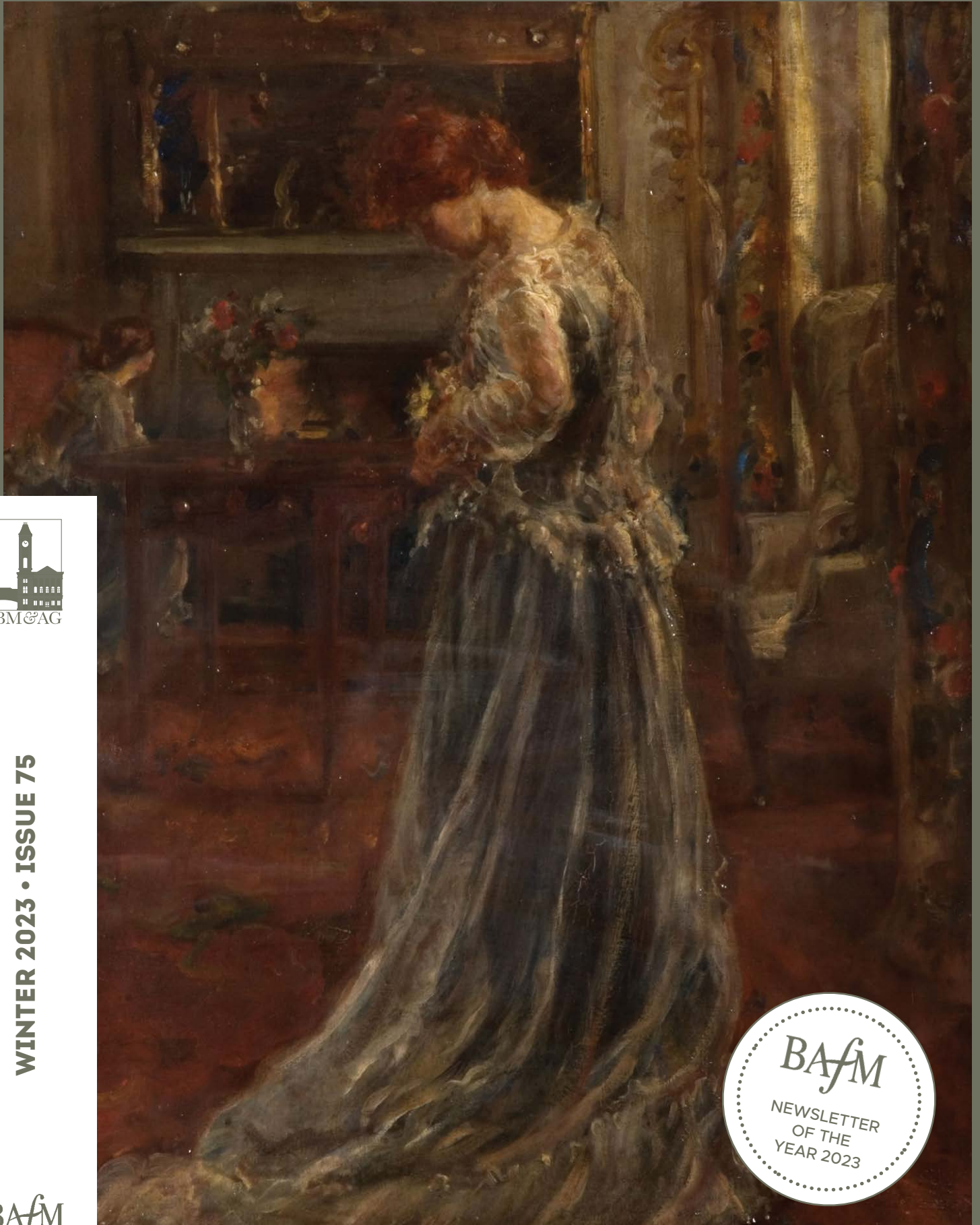


# ARTEFACTS



WINTER 2023 • ISSUE 75



MEMBER OF  
THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF  
FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS



FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS & ART GALLERY MAGAZINE



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# PAGE 14

## CHANGING BIRMINGHAM - BAH HUMBUG



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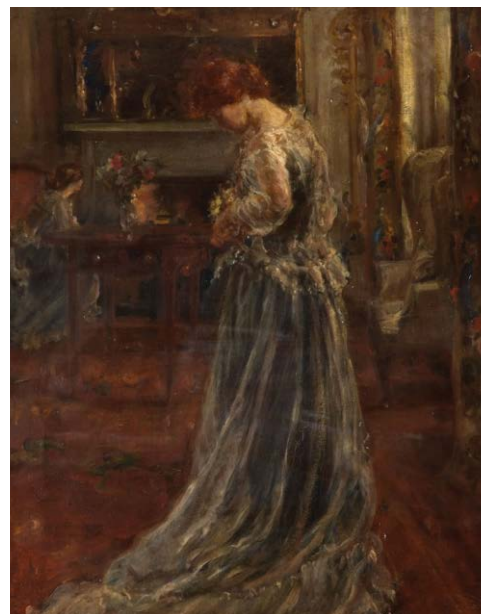
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# ON THE COVER

'A Symphony in Bronze and Silver' by Ethel Walker (d.1951), 1900-1914; 1948P20; Presented by the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, 1948; Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0





# CHAIR'S OBSERVATIONS

BY PETER MILES

Those of you who read the AGM booklet, posted out with the Autumn edition of 'Artefacts', might have noticed that at last year's AGM it was voted to reduce the number of Members required in order for our future AGMs to be quorate. This seemed prudent given our smaller membership and the impact of the Covid pandemic.

However, over 50 Members attended our 2023 AGM in September and we were delighted that it was so well supported. Thank you.

I believe that one of the reasons that we had such a good turnout this year was because our Members are concerned about Birmingham's galleries and museums, particularly following Birmingham City Council issuing the Section 114 notice on 5 September, a week before the AGM, and the speculative and financially troubling news reports. We were fortunate in that we had Toby Watley to explain what was happening from his perspective as Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT)'s Director of Collections and, after the formal meeting, we had Zac Mensah (BMT's joint CEO) to explain BMT's vision for the reopening of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG).

BMAG itself, BMT's flagship site, has had a double blow with its closure during Covid and then its closure for essential maintenance work on the fabric of the building.

The Council House itself is complete – work has been finished and it looks good. In BMAG, the Round Room and the Industrial Gallery were opened briefly in 2022 – a 'pop up' reopening for the Commonwealth Games – but it was closed again whilst ongoing essential maintenance was carried out. Whilst this work itself is now nearly complete, the galleries will need a lot of work in order for them to be prepared

to display Birmingham's collections and to be reopened.

I was fortunate in having a guided tour by Toby and Zac of both the galleries and behind the scenes in September. There is a lot of work still to be done. And this will, of course, require money.

And of course, we know the situation. Birmingham Museums Trust are working very hard to secure funding towards the redisplay and reopening of BMAG. Following on from the Section 114 notice, we can but hope that the government commissioners look favourably on these requests.

To lighten the mood – I certainly don't look good in protective clothing!



At our October Committee Meeting, Toby Watley asked the Friends to

contribute £30,000 towards supporting the redisplay and reopening of BMAG's galleries. He explained that this money would demonstrate the Friends' support and would enable BMT to apply for and hopefully to secure additional funding. We were, of course, delighted to support this vital work to enable BMAG to reopen as soon as possible. So watch this space!

As a personal recommendation, I wanted to highlight an exhibition of the portraits of Frans Hals, which has just opened in London at the National Gallery.

Painted four hundred years ago, Hals' portraits continue to breathe with life. He captures the hint of a smile, a glint in his sitter's eye, a hand resting nonchalantly on a hip, and sometimes even a burst of laughter.

Around 50 of Hals' works have been brought together in an exhibition celebrating one of the most sought-after painters of his generation. Hals was a gifted artist with a remarkable reputation and his deft brushwork was unparalleled. He developed a new style of portrait, highly unusual in his time, which showed relaxed, lively sitters, often smiling, and occasionally laughing.

And who cannot be enthralled with what must be one of his most favourite portraits! ■

**LEFT: Peter Miles, Zak Mensah and Toby Watley during the tour of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, September 2023; Photo: Birmingham Museums Trust**  
**RIGHT: 'Laughing Cavalier' by Frans Hals, 1624, Wallace Collection, London**







# FRIENDS' EVENTS

## HOW TO BOOK EVENTS - EITHER BY EMAIL OR BY POST

### BY EMAIL

Send an email to [friendsofbmag@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofbmag@gmail.com) listing: all the events you would like to go to, how many tickets you would like for each event, and whether the tickets are for members or non-members. Please include your membership number if applicable.

You will be sent an email reply and information about how to pay for the events by bank transfer. Once the bank transfer has been received you will receive a further email confirming your booking.

### BY POST

Write to us including: all the events you would like to go to, how many tickets you would like for each event, and whether the tickets are for members or non-members. Please include your membership number if applicable.

Please work out the total amount due and send a cheque, made payable to 'FBMAG', to: Friends of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Soho House Museum, Soho Avenue, Birmingham, B18 5LB. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope so we can issue you with your ticket(s) and confirm your booking(s).



### 'CAMEO GLASS'

*Date: Tuesday 5 December 2023, 10.30am for an*

*11am start. Coffee and tea will be available on arrival*

*Venue: Soho House Museum, Soho Avenue, off Soho Road, Birmingham, B18 5LB*

*Speaker: Dr Kate Round, Outreach Presenter and Tour Guide for Dudley Museum Service*

*Cost: Free, but donations will be much appreciated*

*By car: Take the A41 out of the city centre towards*

*Handsworth. There is a small car park at Soho House and there is also on-street parking.*

*By bus: 74 from Snow Hill Ringway. Get off at the second stop after the Hockley Flyover and Soho Avenue is on the left.*

*[NB. This event was advertised in the Autumn 2023 edition of 'Artefacts'. If you have already applied to attend this event, please do not reapply.]*

What is it? How is it made? And how did cameo glass bring fame and fortune to the streets of The Crystal Mile?

This talk will take you to the Cameo gallery in The White House Cone Glass Museum and, starting with the 17th Century rediscovery of a lost Roman art form, will show you the challenges faced and the rivalry engendered by the glass dynasties of Stourbridge in their attempts to reproduce Cameo glass.

Through the lives of the local glassmakers and their superb artistic talents, for which Stourbridge glass is world renowned, we will follow the story of Stourbridge Cameo from the 1876 reproduction of the Portland Vase, to the present-day studio artists continuing development of the craft.



### MEET AND GREET THE COMMITTEE

*Date: Tuesday 5 December 2023, 12noon – following on from the talk by Dr Kate Round*

*Venue: Soho House Museum, Soho Avenue, off Soho Road, Birmingham, B18 5LB*

*Cost: Free, but donations will be much appreciated*

*Refreshments - a glass of wine or a soft drink and nibbles - will be provided*

*[NB. This event was advertised in the Autumn 2023 edition of 'Artefacts'. If you have already applied to attend this event, please do not reapply.]*

We invite all Friends Members, BMT staff and anyone who might like to join us to take this opportunity to get together with the Friends' Committee and other Friends, to catch up with each other's adventures and to celebrate the Friends over a glass of wine or a soft drink and some nibbles. As we have settled into a 'new normal' over the last twelve months this will be a great opportunity to start the festive season with friends and colleagues who share a common interest in the future of Birmingham Museums.

We are not charging for the talk or for the 'meet and greet' and so if you wish to make a donation towards the costs prior to the event then please send these to us. Donation plates will also be available on the day. It is important that we know numbers for catering purposes so please book your place by following the instructions above. It will be lovely to see you all. PS. It's all right to turn up at 12noon just for the 'Meet and Greet'!



### 'MAKERS AND MACHINES: CREATIVITY IN THE COMPUTER AGE' AT THINKTANK

*Date: Wednesday 7 February 2024, 2pm for 2.15pm*

*Venue: Thinktank – Birmingham Science Museum, Millennium Point, Birmingham, B4 7XG*

*Speaker: Felicity McWilliams, Curator of Science and Industry, Birmingham Museums Trust*

*Cost: £8 members, £10 non-members (includes a talk, tour and tea/coffee and cake)*

*How to get there: By car - parking: The closest car park is Millennium Point Multi-Storey Car Park on Howe Street, B4 7AP.*

*By train: 10 minutes walk from Moor Street station, 15 minutes from New Street. By bus: Catch numbers 14 and 94 from The Priory Queensway (in front of B&M) in the city centre to Jennens Road.*

## EVENT KEY



ANNUAL EVENT



DAYTIME TALK



EVENING EVENT



GUIDED TOUR



OUTING



Come and join us for a talk and tour of this fascinating exhibition that covers everything from William Morris and weaving to Artificial Intelligence. Relive the joys of coding on punch cards and the delights of the now fashionably retro games Tetris and Pac-Man. In the new exhibition space being developed by BMT at Thinktank, this particular exhibition showcases creative and pioneering figures from a variety of fields related to coding, many of them female such as Dame Stephanie Shirley. There will be a wide range of artefacts on display including the ZX Spectrum and one of the oldest electronic computers, the Hollerith, as well as William Morris tapestries.



