history."

Us Brits are fascinated with stately homes and country mansions. Countless novels and hugely successful TV dramas - from Jane Austen to Downton Abbey - centre on historic houses and the lives of the people who live there. According to research, in 2019 26.9 million visits were made to a National Trust property and 26.8 million people visited one of the UK's Historic Houses. In 1864 Aston Hall was the first historic building in Britain to be preserved by a local authority specifically as a public visitor attraction – predating the creation of the National Trust by some 30 years. "Whether it's an element of romance, a fixation with history or a general fascination

with the lives of others, our interest in stately homes, castles and stories of the past is undeniable," says Kimberley.

After being closed for over a year due to the pandemic, Aston Hall finally welcomed visitors back through the doors in July. The reopening was marked with brand new displays that explore the fascinating lives of the Hall's residents and its colourful historical past. Like every other UK visitor attraction, the prolonged pandemic-enforced closure had a significant impact on Aston Hall, but it also brought some time to reflect on the visitor experience.

"The past year gave us the opportunity to consider how we re-tell, re-imagine and re-display the four centuries of Aston Hall's history," explains Kimberley. "The new displays capture the excitement and eventful history of the Hall and the fascinating lives of people associated with it. Visitors love the architectural and historical delights of Aston Hall – such as the breath-taking Long Gallery and the battle scars of the Civil Wars – but they also revel in the real-life stories of the families that lived here. We've made more of the ancestral history of the Holte family who built Aston Hall in the 1600s and peppered that history with enthralling stories of family rifts, royal visits, pitched battles and even the tragic tale of a tightrope walker."

Visitors can explore over 30 rooms at Aston Hall, including the amazing Long Gallery – said to be one of Britain's finest and surely one of Birmingham's most incredible spaces - and the elaborate



Great Stairs. But equally fascinating are the servants' rooms, such as the eerie Dick's Garret at the very top of the house to the purposeful Butler's Pantry on the ground floor. There's also an amazing collection of paintings spanning four centuries to see, such as Peter Lely's famous official 'warts and all' portrait of Oliver Cromwell and works by the likes of Thomas Gainsborough and George Romney.

"Oliver Cromwell purportedly said to another artist, Samuel Cooper, who was painting his portrait 'Remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts and everything as you see me, otherwise I will never pay a farthing for it.' Lely is thought to have based his portrait on Cooper's and it does indeed show Cromwell, 'warts and all' and so the saying was born." says Kimberley. She adds proudly: "Aston Hall is home to Lely's prime version, or original, of the Cromwell portrait – when it was painted it was declared as an official portrait of him in his role of Lord Protector."

Another historic gem that can be seen at Aston Hall is a set of 350-year-old embroideries which have finally gone back on display after 10 years of painstaking restoration.

The embroidered bed hangings adorn the 17th century bed in the room where King Charles I stayed in 1642. The linen had rotted away so badly that the embroideries were in danger of being lost forever. So, in 2009 the conservation team at Birmingham Museums enrolled the help of heritage volunteers from The Arts Society in Arden, Solihull and Friends of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery to help with the lengthy but important restoration project.

Designed using a type of embroidery called crewel work, which was a particular favourite style of the Jacobean period, the embroidered bed hangings comprise two curtains, pelmets and a bed covering. They feature an exquisite Tree of Life pattern, flowers, birds, deer and a Chinese-style pavilion. The wool threads are coloured with natural dyes in shades of blue, green, yellow, orange, red and pink. Embroidered bed coverings were the

preserve of only the wealthiest families in the 17th century and such sets of hangings around a bed, gave warmth and privacy.

Jane Thompson-Webb, Conservation Team Leader at Birmingham Museums tells us more: "It's a major achievement welcoming these embroideries back on display at Aston Hall. Before the start of the restoration project, they were very dirty, the colours were dull, and it was obvious that the embroideries were in a fragile state and at risk of being lost forever.

"They've been superbly restored thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers – with their hard-work these historic embroideries and their fabulous colours, intricate scenes and delicate details have been preserved for many more years to come."

The team at Aston Hall have also put a lot of consideration into the visitor experience: "We've substantially changed the Hall's food and drink offer," says Kimberley. "With Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery currently closed the Sous Chef from the gallery's award-winning Edwardian Tearooms has created a fantastic new menu in the Stable Yard Café. We're now serving hearty hot lunches for the first time including a traditional Sunday Roast and for those that want a real treat we have an Astonishing Afternoon Tea inspired by the Hall's Lady Holte's Gardens."

As a born and bred Brummie, Kimberley's passion for Aston Hall is palpable, "Nowhere else in Birmingham can you explore such a magnificent and iconic building," she says. "The Hall really comes alive when visitors are there to enjoy its many treasures, be it the breathtaking rooms, incredible collections or the real-life stories of the past. It's a must-see destination so come and visit!" ■

Aston Hall is open Wednesday – Sunday until 19th December:
www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/aston

Photos by Birmingham Museums Trust



RECENT ACQUISITIONS

SOUVENIR 9 (QUEEN VICTORIA), 2019

Birmingham Museums is delighted to have acquired a piece by leading contemporary artist Hew Locke, *Souvenir 9 (Queen Victoria)*, with the support of the Friends, Art Fund and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

Hew Locke was born in Edinburgh in 1959 and spent his formative years in Guyana. After studying in Falmouth and at the Royal College of Art he now lives in London. Locke works as a sculptor and visual artist across a wide range of media, often exploring ideas around nationhood, national mythmaking, the burden of history, and its resonances in the present day. The most comprehensive exhibition of his work to date, *Here's The Thing*, was staged at Ikon Gallery in Birmingham in 2019.

Souvenir 9 (Queen Victoria) is one of a series of sculptural pieces in which Locke takes original 19th-century ceramic busts of British royalty and dresses them in elaborate regalia, its imagery expressive of military power and imperial conquest. Locke comments that these busts are 'weighed down by the literal burden of history and this goes back to my idea of how a nation creates itself, what stories it sells to itself and how this relates to ideas of Britain and its history that are weighing down the minds of people today...'

The image of Queen Victoria is one that has particular resonance for the artist. One of Locke's enduring early memories is of a marble statue of the monarch that had stood outside the High Court in Georgetown, Guyana: one of many commissioned for, and displayed in, colonised places across the world in the 19th century to express and consolidate British power. Dynamited and decapitated in an act of anti-colonial protest in 1954, the statue had subsequently been relegated to the city's Botanic Gardens, where it languished for two decades (Controversially it was restored and returned to its former location in front of the High Court in 1990).

Hew Locke has returned to images of Queen Victoria repeatedly in his practice. In *Souvenir 9* a 19th-century ceramic bust is embellished with materials including bicycle tyre, hessian rope, chains, coins and medals, and lace. On its forehead the figure displays a medal from the fourth Anglo-Ashanti war (1895-6), one of a series of conflicts which ended with the conquest of the Ashanti empire by the British in 1900, while its headdress carries an image of one of the ivory masks looted following the British sacking of Benin City in 1897.

The bust itself is made of Parianware, a hard, white porcelain developed in the 1840s which could replicate the appearance of marble. It allowed the mass production of small sculptural pieces which middle-class consumers could afford to buy and display in their homes. Copeland in Stoke-on-Trent, which produced the bust used by Locke in this piece was a leading maker of Parianware, which it sold under the name 'Statuary Porcelain'. The bust of

Queen Victoria, made in 1868 from a model by C Delpech, is one of a series of small sculptures commissioned by the Art Union of London. Founded in 1837 and running until 1912, the Union was a membership organisation intended to promote art among a wide public: members paid an annual subscription for which they received an engraving each year plus entry to a draw with the opportunity to win other art objects as prizes.