### 'THE SCREW KINGS'

*Date: Tuesday 19 March 2024, 11am*

*Venue: Winterbourne House and Gardens, 58 Edgbaston Park Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2RT*

*Speaker: Henrietta Lockhart, Curator, Winterbourne House*

*Cost: £10 members, £14 non-members (NB. Cost does not include entrance fee to Winterbourne. This should be paid at reception on arrival - adults £8.20, over 65s £7.20. This entrance fee does not apply to Winterbourne members.)*

*Meeting Point: The reception in Winterbourne at 10.45am for an 11am start*

*How to get there: By car from city centre: Along the Bristol Road, turn right into Edgbaston Park Rd and then past the University. Winterbourne is on the right. There is a 50 space car park and 2 blue badge spaces beside the house. By bus: The X21 and X22 buses stop just round the corner from Winterbourne.*

*They pick up from the city centre by Moor Street station. More details about frequency and other stops can be found at the National Express website: [www.nxbus.co.uk](http://www.nxbus.co.uk)*

In the late 19th century, the screw market was dominated by the Nettlefold and Chamberlain families, the self-styled 'Screw Kings'! In 1900, the merged company Guest, Keen & Nettlefold (GKN) was born, and went on to become one of the world's largest engineering conglomerates. Winterbourne House in Edgbaston, built by John Sutton Nettlefold, has always celebrated its historical connection to GKN, and now has a significant GKN archive and exhibition. This talk will explore the history of the company and its connection to Winterbourne, and the process of creating the exhibition. After the talk, you

can see objects from the archive up close, and enjoy a guided visit to the exhibition.



### TOUR OF SELLY MANOR MUSEUM AND BOURNVILLE VILLAGE

*Date: Wednesday 24 April 2024, 10.45am for an 11am start*

*Venue: Selly Manor, Maple Road, Bournville, Birmingham, B30 2AE*

*By public transport: 15 minutes from Bournville Station, and on the 11 and 27 bus routes.*

*Cost: £12 members, £15 non-members (includes the tour and talk covering the Museum and Bournville village and refreshments: tea and cake)*

*[NB. This event was advertised in the Autumn 2023 edition of 'Artefacts'. If you have already applied to attend this event, please do not reapply.]*

Selly Manor Museum, made up of two distinct and beautiful buildings, lies at the heart of Bournville garden village in Birmingham and has a surprising history. Selly Manor dates from medieval times and its intriguing past includes an Italian wine merchant, a burglar and a world-famous chocolate maker! Originally called 'Smyths Tenement', it was a prosperous house until 1695 when it had a new owner and its slow decline began. By the end of the 19th century, it was divided into three dwellings known as 'The Rookery' and then it fell into disuse. With an uncertain future, George Cadbury, founder of Bournville, saved the building and arranged its move from nearby Selly Oak into his new village where it stands today.

Minworth Greaves, a magnificent cruck-framed hall, is about 750 years old. It was moved from near Sutton Coldfield in Birmingham and re-built on site in Bournville in 1932 by George Cadbury's son Laurence.



### WALKING TOUR AROUND THE MOOR POOL ESTATE

*Date: Friday 21 June 2024, 1.15 pm for a 1.30pm start*

*Cost: £10 members, £14 non-members (includes refreshments)*

*Meeting Point: Moor Pool Hall on The Circle on the Moor Pool Estate, B17 9DY*

*By car: There are no parking restrictions on the roads around Moor Pool. By bus: The Number 11 bus comes along the Lordswood Road and drops off at the top of Carless Avenue, which is a 10 minute walk from The Circle. The 23 and 24 buses drop off in Harborne High Street, which is approximately 15 minutes to Moor Pool. From the High Street, turn onto Station Road and then Wentworth Road. Turn right onto Wentworth Gate, which will bring you onto The Circle.*

Step back in time with a walking tour around the Moor Pool Estate in Harborne. Built at the beginning of the twentieth century, this hidden Birmingham gem was the brainchild of John Sutton Nettlefold, town-planning pioneer and wealthy industrialist. This Garden Suburb has survived virtually intact for over one hundred years, and is the perfect combination of heritage, nature and community. Visitors will take a gentle stroll around the Estate, which is virtually unchanged since its completion in 1912. At the end of the tour visitors have the opportunity to have a game of skittles in the original Edwardian bowling alley! This is a predominantly outdoor excursion and Moor Pool is an undulating area. Please wear suitable footwear and clothing to suit the weather conditions and advise us of any additional needs you may have.

# NEWS FROM THE OFFICE



## Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

Since our formation in 1931, the Friends have enhanced Birmingham's collections by supporting the purchase of over 2,700 acquisitions. Our Friends' Acquisitions database provides a comprehensive list of all these acquisitions and can be found on the 'Publications' page of our website: [www.fbmt.org.uk](http://www.fbmt.org.uk). To celebrate over 90 years of support for Birmingham's Museums, each week one of these works is added to the Friends' Facebook page, to showcase the Friends' contributions to Birmingham's world class collections. Please visit our Facebook page - FriendsBMAG - to follow our updates and to find out more!

We are delighted that, after some debate at the 2023 AGM, the new Friends logo was voted in! Sarah Farnan, our Membership Secretary, provided the inspiration for the initial design and our thanks go to Paul Blyth, from PB&J Publishing, who created the logo. The new logo will refresh the Friends' identity, using the silhouette of BMT's flagship

site, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, with its distinctive architecture and its clock tower funded by Abraham Follett Osler, a pioneer in the measurement of meteorological and chronological data. This icon seemed to appropriately reference not only Birmingham's arts and museums collections but also the science collections on display at Thinktank. If you would like to use our new logo then please do get in touch with us (see below) and we will send you the logos and the usage guidelines.

Please send any written correspondence to us at: Friends of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Soho House Museum, Soho Avenue, Birmingham, B18 5LB; email Melissa at [melissa.page.fbmag@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.page.fbmag@gmail.com) or Sarah at [fbmagmembership@gmail.com](mailto:fbmagmembership@gmail.com); or ring: 0121 348 8330 (our office is open on a Tuesday).

Joining the Friends will give you the following benefits (T&Cs apply):

- Free entry to Birmingham Museums' Historic properties: Soho House, Sarehole Mill, Blakesley Hall, Aston Hall and Museum of the Jewellery Quarter. Please check [birminghammuseums.org.uk](http://birminghammuseums.org.uk) for up-to-date opening times and prices

- 'Artefacts' magazine, which is published quarterly, and the Friends' E-Newsletter
- The opportunity to join the Friends' social events and outings
- Discounts in the shops and cafés at BMAG, Thinktank and the Historic properties
- 50% entrance discount to Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum at Millennium Point: [www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank](http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank)
- 10% discount at the Birmingham and Midland Institute's Coffee Lounge on production of a valid Friends membership card
- 10% discount off purchases in both the shop and the café at Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and Gladstone Pottery Museum: [www.stokemuseums.org.uk](http://www.stokemuseums.org.uk)

### NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to our new Members: Mrs Sally Arkley Rowe; Mr Neil & Mrs Faith Lucas; Mr Robert & Mrs Glenys Harrington; and Mr Norman & Mrs Sheila Davies.

## FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS APPLICATION FORM

Title:	
Full Name:	
Address:	
Tel:	Mobile:
Email:	
Where did you pick up this copy of 'Artefacts'?:	

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

Please sign below and send to: Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, Soho House Museum, Soho Avenue, off Soho Road, Birmingham, B18 5LB, together with your cheque (if applicable) 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:

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 (60+/unwaged)

☐ **SINGLE** £21

☐ **DOUBLE** £32

☐ **STUDENT** £15

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

**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 ☐



# FRIENDS SUBSCRIPTION RATE INCREASE

You will have seen in your AGM booklet, which accompanied the Autumn 2023 edition of 'Artefacts', that one of the items for discussion at this year's AGM was an increase to our subscription rates. Our membership subscription rates have remained unchanged for the last 9 years, since the last increase on 1 October 2014.

At the AGM, our Deputy Chair acknowledged that it was a difficult time to raise costs, particularly in light of BMAG's continued closure. However, the Committee need to ensure that the Friends' membership subscriptions cover the rising administrative costs and the proposed increase would cover the significant rise in postage rates over the last 9 years. The Committee's recommendation was that the increase to annual subscriptions rates be delayed until 1 June 2024.

The proposed new rates are based on the current rates being raised by the same percentage across all the membership

categories. These were discussed at the AGM and Members felt that this increase was fair. However, it was suggested that the double concessionary membership rate should rise by slightly more (from £32 to £40, rather than £35 as had been proposed in the AGM booklet) in order for it to remain a fair comparison to a concessionary single rate. This proposal was voted on by all Members present who voted in favour of the subscription rates being increased.

Therefore, from 1 June 2024, our new annual subscription rates will be as follows:

## Single

£35 (currently £32)

## Single Concession (retired)

£23 (currently £21)

## Single Student

£16 (currently £15)

## Double (including children under 16)

£52 (currently £48)

## Double Concession (retired)

£40 (currently £32)

These revised rates will continue to be collected from our Members in the same way as they currently are. If you have a direct debit with us, these will be automatically increased, and you do not need to do anything. If you currently pay by cash, cheque or bank transfer, our new rates will be listed in your renewal reminder letter.

If you currently pay by cash, cheque or bank transfer but would like to set up a direct debit to make your yearly subscription easier and automatic, it is really easy to do. Please contact Sarah, our Membership Secretary, at the office either by email at fbmagmembership@gmail.com or by telephone on 0121 348 8330 (our office is open on a Tuesday).

If you have any queries regarding the change in subscription rates, please contact us at fbmagmembership@gmail.com and we will be happy to help. ■

By Sarah Farnan,  
Friends Membership Secretary

# CHRISTMAS GIFT MEMBERSHIP

A Christmas Gift Membership could make an ideal present so why not give a Friends Gift Membership to a relative or friend this year - which includes 3 extra months FREE!

The Friends was set up in 1931 to support the work of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. Over the years, this has extended to include nine museum sites which make up Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT). With the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG) having to close its doors for essential maintenance work and with Birmingham City Council's financial difficulties, our work supporting and promoting BMT and its Historic Properties has become even more important now than ever before.

In addition to supporting the work of the Friends and BMT, the benefits of Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Galleries Membership include free admission to Birmingham Museums Trust's Historic Properties: Soho House, Sarehole Mill, Blakesley Hall, Aston Hall, and the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter; discounts in the cafes and shops at Thinktank and the Historic Properties (and BMAG when it reopens); 50%

entrance discount to Thinktank; and a 10% discount in the Birmingham and Midland Institute's Coffee Lounge and at the cafe and the shop at the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and the Gladstone Pottery Museum. Recipients will also have the opportunity to take part in Friends' social events and will receive a copy of our quarterly magazine 'Artefacts' and our e-newsletters.

Please visit our website ([www.fbmt.org.uk](http://www.fbmt.org.uk)) to download a Membership Application form. Alternatively, you can use the standard application form in 'Artefacts' (see page opposite) but make sure that you complete the form with the recipient's details and send it with a covering note giving your own name and contact details. A Membership Card plus the latest edition of 'Artefacts' will be sent directly to you (unless stated otherwise) to give as a present. ■

**To take advantage of Christmas Gift Membership, please return this form by email to fbmagmembership@gmail.com or post it to the Friends' Office by Tuesday 5th December.**

# ARTEFACTS SPOTTED IN THE WILD



We were all absolutely thrilled that a copy of the Autumn 2023 edition of 'Artefacts' was spotted on the Lord Mayor of Birmingham's desk in September during one of the Heritage Week tours of the Council House!







# HELLO FROM BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS

**There never seems to be a dull moment for  
Birmingham Museums Trust!**



**W**e enjoyed a busy summer programme across our many museums, welcoming 64,000 visitors over July and August, who enjoyed a diverse range of events – from the drama of Medieval Day at Weoley Castle to the musical ‘Celebration of Sound’ event at Thinktank in partnership with Birmingham Conservatoire.

The highs of the summer, however, were quickly overshadowed by a public statement on 5th September by our main funder and stakeholder, Birmingham City Council, announcing it had issued a section 114 notice. This means the Council is unable to balance its budget for 2024/25 and must cease all new spending, except for protecting vulnerable people, statutory services and pre-existing commitments.

Birmingham Museums Trust manages a portfolio of nine museum sites and the city’s world class civic museum collection of over 1 million items on

behalf of Birmingham City Council, which currently invests 45% of our total annual funding. So, this remains deeply worrying news for the Trust as we wait to hear how Birmingham City Council will address its financial pressures, and what impact it may have on its award-winning museums service.

The heritage and culture of Birmingham is its unique DNA, a reflection of the lives and achievements of its people - past, present and future - which defines its place in the UK and the wider world. As Neil Mendoza, the chair of Historic England, said in a recent joint letter with Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund: “Cultural and heritage assets are incredibly precious and important parts of communities. They’re not things to be bought and sold.”

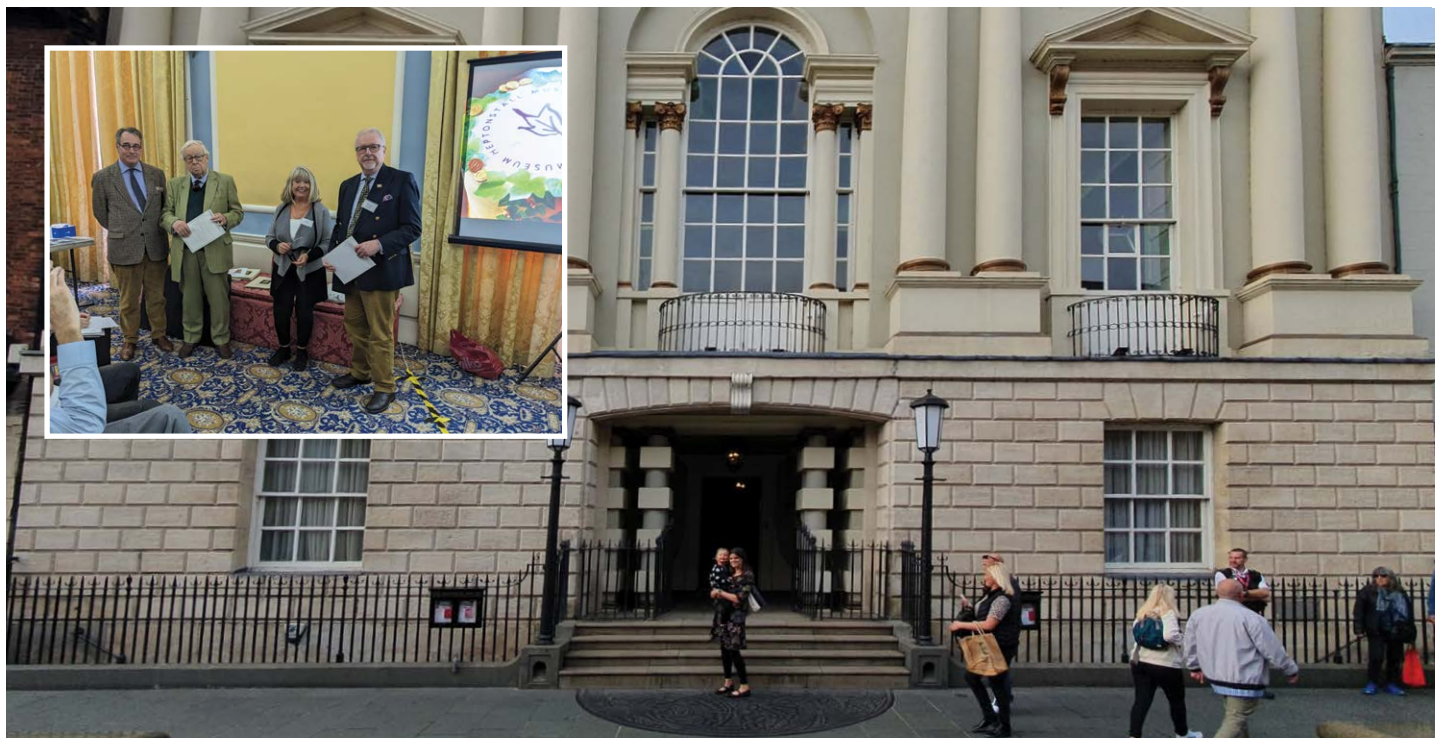
Sadly, Birmingham Museums Trust is not alone, with many civic museums facing severe budget cuts and uncertain futures as a result of the financial

pressures on many local authorities. At times like this, the continued financial, voluntary and wider support offered by Friends of museums organisations, like the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, is more critical than ever before. Our Friends provide the essential core funding to lever in large grants, the time and commitment to help care for local heritage, and most importantly – as I have valued in recent weeks – hope and support.

Birmingham Museums is very lucky to have the continued support of its Friends!

If you would like to support Birmingham Museums by becoming a member, making a donation or joining the Friends then please visit our website: [www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/support-us](http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/support-us) ■

**By Toby Watley**  
Director of Collections  
Birmingham Museums Trust



## BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS 50TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**Peter Miles and I were delighted to represent the Friends at the British Association of Friends of Museums (BAFM) Annual Conference, which was held in Doncaster on Saturday 30 September 2023.**

**W**e were invited to attend to receive our certificate for 'Artefacts', which had won the BAFM Newsletter of the Year Award for 2023 and our prize was two complimentary tickets to attend the conference.

The theme of the conference was 'Regeneration: Growing the cultural offer and friends in challenging times', one which is particularly pertinent for our Friends organisation at the moment given the financial difficulties facing Birmingham City Council, and the impact this is having on Birmingham Museums Trust. In his welcoming speech, the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Doncaster underlined the vital role that creativity plays in regeneration, in building a city and in improving health and wellbeing.

Our Newsletter of the Year Award was featured in the BAFM Newsletter. The award had been relaunched this year and there were a lot of entries, so we were particularly pleased to have won! The judges felt that: 'Against a difficult time of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery closure for refurbishment, the Friends have recognised the very real importance of the newsletter and continue to engage with their members.'

They quoted Peter's comment in his 'Chair's Observations' in the Autumn 2023 edition of 'Artefacts' that: 'now is the time when Birmingham Museums really needs its Friends more than ever.'

The judges also commented that: 'What was so impressive about Artefacts was the way it was designed to be a gateway publication for the arts and heritage within the wider area of the West Midlands. Members reading the magazine are being kept aware of exhibitions in museums in Coventry, Worcester and Kidderminster. There is information about theatre, dance and musical events as well. But the heart of the magazine is still focused on the collections of Birmingham Museums and the work of the Friends.' (BAFM Journal, Issue 131 / Autumn – Winter 2023, p.37).

'Artefacts' is produced by a small and dedicated team of volunteers and we were delighted to receive such praise about a magazine of which we are incredibly proud. I would like to thank everyone who contributes to the magazine – from writing articles to sourcing images and proofing. The passion and commitment of everyone who contributes to our publication is both remarkable and inspiring. And thank

you to you, our readers. We would not be able to do this without our Members' support and the enthusiasm with which 'Artefacts' seems to disappear off the shelves into the hands of our readers.

Following the Covid hiatus (during which 'Artefacts' was not produced) and an uncertain end to 2022, 'Artefacts' has come such a long way, making this award particularly special for us. PB&J Publishing, a small family run business set up by Paul Blyth, who has been designing 'Artefacts' for many years, and his partner Jess, took on its publication in Spring 2023, increased its circulation and have spent a huge amount of time and energy working with me to develop the magazine. We now have a 4,000 copy print run and a magazine of which we are all very proud. And congratulations to PB&J Publishing on completion of their first year of producing 'Artefacts' as this is their fourth magazine! ■

**By Melissa Hughes,  
Artefacts' Editor and  
Friends' Administrator**

**ABOVE:** Melissa and Tamara outside Mansion House  
**ABOVE INSET:** Peter receiving the certificate  
**RIGHT:** The certificate





# BAfM

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS

*is pleased to present*

*Friends of Birmingham Museums*

*with the*


BAfM

Newsletter of the  
Year Award  
2023

# WINNER

Signed on behalf of the BAfM Council

*Daniel Calley Chair*

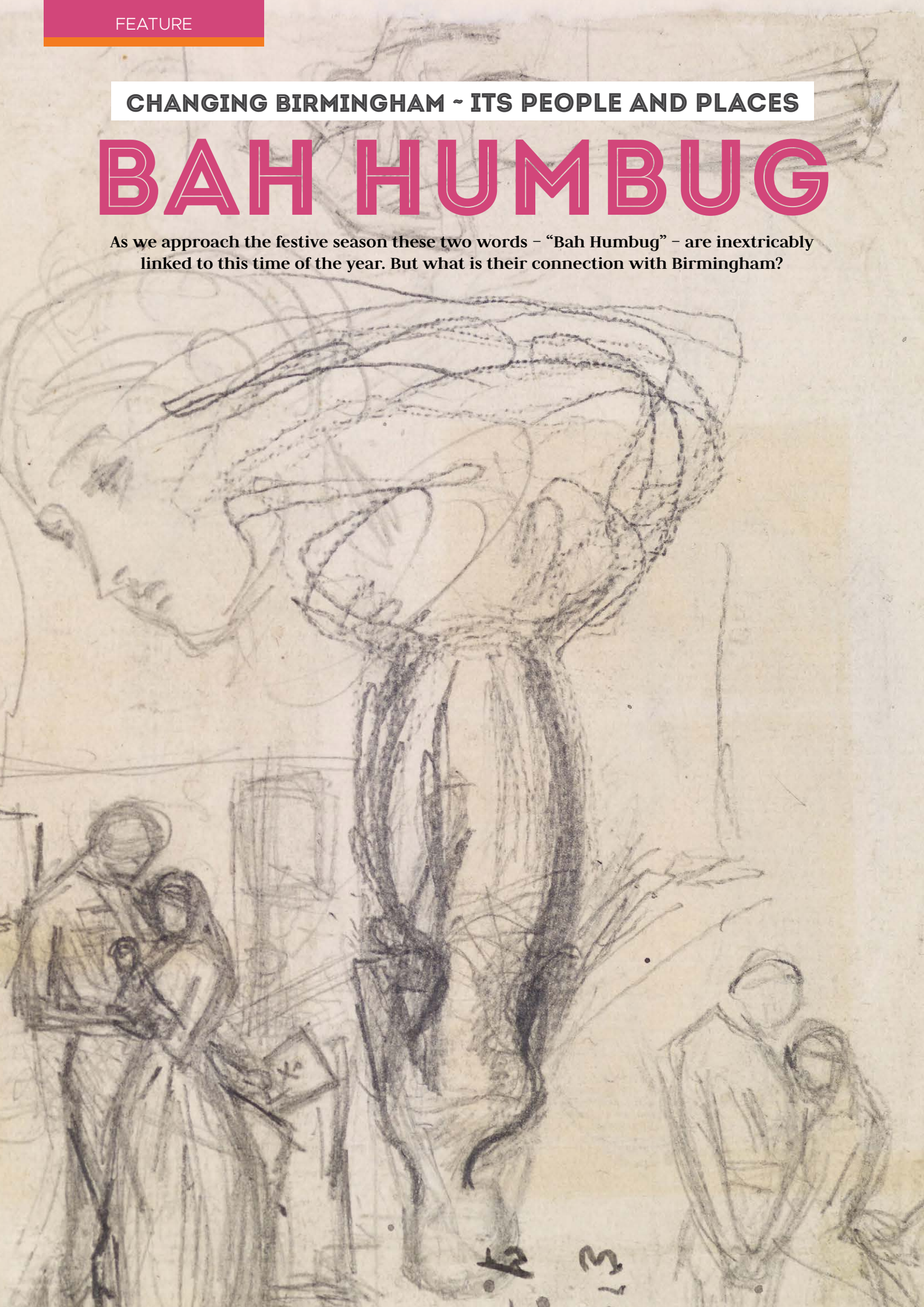





CHANGING BIRMINGHAM ~ ITS PEOPLE AND PLACES

# BAH HUMBUG

As we approach the festive season these two words – “Bah Humbug” – are inextricably linked to this time of the year. But what is their connection with Birmingham?



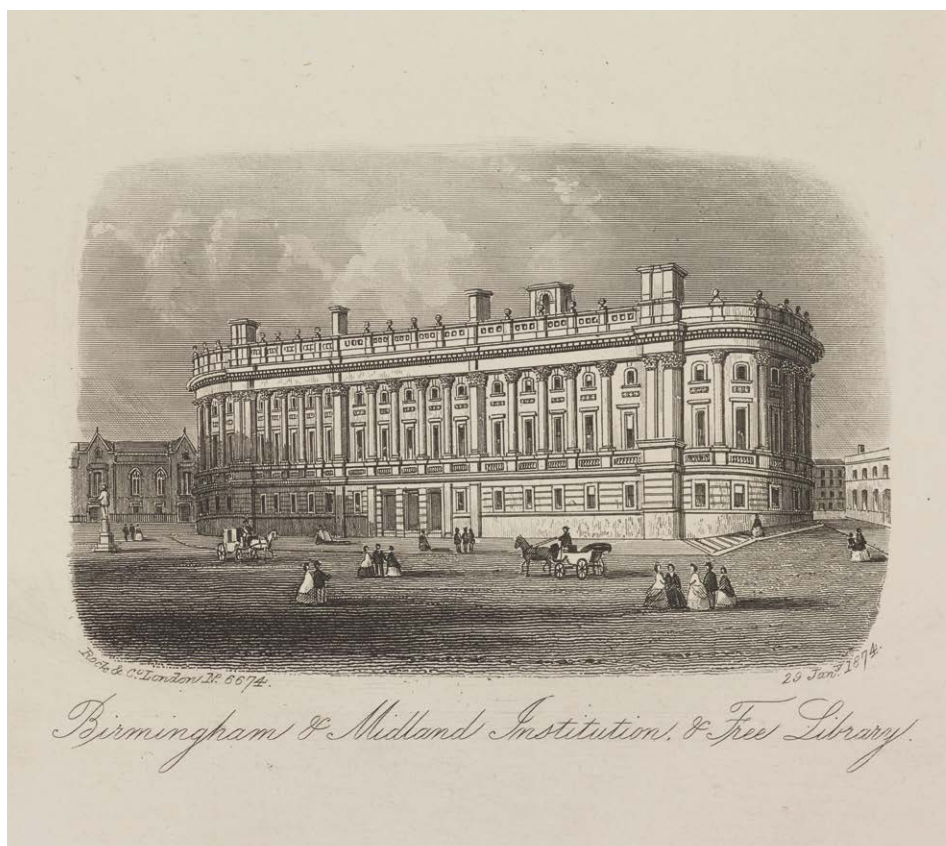


They, of course, originate in an illustrated fable called 'A Christmas Carol', written by Charles Dickens (1812-70) in 1843. 'A Christmas Carol' has given us the character Scrooge and, such has been the impact of the story, that the term 'scrooge' is now in the 'Oxford English Dictionary'.