The acquisition of *Souvenir 9 (Queen Victoria)* strengthens one of the themes BMT is exploring in our current research and collecting: the global contexts of Victorian art and design, and how artists and makers of colour today are engaging with 19th-century objects and their histories in their own work. Together with colleagues from the University of Birmingham and University of Exeter, BMT has founded a new British Art Network research group called Race, Empire and the Pre-Raphaelites to explore these themes. By using Birmingham's rich collections as a starting point, we aim to encourage wider conversations about how Victorian art and design might be displayed and interpreted for the 21st-century museum and its diverse audiences. At a recent research seminar organised by the group, Hew Locke joined ceramicist Matt Smith (whose *Queering the Museum* project at BMAG in 2010-11 some longstanding Friends might remember) and Dr Sadiya Qureshi from the University of Birmingham for an illuminating conversation about Victorian Parianware ceramics in the context of their own work (available to view online: <https://raceempireprb.wordpress.com/events/>). In the future, displaying *Souvenir 9 (Queen Victoria)* alongside Parianware pieces from the city's collection will offer a powerful way of exploring under-researched histories and enabling new perspectives on 19th-century objects.

Souvenir 9 (Queen Victoria) will be on loan to Tate Britain from 1 December 2021 to 3 April 2022 for the major exhibition *Art from Britain and the Caribbean*, allowing it to be on display during the period BMAG is closed for electrical work, but it will return to Birmingham next spring. We look forward to showing it once the Museum reopens and are grateful to the Friends for supporting this significant acquisition. ■

By Victoria Osborne,
Curator (Fine Art) and Curatorial Team Leader

LEFT: Hew Locke, *Souvenir 9 (Queen Victoria)* (2019)
Mixed media on antique Parianware, 44.1 x 27 x 26 cm
Birmingham Museums Trust, photo Hales Gallery/Anna Arca



ART THROUGH THE AGES

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

BY SIR EDWARD COLEY BURNE-JONES (1833–1898)

In 1885 the City of Birmingham opened its new Art Gallery. It was the result of years of hard campaigning and fundraising by the businessmen of Birmingham, who wanted to ‘bring art to the people’.

At that point they gave a £2000 commission to Sir Edward Burne-Jones to paint a work to celebrate the creation of this important cultural addition to Birmingham’s rapidly developing city centre. Burne-Jones had been chosen as the artist because he was a Birmingham man – born in Bennett’s Hill and a pupil of King Edward’s School, then in New Street. He left Birmingham at the age of eighteen to go to Exeter College, Oxford to train for the clergy but he left without finishing his degree. Whilst at Exeter College he met William Morris.

Although he disliked Birmingham, by 1885 Burne-Jones had become a very successful artist and accepted the commission. He had occasionally returned to the city to lecture at the Birmingham School of Art by then in Margaret Street, just across the road from

the Art gallery. Such was his fame and popularity that his visits were greeted with the crowds and hysteria only seen by pop stars and footballers today!

Burne-Jones was a romantic and a follower of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, sharing their love of fine detail and the realistic portrayal of the subject matter. The vague outlines of the Impressionist School of painting being developed across the channel were definitely not for him! It is still disputed as to whether or not he can be included in the group of artists known as the Pre-Raphaelites. He loved everything mediaeval, especially works such as *Morte D’Arthur* and frequently used those tales in the tapestries he designed along with William Morris, which were woven in Morris’ Merton factory.

In 1887 he started work on his commission. Unusually, for a piece of this size, he chose to work in watercolour. It is believed he was sensitive, possibly even allergic to the linseed oil used to clean the brushes following working with oil paints.

Although he had long since abandoned any thought of going into the church, he still appreciated the biblical stories. He had previously designed, along with William Morris, a tapestry for the chapel in Exeter College and chose to use this design, but altered to work for a painting instead of a tapestry. The figures remained quite elongated as he liked the way Botticelli portrayed his figures.

However, although the detail in the painting is very precise, the setting is not. He chose to put Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus in a very English forest glade, far removed from the arid Palestinian reality of the setting in which Jesus had been born. The story, as told in Matthew's gospel, talks of Jesus being twelve days old. This baby, beautifully painted, is more likely to be six or seven months old and far more interesting and interested than a new born! The baby Jesus Burne-Jones depicted, like most babies of this age, appears to be very suspicious of the three men who came bearing gifts. Mary is also very uncertain about what is happening and Joseph is clearly uncomfortable. Joseph and his wife were very humble people. In contrast the wise men, kings, magi – call them what you will – are from a very different social class and yet they are bringing gifts for their child!

But does any of this matter? The unrealistic setting and the social context fade into irrelevancy when set against the absolute beauty of the way each individual part is painted. The robes of the first king were obviously folded and stored in a chest before the model put them on. The desire to paint exactly what is seen overcomes the fact that the folds look out of place! The embroidery on the hem of the third king's robe is so detailed and demands careful attention from the viewer to understand all that is going on in it. It is also hard to believe that the armour of the middle king is not metal that would be hard on touch but, simply, it is watercolour paint on paper.

Further detail that he adds are the little white flowers below Mary. They are *Ornithogalum*, popularly known as Star of Bethlehem and are a symbol of purity, atonement and reconciliation.

The work took four years, being completed in early 1891. It was painted on 10 sheets of the largest watercolour paper then available, and laid canvas. It was, and still is, a technical tour-de-force and is believed to be the largest watercolour in the world.

It was shown in the New Gallery in London in 1891 before being brought to Birmingham. It formed the centrepiece of the Museum and Art Gallery's celebratory exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite paintings which was opened with an address by William Morris on 2nd October that year.

A photograph shows it hanging in what is now the Tearoom and it is assumed that it remained there until at least 1919 when the Feeney Galleries opened. At some point it was moved from its original location to gallery 14. Some people believed that it hung in the Industrial Gallery over the archway leading into what is now the Mini Museum. There is possibly space but, due to the weight, the size and the fragility of the glass, that idea is discounted, especially as there is no evidence to support it. What was once

thought to be a photograph of it in that location turns out to be a photograph of a carpet, not a large painting.

The Star of Bethlehem still hangs in Gallery 14. Unlike most watercolours it is on permanent display. Moving it and then storing it would present too much of a challenge. There is a continuing discussion as to how it got into the gallery in the first place and whether it was moved out when the museum was emptied during World War II? I have not been able to find the answers to those questions.

In spite of the decades it has been on display its condition seems to be quite good. The lighting has been subdued and the roof over Gallery 14 is made of glass panels which were covered with a tile designed to keep the sunlight off the painting. The colour seems good but until the edges hidden behind the frame are revealed we will not know for certain.

After Burne-Jones finished this and another large commission, he gave up accepting commissions on this scale. He was totally exhausted, in spite of having assistants to help. He continued to work and to exhibit but his style went out of fashion and his work failed to sell.

His friend, William Morris, died in 1896. Burne-Jones was devastated and his health seriously declined. In 1898 he suffered an attack of influenza and had apparently recovered when he was again taken suddenly ill and died, aged 64, in Fulham on 17 June 1898. He was buried in St Margaret's Churchyard, Rottingdean, Sussex. ■

By Jane Howell

References: 'By the Gains of Industry', Stuart Davies. Published by Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

'Visions of Love and Life: Pre-Raphaelite Art from Birmingham Collection', Stephen Wildman. Published by Art Services International, Alexandria, Virginia, USA.

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to the following who gave me useful hints and directions of research - Victoria Osborne, Jane Arthur, Brendan Flynn, David Rowan, and Emma McMannis

LEFT: *The Star of Bethlehem*, 1887-1891; Sir Edward Burne-Jones. Commissioned by the Corporation of Birmingham, 1887, and purchased through the Art Gallery Purchase Fund, 1891. Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0.

BELOW: BMAG Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition, 1891, showing *The Star of Bethlehem* as its centrepiece; Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0.





THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY: BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS

The Victorian Society is the only charity dedicated to fighting to protect our Victorian and Edwardian built heritage from demolition or harmful alteration. The Society promotes the sensitive reuse of historic buildings to generate much lower carbon emissions than demolition and rebuild - helping to tackle the climate emergency and the UK to reach net zero.