In 1853 Charles Dickens gave his first dramatised reading to a packed Birmingham Town Hall – and the story he read was 'A Christmas Carol'. Prior to this momentous event Dickens had a long association with Birmingham and its evolving institutions, leading to a reference to the Town in 'The Pickwick Papers' (1836-37): 'the fires, whose livid, sullen light had been visible for miles, blazed fiercely up in the great works'. Dickens' earliest visit to Birmingham in aid of good causes was on 6 June 1848, when he directed and acted in a Ben Jonson play at the Theatre Royal in New Street to raise funds in support of Shakespeare's birthplace. Dickens maintained a close relationship with the Town and its citizens and his reading of 'A Christmas Carol' was probably the highpoint.

'A Christmas Carol' was written in a short space of time, and Dickens described the writing process in 1843 to a friend as one in which he composed the story in his head, weeping and laughing as he walked 'the black streets of London, fifteen or twenty miles, many a night when all sober folks had gone to bed'. The story was motivated by Dickens' disgust at the operation of the New Poor Law and what he felt was the indifference of the wealthy to the condition of children in poverty in London. Having visited a 'ragged school' in 1843 he wrote to a friend that there was not: 'anything so shocking as the dire neglect of soul or body exhibited in these children'. No better is this illustrated than in the episode in 'A Christmas Carol' featuring the second spirit, in which Scrooge is shown a boy and a girl: 'yellow, meagre, ragged... This boy is Ignorance, this girl is Want'.

Ten years after the publication of 'A Christmas Carol', Birmingham's leading citizens were attempting to raise funds for a new organisation, the Birmingham and Midland Institute (BMI). Arthur Ryland was the main mover and he held a meeting at his house in 1852 and a public meeting to win support 'to establish a Scientific and Literary Institution'. Key to building the campaign was a letter from Dickens to Ryland offering to do a reading of 'A



Christmas Carol' in the Town Hall to help raise funds, with a condition that one of the events would be free for the working classes of the Town.

Dickens' preparations for the readings were interesting: the day started with two tablespoons of rum in cream and then a pint of champagne for tea, followed by a raw beaten egg in a tumbler of sherry just before the commencement. The readings were a complete theatrical performance with all the characters played by Dickens, hence the need for fortification! The second reading on 30 December 1853, with only a 6d entrance fee, produced a packed Town Hall and lasted three and a half hours (rather than the scheduled two hours) due to the raucous reaction of cheers, laughter and roars. Dickens writes of the event: 'The good people of Brimingham seemed to understand everything... I felt as if we were all bodily going up into the clouds together'. Dickens' visit concluded on the 31 December with a reception and gifts for his wife Catherine and eldest son Charles. There is another Birmingham connection with the Dickens family as the city's collection includes a sketch of Kate, Dickens' daughter, by the Pre-Raphaelite artist John Everett Millais. Kate modelled for Millais, as well as being an artist in her own right.

The readings were a turning point for both Dickens and Birmingham. For

Dickens, they launched his second career as a celebrity performer as well as a popular writer. For Birmingham, the BMI was established by a Parliamentary Bill in 1854, and still thrives today. The dramatised version of 'A Christmas Carol' continues to be a popular theatre production over the festive season. The Royal Shakespeare Company had a production in 2022 starring Adrian Edmondson and our own Crescent Theatre in Birmingham have a production lined up for the festive period this year. The power of Dickens' story and its social messages continues. ■

**By Jim Wells, Friends Trustee**

For more information, sources and further background reading please visit our website: [fbmt.org.uk/publications](http://fbmt.org.uk/publications).

**LEFT:** 'The Black Brunswicker - Figure Sketch' [Recto - Front] by John Everett Millais, 1859-60; 1906P623.

This sketch relates to the drawing and oil painting in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, and a drawing in Tate Britain. The scene shows an English girl saying goodbye to a German soldier sweetheart on the eve of the battle of Waterloo in 1815. The girl was modelled by Charles Dickens' daughter, Kate, and the soldier by a private in the Lifeguards.

**TOP RIGHT:** Engraving - 'Midland Institute & Free Library, Birmingham', 1874; Wilkinson Collection, Vol 1; 1996V148.127; Transferred from Birmingham Reference Library.

Constructed several years after the readings by Dickens, the Midland Institute & Free Library, Birmingham provided technical and scientific education for adults. It was sadly demolished in 1965, but, as we know, the Birmingham and Midland Institute (BMI) then moved to Margaret Street.

All Photos © Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CCO.



'A Symphony in Bronze and Silver' by Ethel Walker (d.1951), 1900-1914; 1948P20; Presented by the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, 1948; Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0

FRIENDS' ACQUISITIONS

# DAME ETHEL WALKER'S 'A SYMPHONY IN BRONZE AND SILVER'

Ethel Walker (1861 – 1951), born in Edinburgh on 9 June 1861, was a Scottish painter who specialised in portraits, floral still life and sea pictures. Initially Walker was not attracted to art as a career, but learned the necessary artistic accomplishments of a young lady.



At the age of twenty she made the deliberate decision to become a painter and studied fine art at the Westminster School of Art under the painter Frederick Brown, before following him to the Slade School of Art in c.1893. She was also able to travel in Europe and her exposure to modern art in France and Spain greatly influenced her technique. Walker also attended evening painting classes with the artist, Walter Sickert. In 1912 and 1916 she returned to the Slade to study fresco and tempera painting; and then again in 1921 to study sculpture with James Havard Thomas.

This beautiful oil painting – ‘A Symphony in Bronze and Silver’ – was painted by Walker between 1900 and 1914, and was presented to Birmingham by the Friends in 1948. It measures 76cm high by 63.5cm wide.

In the late 19th century, the Aesthetic Movement challenged the values of mainstream Victorian culture and was a move away from politics, morals and narrative, focusing on creating art that was produced to be beautiful – ‘Art for Art’s sake’. In ‘A Symphony in Bronze and Silver’, Walker’s adherence to Aestheticism’s principles can be seen in her privileging of visual effects over narrative, and parallels between art and music are suggested in her use of ‘Symphony’ in the painting’s title. Neither of the women are identified but instead the artist describes a composition of colour, using the muted pigments of her intimate interior scenes, which were more typical of her early work and usually featured female subjects. Both figures have informal poses and are apparently unaware of the viewer and that they are being captured on canvas.

Walker was a prominent figure in the art world of the time and her work was exhibited widely during her lifetime, which was particularly notable given her gender. Walker did not exhibit her work until she was 37 years old. Her painting, ‘Angela’, was exhibited in an exhibition at the New English Art Club in 1899, and in 1900 she was elected its first female member. Throughout the 1920s, Walker was one of the most frequently exhibited female artists in the Royal Academy’s annual Summer Exhibition. She represented Britain four times at the Venice Biennale: in 1922, 1924, 1928 and 1930. She became a member of The London Group in 1936. In 1939 she represented Britain at the World Trade Fair in Chicago with her painting ‘Decoration: The Excursion of Nausicaa’ (1920), which is now in the collection of Tate Britain.

Tate Archives house a collection of notes on Walker’s career, compiled by the painter Grace English, who met Walker in 1931. English became Walker’s patron and friend. Walker regularly exhibited at the Lefevre galleries and she wrote to English about her exhibition there in 1939: ‘Thank you for your beautiful letter about my show... [which] made me able to dispense so easily with the limited survey of all the obtuse press opinions and made them non-existent.... Because I am a woman I have to be patronised it seems with a sea of futilities and adjectives.’ (Quoted in ‘Ethel Walker’ in Alicia Foster, ‘Tate Women Artists’, Tate Publishing, 2003). Walker’s letter to English shows her exasperation at the critical response to her show, which she felt was based on her gender rather than her abilities as an artist.

The impact that her gender had on her stature as an artist during her lifetime appears to be demonstrated by the fact that Walker was not elected as an Associate Member of the Royal Academy until 1940, when she was 79 years old. Three years later, she was appointed the Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (a DBE) in recognition of her contribution to British art.

In her obituary in ‘The Times’, Walker was described as: ‘the most important woman artist of her time since Berthe Morisot’, emphasising her important status in the art world. From 7 May until 15 June 1952, the year after Walker’s death, the Tate held a major retrospective entitled ‘Ethel Walker, Frances Hodgkins, Gwen John’, organised by Tate Director John Rothenstein, a friend of Walker’s. The exhibition was well received by the critics. In ‘The Spectator’, one critic was impressed by the significant contribution made by each of the three artists: ‘It would be ungenerous to attempt to weigh the relative importance of the three women painters... for together they form the greater part of woman’s contribution to British painting in this century.’ T.W. Earp, in his catalogue essay on Walker, defined Walker’s particular contribution: ‘although in technique her impressionism was less doctrinaire and scientific than that of the French masters – nearer to Whistler than to Monet, with less use of divided colour and for the most part content with a broad daylight effect, she gained the same result of vibrance and spontaneity. This shows particularly in her portraits of women, usually painted in one dominant key of radiant colour, which, without effort at deliberate likeness, net

the sense of personality in their rapid grasp of a moment’s mood.’

In her novel ‘Winter’, published in 2017, Ali Smith mentions Walker commenting that: ‘she was a painter of landscapes and portraits so renowned that there’s practically no municipal collection in the United Kingdom that doesn’t have something by her in it.’

Yet despite being well-known during her lifetime and having a prolific output, Walker’s work seems to have subsequently fallen out of favour and she is now relatively unknown. Candy Bedworth, in her article ‘Dame Ethel Walker – A Sensitive Portrait’, states: ‘How is it that an artist of such talent, with such a wealth of paintings produced, is virtually unheard of? Well, we know, don’t we? It’s because she was a woman. And she painted women in a gentle and sensitive way. Oh, and she was a lesbian too. All clearly rattled the fine sensibilities of the male art history club.’

In more recent years, now that the discourse of art history sanctions and encourages discussions about sexuality, Walker has been acknowledged as a lesbian artist, who explored her sexuality through her works. Walker had a preference for women sitters and female nudes and much of her work celebrates the female body and female sexuality. She preferred models to be as ‘natural’ as possible, removing adornments and cosmetics – all make-up, jewellery and often clothing – to allow her to focus on an individual’s character and expression.

Walker’s work, which can be found in many UK public collections, has become more prominent again in recent years and her large painting ‘Decoration: The Excursion of Nausicaa’ featured in Tate Britain’s exhibition ‘Queer British Art 1861 – 1967’ in 2017. ■

**By Melissa Hughes,  
Artefacts’ Editor and  
Friends’ Administrator**

**Bibliography:** Ethel Walker, Frances Hodgkins, Gwen John Tate Britain; [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)  
Candy Bedworth, ‘Dame Ethel Walker – A Sensitive Portrait’ in ‘Daily Art Magazine’, 22 August 2019; Dame Ethel Walker – A Sensitive Portrait | Women Artists ([dailyartmagazine.com](http://dailyartmagazine.com))  
Dominic Bilton, “(re)remembered and celebrated”, British Art Network. British Art Network, January 2022; “(re)remembered and celebrated” – British Art Network ‘Explore: Dame Ethel Walker’, Government Art Collection; Dame Ethel Walker – Government Art Collection ([culture.gov.uk](http://culture.gov.uk))  
Tate Britain’s catalogue entry: ‘Decoration: The Excursion of Nausicaa’, Dame Ethel Walker, 1920 | Tate ‘Self-Portrait’, Dame Ethel Walker, exhibited 1930 | Tate ‘Ethel Walker’ in Alicia Foster, ‘Tate Women Artists’, Tate Publishing, 2003

# CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

## PERFECT PRESENTS FROM BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS

Embrace the festive spirit and bring joy this winter with Birmingham Museums online shop.

From Brummie inspired gifts and art prints of some of Birmingham's finest artworks, to statement jewellery and stocking fillers, the ideal Christmas present is just waiting to be found!

**T**ake a browse through Birmingham Museums top Christmas gifts and get ahead with shopping for the perfect presents for family and friends. And, at the same time, you'll be supporting Birmingham Museums Trust as every purchase helps the Trust's work in preserving and looking after Birmingham's world-renowned collections and historic venues for future generations.

### The Brum Cup

The Brum Cup is designed by local artist, Olive Burke and features Birmingham's iconic skyline. As an environmentally friendly, re-useable cup it is perfect for tea and coffee on-the-go. Know someone who deserves a stylish caffeine pick-me-up? Then they'll love this. £10  
[shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/most-popular/products/birmingham-brum-cup](https://shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/most-popular/products/birmingham-brum-cup)

### The Birmingham Colour Palette Mug

Birmingham's very own colour palette was created by talented local artist, Stacey Barnfield to celebrate Brum's extraordinary city. This stylish, limited edition earthenware mug showcases the original Birmingham colour palette which pays homage to the city's heritage from heavy metal inspired Sabbath Black to Bull Bronze. £12.50.

[shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/most-popular/products/the-birmingham-colour-palette-mug](https://shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/most-popular/products/the-birmingham-colour-palette-mug)

### Walk Birmingham

For a journey through time, there's nothing quite like 'Walk Birmingham'. This book brings together 20 inspiring walks around the mighty city of Birmingham, from Sutton Coldfield to Longbridge and from Harborne

to Sheldon, giving you a chance to experience its history for yourself. A handy pocket-sized book that's the perfect gift for walkers and heritage lovers. £7.50.

[shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/most-popular/products/walk-birmingham](https://shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/most-popular/products/walk-birmingham)

### Things to do & Places to See in Birmingham & the West Midlands

Featuring over 400 hidden gems - from world class museums to historic houses and from nature reserves to parks - this comprehensive guidebook, published earlier this year, provides all the inspiration you need for a day out to remember in Birmingham and the West Midlands. £9.99.

[shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/most-popular/products/things-to-do-places-to-see-in-the-west-midlands-1](https://shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/most-popular/products/things-to-do-places-to-see-in-the-west-midlands-1)

### Yes Bab Beanie

Ethical, organic and straight out of Brum, get a Yes Bab beanie created by Birmingham independent Punks and Chancers. Made from 100% organic supersoft cotton this beanie will keep you toasty during the cold months. Check out Punks and Chancers' other Birmingham apparel on the website - including t-shirts, tote bags and pin badges. £22.

[shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/provide/products/yes-bab-beanie](https://shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/provide/products/yes-bab-beanie)

### Statement Jewellery from Birmingham designers

Dazzle a loved one this Christmas with a striking snake ring or beautiful earrings, created by Vanessa Miller, Jeweller in Residence at the Museum of the

Jewellery Quarter. Her unique designs were inspired by the iconic Smith & Pepper snake range at the museum, working directly from the business' sketch book. Birmingham Museums online shop also features an extensive collection of jewellery by many other Birmingham makers, including stunning pendants, rings and necklaces.

Browse the full collection at:

[shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/jewellery](https://shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/jewellery)

### Iconic Art Prints

For the art lover in your life choose a print from a breath-taking range of iconic works from Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. Be it a Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece, a William Morris design or a charming watercolour by Birmingham artist David Cox - there are hundreds of artworks to choose from. From £25.

[shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/art](https://shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/collections/art)

Explore the full range of gifts available in Birmingham Museums online shop at [shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/](https://shop.birminghammuseums.org.uk/). Every purchase supports Birmingham Museums Trust and its work looking after nine museums and historic properties as well as the city's collection.

Please note: the last order date is 18 December 2023 for gifts to arrive in time for Christmas. ■

- 1: Statement Jewellery from Birmingham designers
- 2: The Brum Cup
- 3: The Birmingham Colour Palette Mug
- 4: Walk Birmingham
- 5: Things to do & Places to See in Birmingham & the West Midlands

Birmingham Museums offers members of the Friends a 10% discount on all items - both online and when showing your membership card when instore. If you wish to purchase anything online, please contact the Friends' office for your code (contact details on page 3).



1



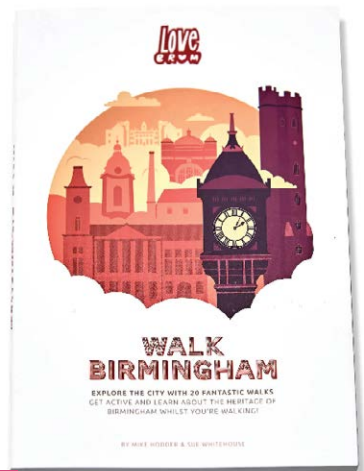
2



3



4



5





# ...LIKE A SHORT CUT THROUGH THE BRAMBLES

Presenting in art galleries and museums across Coventry and the West Midlands, '...like a short cut through the brambles' investigates our relationship to the natural world.

The festival programme brilliantly illuminates avenues for cultural engagement, offering exhibitions, events and renewed opportunities for participation to UK audiences.

Coventry Biennial is held across five exhibition spaces, including the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, the Old Grammar School, Warwick Arts Centre, Compton Verney and Coventry University's brand-new Delia Derbyshire building. The programme showcases the works of 15 diverse artists, as well as offering an array of engaging events and activities throughout the festival period.

The chosen artists cover a wide range of themes and mediums, spanning from portraiture and sculptural installations to the innovative realm of urban gardens. Midlands-based Janet Tryner, Jo Gane, Paul Lemmon, and Ania Bas are joined by international artists Dinh Q. Lê and Clémence, Lollia Hilaire, Can Altay and A History of Frogs, amongst others.

Festival visitors have the opportunity to explore Coventry's waterways, attend creative writing workshops and share their ideas on what the future of the city may look like through collaborative art-pieces. Further highlights include a film screening by a Turner Prize nominated artist, guided tours on foot and by bike,



Photography by Maria Polodeanu

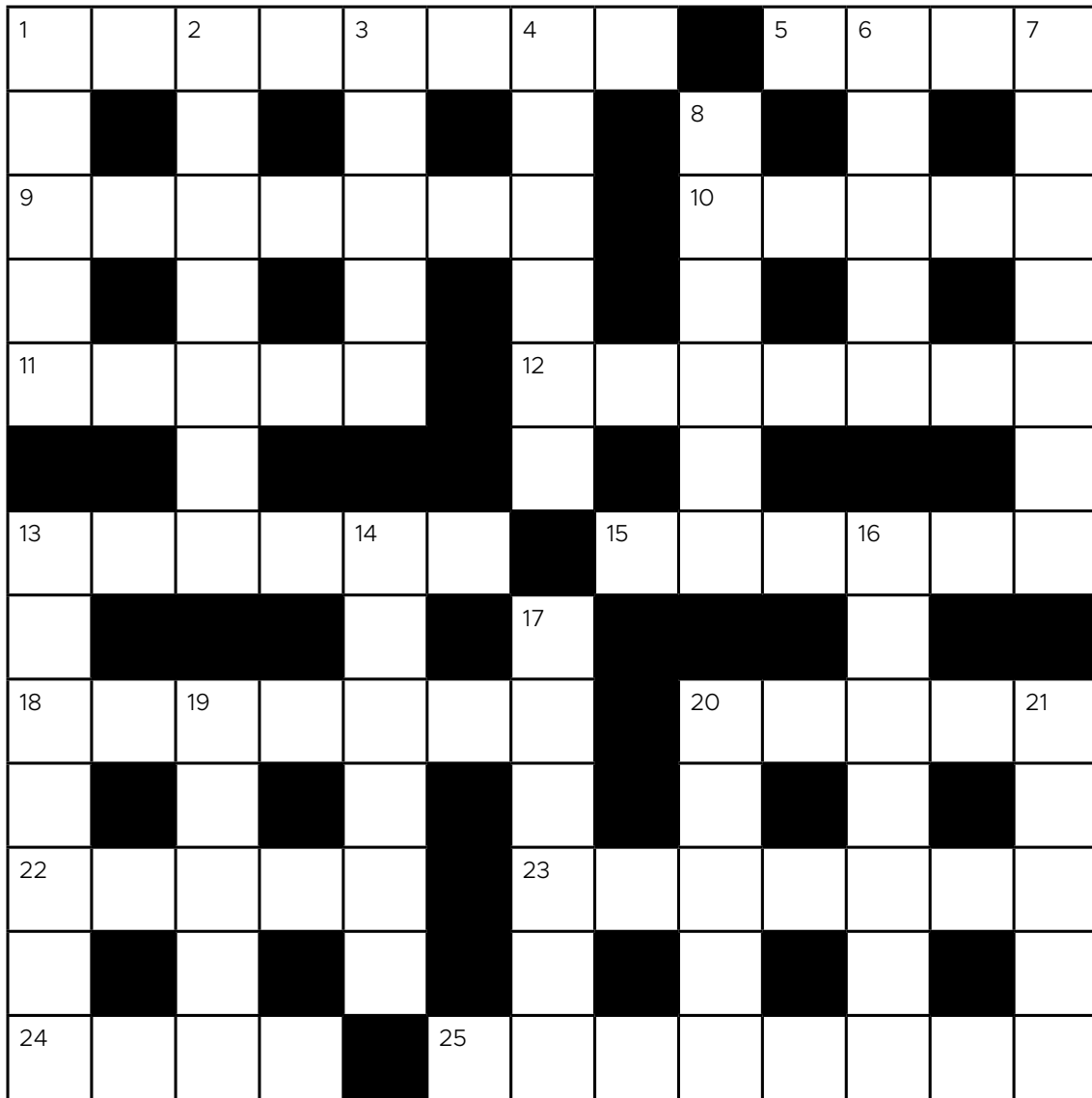
and arts-and-crafts workshops. The events programme primarily operates on a "Pay What You Can" basis. This allows for free access to tickets while also enabling audiences to contribute based on their individual capacities.

Ryan Hughes, Artistic Director and CEO of Coventry Biennial said: "It's a pleasure to have renewed, and built new local partnerships across Coventry, Warwickshire and the whole West Midlands. This is perhaps most immediately visible in relation to our exhibition venues, but it's been impactful to work with galleries and other cultural organisations across the region. We've produced amazing projects with Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, Compton Verney in Warwickshire as well as a huge range of smaller community groups across the city."

"It's also hugely significant that we continue to attract major national and international support from public funders, collections, trusts, foundations and commercial galleries. Of course, this contributes to making our work possible, but it also shines a spotlight on the whole region, its cultural institutions and the many brilliant artists that are based in the West Midlands." ■

[www.coventrybiennial.com](http://www.coventrybiennial.com)





# FRIENDS' CROSSWORD

BY COLIN JONES

## ACROSS

1. Clare Short was MP here between 1983 and 2010 (8)
5. Fruit famously grown in Pershore (4)
9. Confused or disordered (7)
10. The Society at the heart of the 18th century Midlands Enlightenment (5)
11. Prophets or Soothsayers (5)
12. In a perfect world (7)
13. The Barber Institute's first Director, a large blunt needle, or even Hamlet's 'bare' dagger. (6)
15. Hide under them if scared, drive through them if batting (6)
18. A style of architecture and visual arts featured in many interwar cinemas and hotels (3,4)
20. The Gunpowder plotters were an example of one of these (5)
22. The largest artery in the human body (5)
23. You might get this type of word play in a cryptic crossword clue (7)
24. This foretells a change, often but not always for the worse (4)
25. A painting of Christ wearing a crown of thorns, meaning in Latin 'behold a man', for example Van Dyck's in the Barber (4,4)

## DOWN

1. Major 20th Century Birmingham Aerospace and Automotive company now dismembered (5)
2. You won't get on in this type of job (4-3)
3. Units of power named after 10 across Society Member (5)
4. Flower sent daily from Highbury Hall for Joseph Chamberlain to wear in Parliament (6)
6. This Ivan wasn't terrible at tennis, though he never quite won Wimbledon (5)
7. St Alban and Edmund Campion for example who died for their beliefs (7)
8. Board game devised in Kings Heath in the 1940s including character called 5 across (6)
13. An unnecessary show of courage designed to impress others (7)
14. A large glacier found at both North and South Poles and in high mountain ranges (3,3)
16. An official ban on trade with another country (7)
17. A pattern made of small pieces of coloured stone, glass or ceramic (6)
19. Brief, to the point of rudeness (5)
20. A mixed area of woodlands and heath as seen in Staffordshire and Malvern (5)
21. Those left in this state face uncertainty (5)

ACROSS: 1. Ladywood 5. Plum 9. Chaotic 10. Lunar 11. Seers 12. Ideally 13. Bodkin 15. Covers 18. Art deco 20. Cabal 22. Aorta 23. Anagram 24. Omen 25. Ecce Homo DOWN: 1. Lucas 2. Dead-end 3. Watts 4. Orchid 6. Lend! 7. Martyrs 8. Cluedo 13. Bravado 14. Ice cap 16. Embargo 17. Mosaic 19. Terse 20. Chase 21. Limbo

# BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS WHAT'S ON

A festive Aston Hall



**Please note: Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery is now closed for essential maintenance works until 2024 – Date TBC. Please visit [www.birminghammuseums.org.uk](http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk) for up-to-date information about opening hours.**



## ASTON HALL

Trinity Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 6JD.

See [birminghammuseums.org.uk](http://birminghammuseums.org.uk) for up-to-date opening times and prices. A number of the events are listed below, but please see the website for more details and more events as they are added.

### Aston Arts Club

Saturday 4 November 2023, 10am-1pm and Saturday 2 December 2023, 12noon-3pm. A free, drop-in, family-friendly arts and crafts activity.