The founding of the Society, in 1958, took place against the background of an almost universal dislike of Victorian things and the widespread destruction of Victorian buildings as the post-war reconstruction continued apace. Threats to two particularly important buildings provided the Society with early battlegrounds. The first was Euston Station and the famous Arch that stood in front of it. The second was J. B. Bunning's wonderful Coal Exchange in the City of London. In both cases the battle was lost, but only after long struggles which increasingly attracted not just public attention but also public support for the fledgling Society.

In Birmingham it was another nine years before the inaugural meeting of the branch was held on the 19th January 1967 in the Museum & Art Gallery, with the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Alderman Harold Tyler, in the chair. The meeting was attended by over 400 people, 43 joining the Society and many promising to do so. Mr Nicholas Taylor spoke on the aims and objects of the Society and Rachel Waterhouse spoke about the planned programme of activities. The Society's chairman, Professor Pevsner, gave a lecture on Victorian Mansions and afterwards a buffet was served.

Today, Victorian Society: Birmingham & West Midlands has an active casework committee which comments on hundreds of

applications to listed buildings in the West Midlands and in the various designated Conservation Areas across the region and proposes buildings to be added to the statutory list. One of the latest successes was the Wellington Public House being listed at Grade II, following the Society's submission to Historic England. The Society has a detailed educational programme that involves day schools (held at The Birmingham & Midland Institute), walks, and weekend and day visits to other parts of the country. There is also a Conservation Award that seeks to recognise the best work carried out to Victorian and Edwardian buildings in Birmingham and the West Midlands. The winner of the award in 2019 was Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, for the restoration of Smethwick Council House (illustrated). The presentation of the award has been delayed due to COVID.

For more information on the work of the Society and to becoming a member, visit the website: www.victoriansociety.org.uk. ■

By Stephen Hartland, Chairman
The Victorian Society, Birmingham & West Midlands

ABOVE: Smethwick Council House

BMAG BEAR'S BIG ADVENTURE



In July 2020 Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT) launched an appeal to raise funds. Finances were already tight and the closure of its sites caused by Covid 19 meant a further loss of income. In spite of government support, help was needed!



When I saw this announced my immediate response was to volunteer to do a sponsored walk around the nine sites that make up the Trust. I was Deputy Chair of the Friends of Birmingham Museums at the time. I posted this offer on Facebook and therefore was committed!

I always like to walk alone but I felt I needed a companion for this adventure. I knit teddy bears and so BMAG bear was born. At the start of walk he sat in the neck of my fleece, but that didn't last beyond day one as it turned out to be the hottest week of the summer! From then on, he perched on the top of my rucksack.

On Monday 3rd August 2020 we set off together and he shared

the adventure as we left Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) in the city centre to walk to Thinktank, then on to the Museum Collections Centre and finishing on the first day at Aston Hall. Day 2 took us from Aston Hall to Soho House and we finished at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter (MJQ).

After a rest day on Thursday 6th August we went from MJQ to Weoley Castle. That was a long one and the weather was getting warmer. He joined me in a lovely little café for a drink. The next morning we returned to Weoley Castle and walked to Sarehole Mill. On arrival he and I were exhausted and were both pleased to be offered cold drinks and ice cream. He let me have his!

The weekend off was followed, on Monday 10th August, by the walk from Sarehole Mill to Blakesley Hall. By Tuesday 11th August we decided to divide the final stretch into two sections so that we could set off early and finish before the heat built up so, on that day, it was Blakesley Hall to St Andrew's Football Ground and on Wednesday 12th August we finished the walk back to BMAG in the city centre.

During the walk I was putting posts on Facebook to spread the word. What I didn't realise was that this was being picked up by a lot of people and especially BMT's IT and Marketing staff. I think that BMAG Bear even had his own Twitter account for a time! I think his appeal was greater than mine and between us we raised £5,265.49 in donations with a further £1,067.50 in gift aid. One donation came from the USA in dollars so the conversion to sterling gave the odd final figure! BMAG Bear and I felt that this total of £6,332.99 completely justified the effort – plus we ought to add that we enjoyed doing it! Most of the money went to help with the restoration of Sarehole Mill.

BMAG Bear now sits at home getting bored and so it has been decided to auction him at the forthcoming Christmas Party to be held on 11th December at the Birmingham and Midland Institute (see page five for more information).

But do not be surprised if another teddy bear appears on the fundraising scene! ■

By Jane Howell

For events which need to be pre-booked, bookings can be made by calling 0121 348 8263 or via the website – www.birminghammuseums.org.uk (unless alternative details are given).



ASTON HALL

Trinity Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 6JD

See birminghammuseums.org.uk for up-to-date opening times and prices. Free entry for Friends. Charges apply to non-members. Discover the splendour of a grand Jacobean mansion.

Festive Aston Hall

1-3 December, 8-10 December,
15-17 December 2021, 12noon – 4pm.

Explore Aston Hall, a magnificent seventeenth century mansion situated in a picturesque public park. Discover over 400 years of history and incredible stories. See plenty of sparkling baubles and twinkling fairy lights as the Hall will be decorated for Christmas. Visit the Stable Yard Café to purchase something delicious from our Christmas menu. Pre-booking recommended.

Christmases Past and Festive Handmade Craft Market

5 December 2021, 11am – 4pm.

Step back in time as Aston Hall reminisces over Christmases Past. Experience the sights and sounds of the festive season with historical figures from years gone by. See the Hall decorated for yuletide, warm yourself in front of a roaring fire, and join costumed characters celebrating this special time of the year. Purchase unique handcrafted gifts from our Festive Handmade Craft Market and treat yourself to

something delicious from our Christmas menu in the Stable Yard Café. Pre-booking recommended – this event is not free for Friends.

Father Christmas at Aston Hall

17 December 2021, 10am – 4pm.

Visit Aston Hall at the most wonderful time of the year to meet Father Christmas. Each child will receive a small Christmas gift, and your family will have the opportunity to have their photograph taken with Father Christmas. Write a letter to Father Christmas and post it in the Aston Hall post box and each child will receive a Christmas activity pack with a Christmas card to decorate at home. Wander around Aston Hall at your leisure and see the beautiful Christmas trees and twinkly fairy lights. Pre-booking is essential – this event is not free for Friends.



MUSEUM OF THE JEWELLERY QTR

75-80 Vyse Street, Hockley, Birmingham, B18 6HA.

Currently closed except for special events.

Smith & Pepper Time Capsule Tour

27 November 2021, 12noon – 1pm.

When the proprietors of the Smith & Pepper jewellery manufacturing firm retired in 1981, they simply ceased trading and locked the door, unaware they would be leaving a time capsule for future generations. Explore this extraordinary time capsule on a lively guided tour. Watch demonstrations at the jewellers' bench of the traditional skills of this fine trade and discover what it was like to work here. Pre-booking is essential – this event is not free for Friends.

Below: Aston Hall at Christmas





Above: Museum of the Jewellery Quarter



Cole Bank Road, Birmingham B13 0BD. See birminghammuseums.org.uk for up-to-date opening times and prices
Free entry for Friends. Charges apply to non-members.

Guided Tour of Sarehole Mill

Thursdays until 16 December 2021. 11.30am and 1.30pm.
Explore Sarehole Mill with an experienced guide (on Thursdays only). Enjoy the sights and sounds of a traditional 18th Century Water Mill, learn about the life of a Miller and the scenes that inspired writer J.R.R Tolkien. Also take some time to see the beautiful millpond and explore the new Woodland Realm. Pre-booking is essential.

Origins of Middle-earth:

J.R.R. Tolkien and Sarehole Guided Walk

7 November, 21 November & 5 December 2021, 10am - 11am.
Explore the scenery that inspired J.R.R Tolkien when he lived near Sarehole Mill as a child on this guided tour. The tour begins at the Mill and takes us to Moseley Bog, passing Tolkien's childhood home. The route is around 2 miles in length, involves steps and a boardwalk that could be slippery when wet. Good walking shoes are recommended. Not accessible to wheelchairs or pushchairs. The walk will be socially distanced and outside throughout. Pre-booking is essential – this event is not free for Friends.

Guided Tour of Sarehole Mill and Pizza

13 November, 27 November & 11 December 2021, 12 - 1.30pm
Join a guided tour of Sarehole Mill and enjoy a freshly made, delicious Pizza baked by the Mill's star baker. Experience the sights and sounds of a traditional working watermill, see the tranquil millpond – a haven for wildlife including herons and moorhens – and learn about the connection that J.R.R. Tolkien had with the area. After your guided tour of the 250-year-old Sarehole Mill, choose from a mouth-watering range of stone-baked Neapolitan pizzas and dine in the beautiful Mill courtyard, just in time for lunch! Pre-booking is essential – this event is not free for Friends.



Millennium Point, Curzon Street, Birmingham, B4 7XG

Open Wednesday – Sunday 10am – 5pm.

Half price entry for Friends. Charges apply to non-members.

Thinktank offers an extraordinary, fun-packed day out for all the family. From steam engines to a talking robot, this exciting museum is home to thousands of fascinating objects, and over 200 hands-on displays on science and technology. This includes a state-of-the-art digital Planetarium, and an interactive outdoor Science Garden, a gallery dedicated to the iconic Spitfire as well

CONTINUED OVER THE PAGE



Above: Santa at Blakesley Hall

as a number of natural history displays. There's also MiniBrum for under 8s - an exciting, interactive mini city space where children are in charge. With an ever-changing programme of demonstrations, workshops and events, there is always something new to discover.

Save Our Changing Planet – COP26
6-7 November 2021, 10am - 5pm.

As the world's leaders meet in Glasgow for COP26, visit Thinktank to find out how you can support our planet. Think about fun ways to recycle, reuse and repurpose by taking part in the drop-in workshops to make junk puppets from recycled materials with artists from Windswept Workshops. Watch the Operation Earth show to learn how to help look after Planet Earth. Investigate the taxidermy handling collection to learn more about some of the amazing animals we share our planet with and visit the Planetarium for some climate themed shows (additional charge applies).

Planetarium Lates: Experience the Northern Lights
18 November 2021, 7pm – 8pm.

See and hear the experiences of Birmingham based photographer and hiker, Martin Kulhavý, on his trips to Norway to photograph the Northern Lights. There will be a chance to see a selection of his images in their full 360-degree splendour, as though you were actually there. Pre-booking is essential – this event is not free for Friends.



**BLAKESLEY
HALL**

Blakesley Road, Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8RN

Blakesley Hall will be closed to the public over the winter period except for school and group bookings and special events. A fine Tudor house and beautiful gardens just a few miles from the heart of the city.

Santa at Blakesley Hall
11 and 12 December 2021.

Meet Father Christmas at Blakesley Hall and tell him your wish list for Christmas and see the Hall dressed for Christmas. All children receive a small present when meeting Father Christmas. Write a letter and post it in the Blakesley Hall post box and each child will receive a Christmas activity pack with a Christmas card to decorate at home. There will be a Christmas market in the gallery with beautiful handmade crafts and gifts to buy. Pre-booking is essential – this event is not free for Friends.

For all events visit www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/whats-on for further information and to book

THE
BARBER
INSTITUTE OF
FINE ARTS

'A sort of
miniature
National
Gallery
for the
Midlands...'

Alastair Sooke,
The Telegraph



EXHIBITION
Miss Clara
and **THE CELEBRITY BEAST IN ART** 1500 - 1860

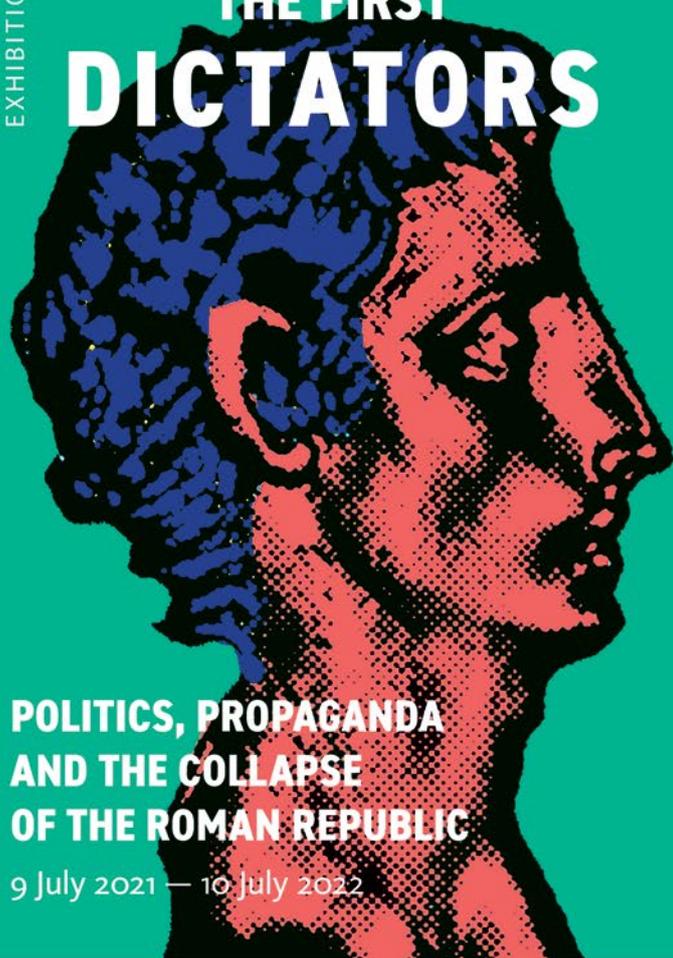
12 Nov 2021 — 27 Feb 2022



EXHIBITION
**THE FIRST
DICTATORS**

**POLITICS, PROPAGANDA
AND THE COLLAPSE
OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC**

9 July 2021 — 10 July 2022



BOOKING:
BARBER.ORG.UK

FREE ADMISSION
to collections and exhibitions

  
[@BarberInstitute](https://www.instagram.com/BarberInstitute)

Tuesday – Sunday, 10am – 5pm
(Closed Mondays)

Visit by train:
University station



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

IN THE AREA

THE BARBER INSTITUTE

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TS. www.barber.org.uk

Cats and Other Creature Companions

22 October 2021 – 6 February 2022. Cats and dogs bring out the positive and playful sides of their human companions and the artists who depict them. This display, which explores companion animals within domestic and rural settings, considers what borders are crossed to allow some animals into human lives, activities and domestic spaces – and what meanings are then bestowed upon these animals. Touch is often a key part of the relationship between people and their furry friends, and the instinct to care for another animal pervades many of the works selected here. Created to complement the Barber's major autumn winter exhibition, *Miss Clara and the Celebrity Beast in Art, 1500 – 1860*, the display features drawings and prints from the 16th to the 20th century, and highlights the striking and uplifting presence of humour characteristic of many of the works.

Packing a Punch: British Graphic Satire and Caricature

29 October 2021 - 16 January 2022. Caricature, thought to have originated in Italy in the late 16th century, developed out of artists exaggerating their subjects' physical features for expressive or comical effect. It arrived in England in the 1700s, and by the end of the century, had transformed in its use from mere lampoonery into satire and the comic cartoon. This display focuses on prints and drawings created in Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries by artists who defined caricature at its height in the Georgian period, and others who developed the genre – often into arguably more respectable forms – in the Victorian era. It explores the variety, confines and crossovers of caricature, satire and cartoons by looking at their intended functions, dissemination and audiences – and explores how humour doesn't always transcend the generations.