### Finds Day at Aston Hall

Thursday 16 November 2023. Have you found an object which you would like to know more about? Come and ask our Finds Liaison Officer all about it! The Finds Liaison Officer is available to help identify and record your finds. By recording your finds you can discover all about the object and by researching your object the archaeologists can find out more about the past. What do we want to record? We would love to see any object which is more than 300 years old which you have found while walking, gardening or metal detecting in England or Wales. We also need to know where you found your object as having a grid reference for all our finds allows us to see where people lived and worked, information about the economy, changes in fashion and much more. Pre-booking is required.

### Aston After Dark: Ghost Tour

18-19 and 24-25 November 2023. £15 per person. Age 12+. Join us after dark for an evening of ghostly tales in one of Britain's most haunted mansions. Join us for an evening ghost tour of one of Britain's most haunted buildings. Expect a few laughs and scares as we tell you all about the Hall's intriguing past. We're sure you'll be left wondering if ghosts really do exist. This is an exclusive opportunity to venture into the Hall at night, so prepare for a scare! Event information: Tours last approximately 1 hour. Please arrive at least 15 minutes before your timed slot; late-comers will not be admitted. Due to the content of some of the stories this event is not suitable for children under 12. Pre-booking is essential, we anticipate that this event will be very popular. Tickets are non-refundable.

### Aston Alive: Christmases Past

Sunday 10 December 2023. Tickets from £5 - £10; Concessions available. Join us at this most magical time of the year to celebrate the festive season! Meet our cast of historical characters and discover how they celebrate Christmas. A chance to explore Aston Hall, a magnificent seventeenth century mansion dressed for yuletide with Christmas trees, twinkling flameless candles, and filled with fascinating people from the past. This event is likely to be extremely popular, so pre-booking is highly recommended. Aston Hall is open from 12noon to 4pm, with the last timed entrance to the Hall at 3pm. Your timed ticket is for entrance to the Hall, but you are welcome to arrive earlier to enjoy the café and to explore the

grounds which are open from 11am (we wouldn't want you to miss anything!). The Stable Yard Café and grounds will be open from 11am-4pm. Please note all events are subject to change of dates due to Aston Villa FC.



## MUSEUM & ART GALLERY BIRMINGHAM

Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, B3 3DH.

**Please note: Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery is now closed for essential maintenance works until 2024 – Date TBC.**



## BLAKESLEY HALL

Blakesley Road, Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8RN.

**Please note: Blakesley Hall is closed to the general public for the Winter period from 5 November 2023, except for special one-off events, room hire and school group bookings. The site will reopen for the 2024 summer season – dates TBC. See [birminghammuseums.org.uk](http://birminghammuseums.org.uk) for up-to-date opening times and prices.**

Blakesley Hall is a picture-perfect timber-framed Tudor house with beautiful gardens, situated just a few miles from the centre of Birmingham. It was built in 1590 by Richard Smalbroke, a member of one of Birmingham's leading merchant families.

### Spooky Crafty Thursdays

Thursday 2 November 2023, 11.30am-3.30pm, £2 per child. Join us in the Barn for Crafty Thursdays at Blakesley Hall! For our Halloween themed craft we'll be making card Wizard lanterns to take away. Booking advised as our craft activities are popular with families. Arrive anytime between 11.30am-3.30pm.

### Pop Up Planetarium

Thursday 2 November 2023, 11.30am, 1.30pm, 2.30pm. Child: £5; Adult: £3. Experience our amazing inflatable planetarium, joining us from Thinktank Science Museum! Gaze at the stars and take a trip into space to learn all about the wonders of the solar system. Join us in The Gallery at the Visitor Centre for this exciting, immersive experience with plenty of opportunity to ask questions and join in.

### Ghost Hunting Academy

Friday 3 November 2023, 11.30am, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm. Tickets: £6-£8. Join us for a light-hearted look at the paranormal with our family friendly tour. Learn the techniques used by paranormal investigators and then take part in an investigation around Blakesley Hall. Try using dowsing rods and other detection methods to detect the presence of spirits as we look around this atmospheric old house together. Will you earn your Ghost Hunting badge?

### Gunpowder Plot at Blakesley Hall

Saturday 4 November 2023, 12pm-4pm. Adult: £8; Concession: £6; Child: £5. Join us for this exciting new event at Blakesley Hall and learn all about the Gunpowder Plot and the planned conspiracy to blow up the Houses of Parliament on 5 November

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Blakesley Hall Christmas Tour

1605. Take part in our activity trail around the Hall to try and find out where the gunpowder has been hidden. Can you identify the plotters behind the Gunpowder Plot who may be concealed in the Hall? Meet some of the characters involved in the Gunpowder Plot and take part in the final Trial to decide the fate of the plotters! Event ticket includes admission to the Hall. The Herb Garden Cafe, shop and grounds will be open from 11am-4pm.

#### Blakesley by Night

Friday 17 November 2023, 6.30pm and 7.30pm. Tickets: £6-£8. An atmospheric costumed evening tour. Find out about the 'night time' during the Tudor period and if Blakesley Hall has any ghostly tales. A rare chance to see Blakesley Hall in the moonlight. Tours at: 6.30pm and 7.30pm. Tours last 45 minutes and the Herb Garden Café will be open for you to enjoy a hot drink and cakes (additional charges apply).

#### Christmas Craft Market and Santa at Blakesley Hall

Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 December 2023, 11am-4.30pm. Tickets to visit Santa in the Hall - £30 for group ticket for up to six people. Entrance to Craft Market - FREE! Come along and get in the festive spirit at Blakesley Hall. Enjoy our fantastic Craft Market in the Barn and Gallery with a wide variety of makers selling locally made crafts and gifts. Join in with Christmas craft led by our friends at Wild Earth Movement in the Barn. Meet Santa in the Great Hall and see Blakesley dressed for Christmas! Each child visiting Santa gets an activity pack to make a Christmas card at home. Write a letter to Santa

and post it in our Christmas Polar post box. All children visiting Santa receive a small present.



**MUSEUM OF THE  
JEWELLERY QTR**

75-80 Vyse Street, Hockley, Birmingham, B18 6HA  
See [birminghammuseums.org.uk](http://birminghammuseums.org.uk) for up-to-date opening times and prices. Please note: Museum of the Jewellery Quarter is currently closed except for special events.



**SAREHOLE  
MILL**

Cole Bank Road, Hall Green, B13 0BD  
See [birminghammuseums.org.uk](http://birminghammuseums.org.uk) for up-to-date opening times and prices. The Shop (11am-4pm) and Pizza in the Courtyard (12noon-3pm) are open Wednesday to Sunday. Guided tours of Mill on Fridays (1.30pm), Saturdays\* (11.30am and 1.30pm) and Sundays (1.30pm). \*On the first Saturday of the month the Mill is open 11am-4pm (no guided tour). Free entry for Friends. Charges apply to non-members. Pre-booking is advised.  
Discover the mill that has connections with Matthew Boulton and inspired famous author JRR Tolkien.





## SOHO HOUSE

**Soho Avenue, Handsworth, Birmingham, B18 5LB**

**Please note: Soho House is closed to the general public for the Winter period from 5 November 2023, except for special one-off events, room hire and school group bookings. The last day to see 'Blood & Fire: Our Journey Through Vanley Burke's History' will be on 4 November 2023. The site will reopen for the 2024 summer season – dates TBC. See [birminghammuseums.org.uk](http://birminghammuseums.org.uk) for up-to-date opening times and prices. Free entry for Friends. Charges apply to non-members.**

Discover Soho House which was the elegant home of the industrialist and entrepreneur Matthew Boulton from 1766 to 1809.



## WEOLEY CASTLE

**Alwold Road, Birmingham, B29 5RX**

Weoley Castle ruins can be seen from a viewing platform throughout the year in daylight hours. Access to the ruins and visitor centre takes place on event days. The ruins of an exquisite fortified manor house built 750 years ago.

### Weoley Castle Guided Tour

Saturday 4 November and Saturday 2 December 2023, 11am  
Tickets: £3-£5. Explore Weoley Castle with our experienced guides and see real finds from the site back on display for the first time in over 10 years! The ruins of Weoley Castle are over 750 years old, and the site is one of the oldest buildings still visible in Birmingham. Take a guided tour of the ruins exploring their architecture, construction, and layout. Learn about the Lords of Dudley, the castle's original owners. Look at some of the objects they would have used and explore what their lives would have been like during the Middle Ages. This tour takes place outdoors and on uneven ground, suitable footwear and clothing is advised. The tour can be adapted for wheelchair users. Suitable for adults and families.

### Kids Warhammer Club

Saturday 4 November 2023 and Saturday 6 January 2024, 1pm-4pm. Free! Join us for a free, fun, table-top gaming club. There will be spaces for painting, modelling and gaming. Bring your own models along, hang out and paint/play with fellow Warhammer enthusiasts. On site we will have a select range of paints and brushes for you to use. If you do bring any of your own, make sure to put your name on your model/paint/brush etc. We welcome any format of playing be it 40K, Age of Sigmar, Underworlds, Warcry, Kill Team or Horus Heresy, come play and enjoy on the site of a ruined Medieval Castle! We aim to be friendly and inclusive to all. So, if this is your first foray into tabletop gaming or haven't played much before, we will have some models to test painting and will run simple games to help you get to speed with the rules. We have played many of the games listed here, but if we don't know the rules to the game you hope to play, then we will learn alongside you and support your play.

### Halloween Trail and Craft

Tuesday 31 October 2023, 2pm. £2 per child. Follow the ghosts

as you explore the Ruins with our kids Halloween Trail. Can you solve all the clues to figure out the mystery word? A small prize is on offer to all that can but beware, the spirits of the Castle may be out this Halloween Eve. Drop in to our craft activity in the visitors centre where we will be making card Wizard lanterns to take away.



**thinktank**  
Birmingham science museum

**Millennium Point, Birmingham, B4 7XG**

**Birmingham term time: Open Wednesday – Sunday, 10am – 5pm. Birmingham school holidays: Open Monday – 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.

### Makers and Machines: Creativity in the Computer Age

Until 28 April 2024. Thinktank's new exhibition explores the surprising long history of coding and tells the incredible stories of local people, past and present, who use coding in their work. The exhibition looks at how local weavers and knitters, mathematicians and scientists, and artists and gamers all use coding in their work. And it also explores the implications of new technology such as AI for human creativity. Can you find the three object labels that have been written by an AI chatbot rather than a human curator? You'll also have the opportunity to see rare and important objects such as the HEC computer, one of the oldest surviving electronic computers in the world. There will be a range of digital and analogue devices on display, plus the chance to see some classic game designs, learn how punched cards worked, and design your own weaving pattern. The exhibition is open during Thinktank opening hours and is included in the admission price.

**For all events visit [www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/whats-on](http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/whats-on) for further information and to book.**





RBSA Members and Associates Exhibition – 14 November 2023 – 6 January 2024

Rachel David – Overgrown garden, Birmingham Art Circle

# IN THE AREA

## BIRMINGHAM AND MIDLAND INSTITUTE

9 Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS.

[www.bmi.org.uk](http://www.bmi.org.uk)

### Barbara Shackley Exhibition

2 November – 22 December 2023. Free exhibition of work by local Birmingham artist Barbara Shackley. Exhibition will be open to the public Mon-Sat 10am-4pm.

### Monday Lunchtime Lecture -

'George Eliot's 'Daniel Deronda' 1876'

6 November 2023, 1pm. Join Antonia Saunders as she discusses George Eliot's 1876 work 'Daniel Deronda'.

### Study Day – J.B. Priestley,

'The Good Companions' (1929) & 'Eden End' (1934)

10 November 2023, 10am-4pm. Priestley achieved fame and fortune with his first novel and yet our current school curriculum positions him firmly as a dramatist. 'The Good Companions' is a joyous and engaging picaresque novel and its success enabled Priestley to turn to writing plays. His texts are both expertly crafted and thought-provoking. He views the family as a microcosm of the world and explores the controlling factor of 'time'. 'Eden End' (set in 1912 but first performed in 1934) has a layered Chekhovian quality in the elusive search for happiness by characters who are innocently unaware of the imminence of war. To book, please email [studydays@deliveringshakespeare.com](mailto:studydays@deliveringshakespeare.com) or phone on 01827 712132.

### Monday Lunchtime Lecture - 'Henry Reed'

20 November 2023, 1pm. The secret life of Birmingham poet Henry Reed. In this talk, archivist Mark Eccleston discusses the life and experiences of the Birmingham-born poet Henry Reed (1912-1986). Research undertaken with Reed's own papers, held at the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham, sheds light on both Henry Reed's literary career

and also his somewhat turbulent personal life. For tickets please follow: [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-secret-life-of-birmingham-poet-henry-reed-tickets-731209275627?aff=oddtcreator](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-secret-life-of-birmingham-poet-henry-reed-tickets-731209275627?aff=oddtcreator)

### Study Day – Sophocles, 'Oedipus Rex' (429 BC)

24 November 2023, 10am-4pm. In recent years we have engaged with writers and directors who have revisited classical texts with a focus on the female characters. Perhaps the triumph of Sophocles' play lies in Coleridge's consideration of it as one of three texts with a perfect plot (we have already devoted days to 'The Alchemist' and 'Tom Jones'). Textual analysis will be informed by close attention to the play's powerful theatricality, supported by the inclusion of extracts from audio and filmed versions of the play. To book, please email [studydays@deliveringshakespeare.com](mailto:studydays@deliveringshakespeare.com) or phone on 01827 712132.