Miss Clara and the Celebrity Beast in Art, 1500 – 1860

12 November 2021 - 27 February 2022. Long before Grumpy Cat, Dolly the Sheep or Red Rum, there was Miss Clara, a female Indian rhinoceros who achieved an unprecedented level of fame during the 18th century. Weighing in at around 5,000 lbs or 2268 kgs, Miss Clara disembarked in Rotterdam in 1741 after being transported from Bengal by an enterprising Dutch sea-captain, Douwe Mout van der Meer. She then began an extensive tour of many of Europe's major cities, travelling in a wooden carriage drawn by eight horses, her thick hide kept moist by the frequent application of fish oil. The first rhinoceros sighted in mainland Europe since 1579, Clara was feted wherever she was displayed – from Brussels to Venice, Paris to Prague, and Rome to Warsaw and

London – where she died in 1758. At each destination, Clara was viewed by kings, queens, courtiers and commoners. She inspired works of art and a lucrative trade in memorabilia – from luxury souvenirs such as clocks and paintings to medals, cheap popular posters and prints – and even hairstyles! A small bronze sculpture – A Rhinoceros, called Miss Clara, cast in bronze after a model by Peter-Anton von Verschaffelt (1710 – 93) – commemorates this early celebrity pachyderm and is one of the most popular and intriguing works of art in the Barber's collection. It is the starting point for this autumn's lead exhibition – the first-ever major loan show devoted to Clara, and the latest of the Barber's acclaimed masterpiece-in-focus displays.

Spanning three centuries, the exhibition explores Clara's story in bronze and marble sculpture, from public and private collections across the UK, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Bowes Museum and the Rothschild Family Trust. It also features ceramics, coins, paintings, prints and drawings by major artists such as Dürer, Rembrandt, Hollar, Longhi and Oudry.

It also considers the emergence of menageries and zoos, and the significance of the capture and captivity of these big beasts within wider discussions of colonialism and empire. Other celebrity beasts sharing the spotlight including the elephants Hanno, Hansken, Jumbo and Chune, and Obaysch, who in the 1850s became the first hippopotamus seen in Europe since Roman times.

The show will be accompanied by a richly illustrated full-colour paperback catalogue published by Paul Holberton Publishing.

BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR

Come & Sing Brahms's Requiem with Paul Spicer

Saturday 27 November 2021, 10am - 5.30pm. Coton Centre, Tamworth. Workshop & performance. All singers welcome. Singers tickets: £18.50. www.trybooking.co.uk/BFOO

O Clap Your Hands!

Saturday 4 December 2021, 7pm. St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham. Birmingham Bach Choir is back with a concert of beautiful music: Britten - *Rejoice in the Lamb*; Dvorak - *Mass in D*; David Bednall - *The Dear Bargain* (premiere); Vaughan Williams - *O Clap Your Hands*; Leighton - *Give me the wings of faith*; Walton - *Set me as a seal*. Conductor - Paul Spicer. Soloists - Isabella Abbot Parker (soprano), Hope Pugh (mezzo), Alex Pratley (baritone), Timothy Burton (tenor). Organist - Callum Alger. Tickets: from £14 (students £6) from: www.birmingham.bachchoir.com or THSH Box Office.

CONTINUED OVER THE PAGE

CBSO

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
FRIDAY NIGHT CLASSICSCLASSIC FM
HALL OF FAMEPRESENTED BY
JOHN SUCHET

FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER, 7.30PM

Symphony Hall, Birmingham
Book now at cbsoco.ukRECOMMENDED BY
CLASSIC FMSupported through funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

HSBC UK

CBSO is a registered charity in England (No. 506276)

O Clap Your
Hands!

Birmingham Bach Choir returns

Saturday 4 December

St Philip's Cathedral 7pm

A joyous programme by Dvorak,
Britten, Bednall, Leighton,
Vaughan Williams & Walton
Tickets £18/£16/£14www.birmingham.bachchoir.comBIRMINGHAM
BACH
Choir
Inspiring Performances



Birmingham Bach Choir – Come & Sing Brahms's Requiem with Paul Spicer

Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

Sunday 19 December 2021, 3.30pm. St Alban's Church, Birmingham. Birmingham Bach Choir invite all to this traditional and moving service of music and readings. Tickets: No tickets required, no charge applies. www.birmingham.bachchoir.com

Come & Sing!

Saturday 22 January 2022, Afternoon. Sing with Birmingham Bach Choir in an inspiring workshop & performance of a choral work led by Paul Spicer. Music and tea provided. www.birmingham.bachchoir.com

For Those We Loved: A Concert to

Remember with Birmingham Bach Choir

Saturday 2 April 2022, 7pm. St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham. Programme: Vaughan Williams, Holst, Parry, Spicer (premiere). Conductor - Paul Spicer. Organist - Martyn Rawles. Tickets: from £14-£18. www.birmingham.bachchoir.com

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Benjamin Grosvenor plays Beethoven

Wednesday 3 November 2021, 2.15pm. Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Marta Gardolinska conducts orchestral works by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, alongside Beethoven's first piano concerto.

A Covid Requiem

Saturday 6 November 2021, 7pm. Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

For this special concert, Mirga leads the Orchestra and Choruses in a moment of remembrance and reflection for all those affected by Covid-19.

Mirga conducts *The Cunning Little Vixen*

Tuesday 16 November 2021, 7.00pm. Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Enter Janáček's animal fairy tale world in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, an opera close to Mirga's heart.

John Wilson conducts Rachmaninoff

Wednesday 1 December 2021, 2.15pm. Symphony Hall, Birmingham. No-one conducts Rachmaninoff with more flair than John Wilson – particularly his soaring, bittersweet *Third Symphony*.

Classic FM Hall of Fame

Friday 3 December 2021, 7.30pm. Symphony Hall, Birmingham. The Classic FM Hall of Fame is the definitive countdown of Britain's favourite classical music, presented by John Suchet.

New Worlds

Thursday 9 December 2021, 7.30pm. Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Grand passions, glorious tunes: Sibelius's *Finlandia* and Dvorák's *New World* are two classics that just never get old.

A Choral Christmas with the CBSO

Thursday 16 December 2021, 7.30pm / Friday 17 December, 7.30pm / Sunday 19 December, 3pm. Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Feel-good festive favourites featuring the full City of Birmingham

CONTINUED OVER THE PAGE

From Boyband A1
MARK READ

From CBeebie's Waffle the Wonder Dog
ANDREA VALLS

He's Back!
SIMON HOWE

Jack and the Beanstalk

Director PETER DAYSON • Choreographer PIPPA HOLLIDAY • Musical Director SAM DANDO

6 DEC 2021 - 2 JAN 2022

PALACE THEATRE BOX OFFICE 01527 65203
WWW.REDDITCHPALACETHEATRE.CO.UK

FOR FULL DETAILS OF PERFORMANCE TIMES AND TICKET PRICES PLEASE GO TO THE THEATRE'S WEBSITE

Jinney Ring CRAFT CENTRE

The Magic of Christmas
12 Craft Studios
Unique Gifts and Decorations
Traditional Christmas Lunches
Evening Meals & Parties
Atmospheric Setting

Jinney Ring Craft Centre, Hanbury Road, Hanbury, B60 4BU
www.jinneyring.co.uk

SURPRISING AND DELIGHTFUL



Discover 250 years of colourful stories through the world's largest collection of Worcester porcelain.

Make your visit special – book a guided tour and refreshments on Royal Worcester china.

Choose from our group visit experiences or enjoy our unique setting for your event.

Severn Street, Worcester WRI 2ND
www.museumofroyalworcester.org
@TheMoRW T: 01905 21247



'Royal Worcester' and the C51 crown device are registered by and used under kind permission from Portmeirion Group UK Ltd to whom all rights are reserved.



The Herbert – Garry Jones Photography

Symphony Orchestra, their massed choirs and a special celebrity guest presenter!

Viennese New Year

Sunday 9 January 2022, 3.00pm. Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Join the CBSO and maestro Eduardo Stausser in a concert that's simply champagne for the ears.

HERBERT ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

Jordan Well, Coventry, CV1 5QP. theherbert.org

Turner Prize 2021

29 September 2021 - 12 January 2022. One of the best-known prizes for visual arts in the world is open now at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum. For the first time, a Turner Prize jury selected a shortlist consisting entirely of artist collectives. Tackling pressing issues in society today, the five shortlisted collectives are: Array Collective, Black Obsidian Sound System, Cooking Sections, Gentle/Radical and Project Art Works. Their work encompasses films, installations, and interdisciplinary practices, as well as socially engaged programmes reflecting on solidarity and community demonstrated in response to the pandemic. All nominees work closely and continuously with communities across the breadth of the UK to inspire social change through art. Free Admission | Book online in advance coventry2021.co.uk

Coventry Biennial 2021: HYPER-POSSIBLE

8 October 2021 - 6 February 2022. Coventry Biennial returns to the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum to present a significant group

exhibition of newly commissioned projects and artworks from studios and galleries, as well as local and national collections. The third Coventry Biennial is called *HYPER-POSSIBLE*, in reference to the radical nature of Coventry's history, whilst also signifying a positive way forward following a deeply difficult 2020 and start to 2021. The exhibition takes three moments from the city's recent (art) history as starting points. From these local, national and international artists have developed artworks that imagine radical futures: enable new forms of knowledge production, reflect on our relationships to the places that we live, explore the social and political impacts of our identities and the impacts that human activity is having on the planet. Free Admission. Book online in advance coventry2021.co.uk

IKON

1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS.
www.ikon-gallery.org

Betsy Bradley: Chasing Rainbows

3 December 2021 - 13 February 2022. For her first major solo exhibition, Midlands-based artist Betsy Bradley explores painting as a life force that traces 'the dance between thought and action'. Recent works by Bradley use voile and organza as painting supports. These translucent fabrics dissolve the distinction between figure and ground and invite the play of light. This liberating energy extends to sculptural works in which the material itself becomes gestural, taking on forms which recall functional and playground objects. Other references to everyday life appear through Bradley's broad influences. Always intuitive, her inspirations come from what she describes as



The Lux

'miraculous everyday phenomena', such as the incidental colours of a patinated billboard or the intangible hues of light pollution in the night sky. Inspired by Eastern and Western traditions of Wabi Sabi, Arte Povera and Mono-ha, Bradley celebrates chance as a means of freeing her artistic process and the viewer's experience: 'I see my work as an invitation to the present moment – an escape as well as a grounding – which enables the viewer to let go.'

James T Hong: Animal

3 December 2021 - 13 February 2022. Taiwanese-American artist and filmmaker James T Hong has been making provocative films for the past twenty years. Focusing on ideas of morality, his work prompts viewers to question their own biases and received wisdom through confronting and often humorous philosophical narratives. This is his first solo exhibition in Europe. This exhibition presents two films by Hong which feature animals. *The Duck of Nature/The Duck of God* (2010) was originally made as an educational video for Dutch schoolchildren and imagines the 17th-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza as a mechanical duck, who is snubbed by other birds on the canals of Amsterdam. The scenario reflects Spinoza's own experience, having been excommunicated by the Jewish community for his humanist beliefs. The second film, *De Anima* (2021), is a two-channel video installation. The first channel, filmed in Taiwan, presents three points of view: the artist's, that of the 'enemy' virus (Covid-19), and a dog's. The second channel, shot in India at the historical location where the Buddha gained enlightenment, reinterprets the first channel and represents the artist's search for insight during the pandemic. In both elements, animals provide this insight with witty observations about human behaviour.

LUX GALLERY

Say Hello To Birmingham's Newest Art Gallery

'For all its large size, rich heritage and culture, Birmingham is a city with too few independent art galleries'. This is the thought of Owen de Visser, the man who founded ArtsBrum and Birmingham Open Studios, which inspired him to create Lux Gallery.

Lux Gallery is the result of years of promoting art and working to get local artists seen. Situated on Greenfield Crescent in the recently developed Edgbaston Village, Lux introduces a completely fresh range of artists to Birmingham. Amongst these are many local talents who were not represented by galleries locally, until now. The gallery is a dual-purpose arts space. As you walk through the door you are greeted with vibrant oils and acrylic paintings, unique ceramics, limited edition prints and jewellery from makers in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. None of the wall artists have their work on show anywhere else in the region, so Lux offers a completely unique range to its clients.

Behind the gallery is a professional photography studio which offers family photoshoots, individual headshots, commercial shoots and photography lessons. Owen, the owner and curator, has been a professional photographer for a decade, alongside his work promoting art. Lux is the amalgamation of all of Owen's projects under one roof. Originally scheduled for Spring 2020, delays due to the pandemic made him even more determined to make Lux a success, and to offer Birmingham another reason to be

CONTINUED OVER THE PAGE

proud of its local culture and creatives. Showcasing culture to the masses is what makes creatives continue and thrive in their work.

The gallery is still building up its portfolio of artists and is striving to pick only the best of Birmingham and British talents. 25 artists are currently on offer through Lux, and Owen hopes to offer 40 by Christmas - as long as they fit his strict eligibility criteria. Current local artists include: Alexander Rhys, Brumhaus, Elliott Packham, ASMCollection, Jasmina Ajzenkol, Kate Smith, Glenn Campbell and Moznabi Fine Jewellery, with more on the way very soon. Lux is still in its infancy, but has big plans including running art classes, special events, lessons and meet ups in the future.

THE MAC

Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, B12 9QH
macbirmingham.co.uk

Christmas Arts Markets 2021

Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 November 2021, Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 December 2021; 11am - 5pm. Free. With a long history of successful craft fairs, MAC is proud to present our annual Christmas Arts Markets, showcasing the work of local designer makers. Expect a range of stalls with a broad selection of quality handmade products including ceramics, jewellery, paintings, and craft items.

PALACE THEATRE

Alcester Street, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 8AE
www.redditchpalacetheatre.co.uk

The Wind in the Willows

Wednesday 23rd February 2022, 1:30pm & 4:30pm. Pack your picnics and join Ratty, Mole, Badger, and the fantastically irrepressible Toad as they embark on the adventure of a lifetime culminating in a colourful battle to save Toad Hall from the mischievous weasels! Multi-award nominated Immersion Theatre proudly bring their trademark style and energy to the riverbank with heaps of interaction, stunning costumes, toe-tapping music, and larger-than-life characters, A TOAD-ally terrific treat whether you're 4 or 104! Tickets - Full Price: £18. Conc: £14. Family £58.00*. Box (max 4 people): £69.

RBSA GALLERY

4 Brook Street, St. Paul's Square, Birmingham, B3 1SA
www.rbsa.org.uk

Society of Designer Craftsmen Exhibition

Tuesday 2 – Saturday 13 November 2021. The Society of Designer Craftsmen are proud to present their winter exhibition *Designer Crafts*. More than 20 artists have been selected to showcase their highly original and inspiring work including textiles, ceramics, sculpture, glass, furniture, silver and jewellery.

Members & Associates Exhibition

Thursday 18 November 2021 – Saturday 8 January 2022. For over 200 years the diverse art practices of RBSA Members and Associates have been displayed in this annual exhibition. The exhibition will demonstrate the high standard of work produced by the Members & Associates of the RBSA.

Renewal - Small Works Exhibition

Friday 14 January – Saturday 12 February 2022. *Renewal - Small*

Works Exhibition is a fundraising exhibition - all the proceeds go towards the RBSA building project.

Print Prize Exhibition

Tuesday 18 January – Saturday 26 February 2022. The *Print Prize Exhibition* aims to champion, celebrate and support printmakers, providing an opportunity for artists to show their work and win prizes. This year's exhibition will be selected by: Tim Southall, Artist and Printmaker; Professor Andrew Kulman, Principal Lecturer in Visual Communications, Birmingham City University and Jehane Boden Spiers, Artist, Agent and Director of Jehane Ltd – an illustration agency.