### Monday Lunchtime Lecture – 'The Geology of Birmingham and the Black Country – the foundations of the world's first Industrial powerhouse'

4 December 2023, 1pm. The talk will describe how Mother Nature provided this landscape with one of the richest and most varied treasure chest of minerals over geological time. It will explain how and why these minerals formed here, what scientific treasures that these layers contained and how this natural heritage provided raw materials for some very clever and brave people to create a landscape of invention. It will finish with a discussion of the recent work that secured the UNESCO designation as a Global Geopark for the Black Country on the basis of its world class geology and related biological and cultural heritage. For tickets please follow: [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-geology-of-birmingham-and-the-black-country-tickets-731216687797?aff=oddtcreator](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-geology-of-birmingham-and-the-black-country-tickets-731216687797?aff=oddtcreator)

### Study Day – Charles Dickens, 'Our Mutual Friend' (1864-5)

8 December 2023, 10am-4pm. Dickens' last completed novel



shifts from dark anger to warm-hearted expansiveness, raises issues of identity and triumphantly manages its use of 'a double heroine' with Lizzie Hexam and Bella Wilfer. Contemporary reaction was mixed but over time the merits and achievements of this rich narrative have been highly praised. Many now consider it to be Dickens' greatest novel. Sandy Welch's 1998 BBC adaptation is one of the very best screen adaptations of Dickens' work. To book, please email [studydays@deliveringshakespeare.com](mailto:studydays@deliveringshakespeare.com) or phone us on 01827 712132.

## COVENTRY BIENNIAL 2023

...like a short cut through the brambles

[www.coventrybiennial.com](http://www.coventrybiennial.com)

6 October 2023 - January 2024 in Coventry and Warwickshire. Across Coventry Biennial 2023 artists and their many collaborators interrogate humankind's relationship to the world around us. Starting with the broad themes of place, the human condition and the intersection of these, this 4th Coventry Biennial will present a series of exhibitions, events and activities in museums, galleries, historic buildings and public locations. The 4th Coventry Biennial, titled '... like a short cut through the brambles' takes place across Coventry and Warwickshire from 6 October 2023 until 14 January 2024. More details can be found at [www.coventrybiennial.com](http://www.coventrybiennial.com).

## COVENTRY TRANSPORT MUSEUM

Millennium Place, Hales Street, Coventry CV1 1JD

[www.transport-museum.com](http://www.transport-museum.com)

### The City Is Full Of Noises: Make Modular

21 October 2023, 10am – 4pm. £50 per person. Join an Intermediate modular workshop developed and presented by Frequency Central's very own Rick Holt. This day session will teach you about the technicalities of module, tinkering with grove boxes and then an afternoon of build your own.

### Junk Modelling Maker Challenge: Moving Monsters

28 October – 5 November 2023. FREE. We believe the world can be an extraordinarily playful place when children are involved in creating it, and our Junk Modelling Maker Challenge offers them a chance to imagine what a more playful environment might look like. Take a break from exploring the largest collection of British vehicles and relax in our family zone. Make junk-model-monsters and get them to move. How far will your moving monster move?

### Tinker | Make | Play: Marvellously Monstrous Machines

28 October, 30 October, 2 November, 4 November 2023, 10.30am - 12.30pm & 1.30pm - 3.30pm. Free. Tinker about with all things circuits, make marvellous machines using tools and take time out to play with loose parts.

### Visit Santa: Vintage Sleigh Ride Experience

25 November - 23 December 2023, 10.30am - 3.30pm. £13 per ticket \*Includes entry for two adults. Admission into the museum is included\*. Wander through a magical winter wonderland and snowy scenes before taking a ride on Coventry famous and enchanting vintage sleigh, pulled by two trusty reindeer. Your next stop? Lapland. Write your Christmas wish list, meet Santa in his festive grotto, tell him your Christmas wishes and collect your bespoke gift from a North pole elf.

### Art Masterclass: Natural Willow Wreath Making

Saturday 9 December 2023, 10.30am - 12.30pm & 2pm - 4pm. £20 per person. For ages 8-14. Accompanying adults are free, no booking required. Join this new and exciting festive art masterclass and learn techniques of weaving your own willow wreath and using foliage to make the most beautiful natural wreath this festive season. Let your creative spirit free while listening to holiday music and indulging in treats, whilst our experts guide you through the techniques used to create a tactile and fun Christmas decoration. Children will select from natural resources including fresh flowers, dried fruits, pinecones and foliage to create their masterpieces. They will then adorn with embellishments of beads, bells, baubles and bows. Take home to display your amazing masterpiece on your door, window or festive table this holiday season.

### Art Masterclasses: Christmas Rag Wreath

10 December 2023, 10.30am – 4pm. £10 per ticket. Book online. Join this new and exciting festive masterclass and learn how to make a beautiful rag wreath decoration. This is the perfect project for recycling fabric into a bespoke door or wall hanging, that will last for years to come. Using luxurious strips of fabric including cotton, organza, shear, and satin, our learning team will guide you through the technique used to create a Christmas decoration which is tactile and fun.

Children will be able to adorn their wreaths if they choose with embellishments such as beads, bells, baubles and bows, to add that extra sparkle or use nature for inspiration and add pinecones for a festive feel. Choose your colour theme, funky or traditional and add silver, gold or bronze tones to make your textile art shine for Christmas.

## HERBERT ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

Jordan Well, Coventry, CV1 5QP.

[theherbert.org](http://theherbert.org)

### Dipp – E VR

Until 31 March 2024, £5. Immerse yourself in the 175-million-year journey of the Herbert's ichthyosaur skull and experience the power of interactive storytelling, with this powerful VR experience! From its initial discovery in a quarry, to when the ichthyosaur was swimming through Warwickshire's Jurassic, this is a great experience for any Dino-superfan!

### Wildlife Photographer of the year

27 October 2023 - 1 April 2024. The world-renowned 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year' exhibition, on loan from the Natural History Museum in London, will open at the Herbert Gallery on 27 October 2023. The 59th edition of this annual exhibition will once again feature exceptional images which capture fascinating animal behaviour, spectacular species and the breath-taking diversity of the natural world. Using photography's unique emotive power to engage and inspire audiences, the images shine a light on stories and species around the world and encourage a future of advocating for the planet.

'Wildlife Photographer of the Year' is the most prestigious photography event of its kind, providing a global platform that showcases some of the best photography talent from around the world for over 55 years. Launching in 1965, today the

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competition receives entries from over 90 countries all over the world, highlighting its enduring appeal.

### **Art Masterclass: Natural Willow Wreath Making**

Saturday 2 December, 10.30am - 12.30pm & 2pm - 4pm. £20 per person. For ages 8-14. Accompanying adults are free, no booking required. Join this new and exciting festive art masterclass and learn techniques of weaving your own willow wreath and using foliage to make the most beautiful natural wreath this festive season. Let your creative spirit free while listening to holiday music and indulging in treats, whilst experts guide you through the techniques used to create a tactile and fun Christmas decoration. Children will select from natural resources including fresh flowers, dried fruits, pinecones and foliage to create their masterpieces. They will then adorn with embellishments of beads, bells, baubles and bows. Take home to display your amazing masterpiece on your door, window or festive table this holiday season.

### **Seasonal Saturday Crafts: Natural Winter Decorations**

£2.50 per child, under 3s free. Drop in, Pay on the Day. 10.30am – 3.30pm. Join the Seasonal Saturday Crafts in the festive month of December. We will craft delightful handmade decorations with a mixture of natural and manmade resources including pinecones, cloves, willow, twigs, twine, yarn, ribbon, glitter and colourful pipe cleaners. Take these delightful decorations home with you to hang on your Christmas tree, decorate a mantelpiece or gift to a friend as a Christmas keepsake. Details of the individual craft sessions can be found below:

#### **Saturday 2 December 2023 – Fragrant Orange Pomanders**

In the spirit of festive Coventry join us in making pomanders and get creative by studding patterns into oranges with cloves. Finally embellish with a ribbon and take home to decorate your home or display on a table.

#### **Saturday 9 December 2023 – Perfect Pinecones**

Find your sparkle this winter by taking inspiration from nature. Adorn pinecones with glitter, ribbons, and pom poms to create a playful decoration, to display in your home.

#### **Saturday 16 December 2023 – Twinkle Stars**

Make your very own star, tree or initial by intertwining twigs and wrapping with twine, elastic bands and wire. Embellish your decoration with an abundance of glitter, wool and sequences and display by hanging with a colourful ribbon.

#### **Saturday 30 December 2023 – Willow Wood Coasters**

A beautiful way of combining visual art and nature to go into the new year. Create your very own coasters using a selection of natural willow branch slices, and customize using a colourful array of acrylic paints and fine paint brushes. Take home and display your amazing textured art pieces.

### **Sensory Stories & Rhymes: Christmas Story Special**

Tuesday 12 December 2023, 10.30am - 11am & 11.30am – 12noon & 1pm – 1.30pm. For ages 0-4. Book online. Join an extra special Sensory Stories & Rhymes session, as we retell the classic story 'The Night Before Christmas' for under 5s. This story will be explored with a sensory play-based approach, providing an opportunity for the youngest visitors to engage with this festive classic in a way that is meaningful to them. The hands-on nature of these sessions appeal to their imaginations and above all else is fun. Each child will

receive a sensory play box, containing freshly cleaned sensory resources, which helps to keep them engaged for the duration of the session; adds context by using a physical object to give words meaning; extends learning through play and increases their opportunities to develop good listening and language skills. This session will take place in the Covered Court area of the museum, which is the first space you enter as you visit the museum. Don't forget your Christmas jumpers, and we will even treat the grown-ups to 10% off in the café too so you can meet with friends for a pre-Christmas coffee and catch up.

### **Sensory Stories & Rhymes: Santa Sing-Along Special**

Tuesday 19 December 2023, 10.30am - 11am & 11.30am – 12noon & 1pm – 1.30pm. For ages 0-4. Book online. Join this Sensory Stories & Rhymes session and welcome a very special visitor from the North Pole! That's right, Santa Claus will be taking time out from his busy schedule to come and sing-along with us to some of our favourite Christmas nursery rhymes. These songs will be explored with a sensory play-based approach, providing an opportunity for the youngest visitors to engage with this festive classic in a way that is meaningful to them. The hands-on nature of these sessions appeal to their imaginations and above all else is fun. Each child will receive a sensory play box, containing freshly cleaned sensory resources, which helps to keep them engaged for the duration of the session; adds context by using a physical object to give words meaning; extends learning through play and increases their opportunities to develop good listening and language skills. This session will take place in the Covered Court area of the museum, which is the first space you enter as you visit the museum. Don't forget your Christmas jumpers, and we will even treat the grown-ups to 10% off in the café too so you can meet with friends for a pre-Christmas coffee and catch up.

## **LUNT ROMAN FORT**

Coventry Road, Baginton, Warwickshire, CV8 3AJ  
[www.luntromanfort.org](http://www.luntromanfort.org)

### **Masterful Masks**

Tuesday 31 October 2023, 10am – 12pm & 1pm – 3pm.  
Thursday, 2 November 2023, 10.00am – 12pm & 1pm – 3pm.  
Charges apply. Book online. This Autumn, raise your spirits by making a spectacular theatrical mask, ready for the grand Feast of Jupiter! All materials are provided. You will also be able to explore this unique reconstructed fortress, climb the newly renovated ramparts, visit the granary building and the world's only known Gyrus inside a Roman fort!

## **IKON**

1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS.  
[www.ikon-gallery.org](http://www.ikon-gallery.org)

**Free entry. Open Wednesday until Sunday, 11am-5pm**

### **Mali Morris: Calling**

Until 22 December 2023. Ikon presents a major solo exhibition by British artist Mali Morris. 'Calling' includes nearly 30 works from the last 25 years and documents a notable change in Morris' artistic practice from the late 1990s when she considered new painterly directions. Morris's first solo exhibition was held at Ikon Gallery, John Bright Street, in 1979 and she now returns to Ikon, Brindleyplace, in 2023 to transform the gallery's spaces into fields of colour and light.

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**COURT YARD  
HEREFORD  
PRODUCTIONS**

★★★★★  
The Stage

**THE PURR-FECT CHRISTMAS FAMILY PANTOMIME!**

# Dick Whittington

LONDON    HEREFORD

**Fri 1 Dec 2023 - Sat 6 Jan 2024**  
Directed by Estelle van Warmelo  
Written by Lyndsay Maples

**BOX OFFICE 01432 340555**

**courtyard.org.uk**

In partnership with




ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND



**IN DULCI JUBILO!**  
- A BAROQUE CHRISTMAS BY CANDLELIGHT  
6th December, 7.30pm - Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick  
9th December, 7.30pm - Malvern Theatres, Worcestershire  
(NB. Not Candlelit)  
Few countries celebrate Christmas like the Germans do, although the city of Venice comes pretty close!  
From the magisterial splendour of the Venetian baroque to the grand and huge-scale works of Michael Praetorius, one thing is certain – Christmas-inspired composers to create the greatest tunes even back in the 16th & 17th Centuries! If you have never heard In Dulci Jubilo sung in 21 different parts, you must not miss this concert!