WOLVERHAMPTON ART GALLERY

Lichfield St, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV1 1DU.
www.wolverhamptonart.org.uk

British Art Show 9

22 January - 10 April 2022. Hayward Gallery Touring have announced new dates for *British Art Show 9*, which will now come to Wolverhampton from 22 January to 10 April 2022. The show launched in Aberdeen this summer but Wolverhampton will be the first city in England to host *BAS9*, before it tours Manchester and finally Plymouth. British Art Show is the largest touring exhibition of contemporary art in the UK, giving people in cities across the country the opportunity to engage with work by the most exciting artists in Britain. Audiences in Wolverhampton will be able to experience the exhibition, which will take place across two main venues: Wolverhampton Art Gallery and the University of Wolverhampton's School of Art. Following Wolverhampton, the exhibition will tour to Manchester and Plymouth. The British Art Show is widely recognised as a significant marker of recent developments in contemporary art in Britain, and *British Art Show 9* will be no exception. A huge range of works by over 40 artists will be presented, engaging with many of the most urgent issues of our times, including the environmental crisis, identity and belonging, conflict resolution and healing. The exhibition is curated by internationally respected curators Irene Aristizábal and Hammad Nasar and is produced by Hayward Gallery Touring, in collaboration with curators at each of the host cities. Hosting *British Art Show 9* represents a huge milestone in the cultural life of Wolverhampton.

Fantasy or Reality?

Until 21 November 2021. Inspired by our family-friendly exhibition *Fantasy Kingdom, Fantasy or Reality?* presents a selection of artworks and objects from Wolverhampton's collection which highlight the connections between fantasy and art, inviting you into a world of witches and spirits, knights and dragons, deities and demons. Much fantasy writing is based on myths, legends and stories from folklore, which are passed down within communities across generations. Artists have also been inspired by these tales, giving rise to a rich visual culture which is as strong today as ever. Some of the works in this display are inspired by the legends of King Arthur and his court at Camelot. They look back nostalgically at an imagined past where gallant knights did battle with fearsome dragons. Many folkloric tales relate closely to the power of nature, and other works here introduce us to forest spirits dwelling in hidden groves, stone circles thought to have been raised by giants and sea monsters lurking beneath the crashing waves.



FRIENDS' QUIZ

BY JIM WELLS

1. Which author is thought to have been inspired by Sarehole Mill?
2. Which king stayed at Aston Hall?
3. Where is the statue of Joseph Sturge located?
a. Chamberlain Square b. Victoria Square c. Five Ways
4. Which US African American campaigner against slavery visited Birmingham in 1846?
5. This is a portrait of a lifelong campaigner for social reform and member of a famous Birmingham Quaker family. Who is it?
6. Whose donation allowed for the building of the Birmingham Museum and Gallery extension, built between 1906-1917?
a. Joseph Chamberlain b. Louise Ryland c. John Feeny
7. Who was the first person to hold a baronetcy at Aston Hall?
8. Which Birmingham photographer is well known for his portrayal of Handsworth life?
9. Which company manufactured the Holy Grail tapestries held by BMAG?
10. Profits from which municipal utility help to fund the Birmingham Museum and Gallery in the nineteenth century?
a. Gas b. Water c. Electricity

Photos by Birmingham Museums Trust

ANSWERS: 1. J.R. Tolkien | 2. Charles I | 3. Five Ways | 4. Frederick Douglass | 5. Joseph Chamberlain | 6. John Feeny | 7. Sir Thomas Holte | 8. Vanley Burke | 9. Morris and Co. | 10. Gas



THE ALEXANDRA'S 120TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

Whether you are a resident Brummie or simply visiting Birmingham for a relaxing afternoon or evening, there are few better ways to unwind than by settling in for a performance at The Alexandra.

The venue, located on Suffolk Street Queensway in the heart of the city, is celebrating its 120th birthday year in style with a packed programme of musicals, plays, one-nighters and children's performances.

With New Street station a stone's throw away and a huge array of restaurants and bars on the theatre's doorstep, there is plenty of time to wine and dine before heading into one of the city's most iconic buildings to watch a show.

Since The Alexandra reopened its doors in mid-July, the theatre has roared back into action and welcomed audiences at full capacity for three months. Recently, almost 8,000 fans watched six sold-out 'Riverdance' performances over three days and the theatre is currently in the middle of a jam-packed series of musicals which will propel the Birmingham venue forward in its milestone birthday year.

The pandemic caused huge disruption to the arts and theatre world and even this famous old building – originally called The Lyceum when it was built in 1901 and which rarely closed during two World Wars – was not immune.

The Alexandra's patrons have always been renowned for supporting the theatre through thick and thin. During World War Two, even the threat of The Luftwaffe rarely failed to halt the show as The Alex was closed for a mere 22 days. However, ongoing lockdown restrictions meant the venue was closed for 491 days

until it reopened in front of beaming faces with 'Anton & Giovanni – Him & Me' in early July this year.

The Alexandra's Theatre Director Simon Creed said: "The venue has been around for 120 years and this must be celebrated in style. We have some amazing shows coming up this year that will see the venue buzzing with excitement, laughter, music and good vibes.

"As a venue and a team we must ensure that The Alexandra continues to be a vital part of the Birmingham community. We have just taken part in a hugely successful Birmingham Pride and also support other city-wide events including Birmingham International Dance Festival and of course Birmingham 2022.

"The key thing we have all learnt over the last 18 months is how adaptable and flexible we are and need to be. We should always remember things need to change for the better and we must look at ways to evolve, listen and react to audience needs and demands. Alongside programming world-class entertainment, the priority must be the safety of our audiences, performers and staff."

The Alexandra's 120th year will end with the hugely popular – and much-loved by the city of Birmingham – 'Jersey Boys', as they work their way back to the city for a four-week Christmas run from Tuesday 7 December. The smash-hit musical has won 65 major awards and has been seen by more than 27 million people worldwide – the perfect celebration to mark the theatre's longstanding history in the region. ■



1901



1901



1935



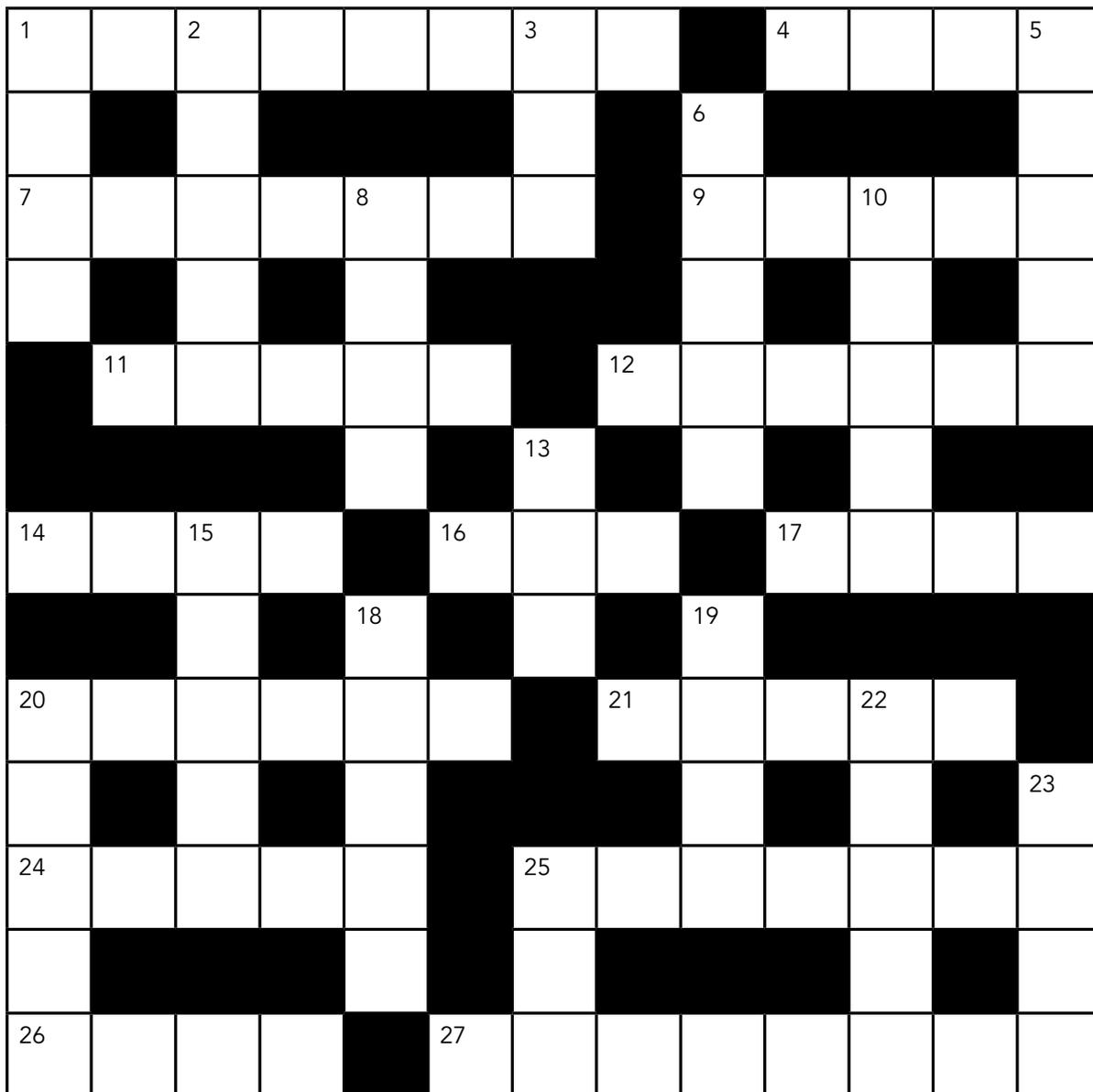
1985



1936



2012



FRIENDS' CROSSWORD

BY DEREK STREET

This crossword's theme is the languages of sport and indoor games

ACROSS

- 1. Fine leg, short leg, square leg, long leg, slip, etc. etc. (8)
- 4. Defines start positions in motor racing Grand Prix. (4)
- 7. Describes something recently seen approaching from the distance. (7)
- 9. Your Dad's brother. (5)
- 11. The "Heavy" version is a music style that started locally. (5)
- 12. Crowd reaction more for a pop concert than a sporting event. (6)
- 14. See 10 down.
- 16. Cold climate variant of the sport that starts with a "Bully Off". (3)
- 17. This athletic activity often starts in the playground or even earlier. (4)
- 20. Players can throw well and climb ladders but these hazards can swallow them down. (6)
- 21. What must Players do about the answer to 20 across? (5)
- 24. An early form of attire for a lady gymnast. (5)
- 25. Mountainous Mediterranean island known for canyoning and hiking. (7)
- 26. Nine got knocked over in old alleys. There are ten in modern venues. (4)
- 27. An error by 1 across can easily result in one of these. (5,3)

DOWN

- 1. Anglers' reward. (4)
- 2. Two under par. (5)
- 3. When Alice encountered the Queen on the croquet lawn what colour was the royal suit? (3)
- 5 & 8. Sport managers and supporters both wish for this. (5,4)
- 6. Penalised in most sports but an essential part of some martial arts. (5)
- 8. See 5 down.
- 10. Board rules say this challenge imposes a temporary, recoverable limit to opponent's freedom. (5) Adding 14 across implies defeat of the opponent and that immediate surrender is demanded. (4)
- 13. Top card in the suit. (3)
- 15. A must for a sports person to succeed. (5)
- 18. Score 40/40. That's not right. Think strawberries and correct it. (8)
- 19. Did this cricket term get the name by the umpire announcing so often that it had finished. (4)
- 20. Administration and practical work necessary before any sporting event can take place. (3,2)
- 22. Getting your hair this way is often welcome after sport. (5)
- 23. One of the King's foot soldiers. (4)
- 25. Once the race has started she (he) has to take the vital decisions on where the rowing eight is going. (3)

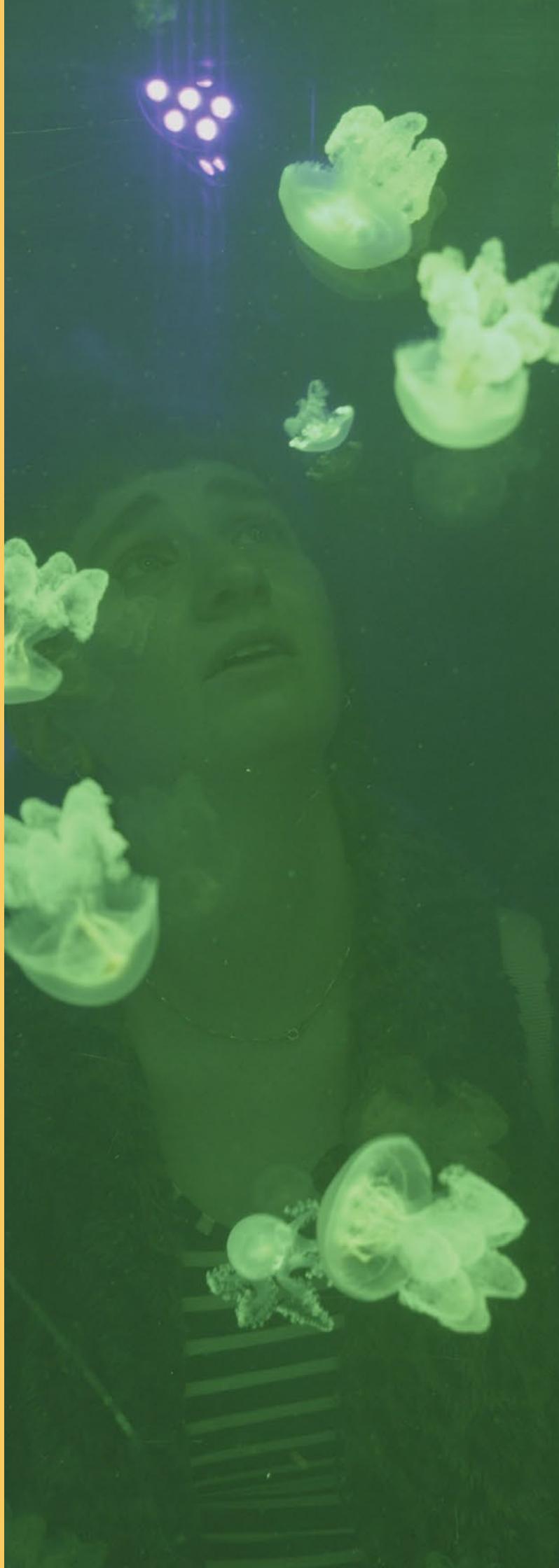
ANSWERS ACROSS: 1. Fielders 4. Grid 7. Sighthed 9. Uncle 11. Metal 12. Scream 14. Mate 16. Ice 17. Skip 20. Snakes 21. Evade 24. Tunic 25. Corsica 26. Pins 27. Extra Run
ANSWERS DOWN: 1. Fish 2. Eagle 3. Red 5. Dream 6. Punch 8. Team 10. Check 13. Ace 15. Train 18. Deuce 19. Over 20. Set Up 22. Drier 23. Pawn 25. Cox

ART

Wolverhampton
Art Gallery
&
University of
Wolverhampton
School of Art

22.01.2022
– 10.04.2022

BRITISH



A Hayward Gallery Touring
exhibition organised in
collaboration with galleries in
Wolverhampton, Aberdeen,
Plymouth and Manchester.

Aberdeen
10.07.2021 - 10.10.2021

Wolverhampton
22.01.2022 - 10.04.2022

Manchester
13.05.2022 - 04.09.2022

Plymouth
08.10.2022 - 23.12.2022

SHOWS

**HAYWARD
GALLERY**
TOURING



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

Art Fund

CITY OF
**WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL**

Patrick Goddard, *Animal Antics* (still), 2021. Produced by FLAMIN + Film and Video Umbrella, with support from Hayward Gallery Touring and E-WERK, Frieberg © the artist. Courtesy the artist and Seventeen, London