This performance is generously supported by Mr Tim Coghlan, Braunston Marina



**ARMONICO CONSORT'S PRESIDENT'S CAROLS**  
20th December, 7.30pm - Warwick Castle, Warwick  
Following the sell-out success of this event in 2022, we once again invite you to join a select group of Armonico Consort's finest singers for this brand-new and exclusive event as they welcome Christmas in the magnificent setting of the Great Hall at Warwick Castle. Arrive through the beautifully lit courtyard, past glittering trees, to the Great Hall where you can enjoy a welcoming drink and begin your Christmas celebrations in exquisite style. (You could even go ice skating before if you are brave!). Armonico Consort will perform traditional carols in this unique setting, steeped in history, featuring pieces which may have been featured in festive celebrations at the castle throughout the past almost 1000 years!

This performance is generously supported by Roger Medwell MBE DL



**CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT**  
21st December, 7.30pm - Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick  
Carols by Candlelight has become a firm tradition of Armonico Consort's festive programme over the past 22 years. What better way to enjoy the warmth and joy of the Christmas season than in the sublime candlelit setting of the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick for a feast of carols, combining traditional favourites and newly-discovered works.  
Don't miss out on the chance to purchase Armonico Consort's brand-new carols recording, 'Noël', which will be available this Christmas!

This performance is generously supported by David Phillips MBE & Phillips and Becker Accountants Ltd



**HANDEL DIXIT DOMINUS – F SCARLATTI DANIELE**  
27th January 2024, 7.30pm - Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick  
3rd February 2024, 7.30pm - Malvern Theatres, Worcestershire  
Armonico Consort has become the world authority in the music of Francesco Scarlatti, the often forgotten member of this incredible musical dynasty. In what possibly might be a world premiere, this concert will see the first performance of the first edition ever created of Francesco's only oratorio – Daniele. It is a fabulously dramatic, and almost operatic, work which tells the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den. The Miserere Mei encapsulates all of the most sumptuous and melodic writing which made the Dixit Dominus and Mass a 16 so popular. To finish the programme, we present Dixit Dominus.

This performance is generously supported by Hillary Eldridge, member of the Conductor's Circle

**ARMONICO CONSORT**

**TICKETS**  
www.armonico.org.uk  
www.malvern-theatres.co.uk  
Registered Charity No. 1103159

“Pure Pleasure”  
THE GUARDIAN

★★★★★  
THE TIMES

★★★★★  
THE INDEPENDENT

★★★★★  
BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

★★★★★  
THE TELEGRAPH









SUPPORT  
ARMONICO



### Dean Kelland: Imposter Syndrome

Until 22 December 2023. Ikon's exhibition features a number of Dean Kelland's new films, prints and sketchbooks that reimagine the psychoanalytic dialogue that has occurred between Pop Art and Prison Art since the 1960s. Referencing figures from popular culture such as Elvis and David Bowie, Kelland interrogates male identity and flawed notions of masculinity. It is the culmination of Kelland's four-year artist's residency at HMP Grendon (2019-2023), funded by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust.

## MIDLANDS ARTS CENTRE - MAC

Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham B12 9QH  
[macbirmingham.co.uk](http://macbirmingham.co.uk)

### Worlds Away: Art, Nature and Wellbeing

Until Sunday 26 November 2023 This exhibition brings together artists who have been inspired by the natural world and its power to stimulate feelings of belonging, mental and physical wellbeing. Artworks consider a range of views from the romantic vision of nature as a therapeutic companion to a new contemporary era of 'climate anxiety' and its enormous global challenges. Featured Artists: Stanley Spencer, Dame Laura Knight, Alfred Wallis, Richard Long, Frank Brangwyn, Dalziel + Scullion, Denise de Cordova, Joan Eardley, Madge Gill, Fred Hubble, John Kippin, Mariele Neudecker, Mimei Thompson, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Rona Lee, Lisa Milroy, Ming de Nasty, Mary Newcomb, John Newling, Paul Newman, Sarah Taylor Silverwood, Grace Williams, Ian Skoyles, Juneau Projects. Kindly supported by The Grimmitt Trust in Memory of Marjorie Welch, MK Rose Charitable Trust, Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Trust, Roughley Trust, Arts Council England, players of People's Postcode Lottery and Birmingham City Council.

### Madge Gill: The Clouds Will Burst the Sun Will Shine Again

Until Sunday 26 November 2023. A journey through the beautiful work of celebrated, self-taught artist Madge Gill (1882-1961). Gill's prolific work was born from a difficult life and the discovery of enduring inspiration from art, spirituality and nature. Drawings, paintings, embroidery and archival material explore the struggles she faced and the moments of experimentation, joy and hope. With thanks to Arts Council England, players of People's Postcode Lottery and Birmingham City Council for their support of this exhibition.

### Marley Starskey Butler: Thirty-Six

Saturday 11 November 2023 - Sunday 28 January 2024. Free entry, donations welcome. What happens when you've been an adult for longer than you've been a child? 'Thirty-Six' is the first solo exhibition of Birmingham-based multidisciplinary artist Marley Starskey Butler, coming soon to MAC's Community Gallery. The exhibition explores the subjects of family, empathy, trauma, identity and understanding. It is informed by both Starskey Butler's personal lived experience of social work and becoming a social worker later in life. The show features photography, punctuated with video, writing, and audio work from multiple bodies of work made between 2009 - 2023.

### Material Evidence: Quilt Art

Opens 12 January 2024. 'Material Evidence' is an exhibition of textile art by current and former members of the pan-European group Quilt Art, on the theme of memory and the power of stitch. It was inspired by the life and work of Mary Fogg, a founder member and pioneering textile artist, who

died in 2016 at the age of 95. The oldest group of its kind in Europe, Quilt Art, was founded in Britain in 1985. Its members come from the UK, Germany, Denmark, Hungary, Belgium and the United States. All are leading practitioners, and many are also noted teachers, lecturers and authors. Most of the artists take the quilt as their starting point, but many experiment with the traditional notion of quilt-making and produce distinctive, innovative and sometimes challenging work. They are united by their passion for fabric, stitch, texture and colour, and the limitless creative possibilities of the textile surface.

## RBSA GALLERY

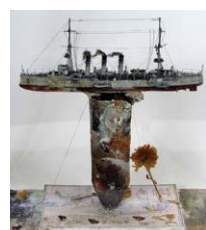
4 Brook Street, St. Paul's Square, Birmingham, B3 1SA  
[www.rbsa.org.uk](http://www.rbsa.org.uk)

### Birmingham Art Circle - Annual Exhibition: 'Sue Kirk and Rosalind Stoddart - Woven From the Field'

Until 11 November 2023. Birmingham Art Circle's annual exhibition showcases a wide range of works by established, practising artists working in a range of media, including print, painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, collage, photography and textiles. There is also the opportunity to meet the artists throughout the exhibition. Willow weaver Sue Kirk and textile artist Rosalind Stoddart both use materials grown and harvested from their land to create organic pieces that have simple clarity of aesthetic beauty. The exhibition aims to highlight the deep connection both artists share with their environment.

### RBSA Members and Associates Exhibition

14 November 2023 - 6 January 2024. Private view: Thursday 16 November 2023, 6pm - 8pm.. The annual RBSA Members and Associates Exhibition is an enormously diverse exhibition celebrating the variety of artistic practices associated with the RBSA. With over 150 works on display there is plenty to see as well as artists' talks on each Saturday of the show.



### Mark Gibbs at the RBSA Gallery

Ground floor exhibition space from 17 October - 11 November then a different selection as part of the Members and Associates exhibition from 16 November - 6 January. Mark Gibbs explores History and conflict through our relationship with animals through his paintings and sculptures of horsemen. In each show, cavalry from the First World War, made from wire and other recycled materials stare back at the viewer. He says, 'My work is a meditation on the fragility of life and the tragedy of obsolete power, remembrance is a major theme'. Based in Cumbria, Mark has exhibited regionally, nationally, and overseas. He won the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists [RBSA] Open Prize in 2020 and was elected an Associate in 2022. He is currently part of the 2023-24 New Light Prize Exhibition- a showcase of art from the North of England and was exhibited in 'Matisse and Contemporary Paper Artists' at the Rheged Gallery, Cumbria in 2020. [www.markgibbs.co.uk](http://www.markgibbs.co.uk)



# Mark Gibbs

Ground Floor RBSA Gallery

17 October - 11 November 2023

Members & Associates Exhibition

16 November 2023 - 6 January 2024

[www.markgibbs.co.uk](http://www.markgibbs.co.uk)

markgibbsartist



**RBSA**  
Gallery

4 Brook Street,  
St. Paul's Square,  
Birmingham, B3 1SA

Open Tues-Sat 10.30am-5pm,  
Closed Sun & Mon



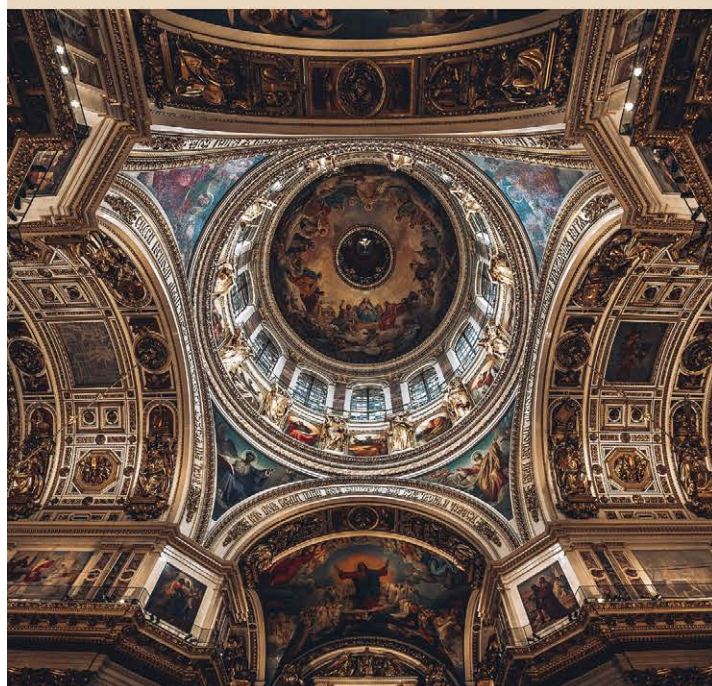
Sutton Coldfield Choral Society present

# FESTIVE BAROQUE

PERGOLES

Stabat Mater & Magnificat

VIVALDI Gloria



**25<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

Emmanuel Church, Wylde Green B72 1YG

7.30pm

**Tickets £15**

**Tel: 0121 354 6999**

Visit us at [www.suttonchoral.com](http://www.suttonchoral.com)

Sutton Coldfield Choral Society is a Registered Charity  
No. 508282



  
**ARTISAN ALCHEMY**  
GALLERY



A unique gallery in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, displaying exciting, individual bespoke jewellery and furniture of the highest quality.

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 0121 233 1186

84 Caroline Street, Birmingham, B3 1UP Open Tues-Sat | 11am-5pm





## BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET'S CLASSIC PRODUCTION RETURNS IN FEBRUARY 2024

Perhaps the most exquisite of the 19th-century classic ballets, *The Sleeping Beauty* was created over 100 years ago by one of the true masters of his craft, the legendary choreographer Marius Petipa.

**B**irmingham Royal Ballet's beautiful production is by former Director of the Company Sir Peter Wright and has been a firm favourite with audiences since its premiere, sprinkling ballet magic on this favourite childhood story and its cast of familiar characters.

The story follows the classic fairytale, telling of the birth of Princess Aurora and a foolish mistake that unleashes a terrible curse upon the innocent baby. Luckily the good Lilac Fairy is on hand to soften the magic of the evil fairy, Carabosse, and ensure the happy ending we all hope for.

With another classic score from that master of ballet of music, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, played live at all performances by the Company's 60-strong orchestra the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, this is a true musical tour de force.

At the forefront of course are the Company's world-class dancers – and one of the most admired and challenging roles in a ballerina's repertory, Princess Aurora, the *Sleeping Beauty* herself, whose grace, skill and technique are on display from her first entrance in Act I, during which she performs the breathtaking *Rose Adagio*, to the finale

and her spectacular grand pas de deux to celebrate her marriage to her prince.

And alongside this there's dazzling spectacle, dramatic scenery, intricate and ornate costumes, and an array of delightful fairytale characters – all in all an entertainment that's not to be missed.

Don't snooze – book now to secure the best seats at the best prices (makes a great gift, or a post-Christmas treat for yourself).

Performances run from 21 February to 2 March at Birmingham Hippodrome. Book direct at [birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com) ■



# BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

© Manvir Rai

Director Carlos Acosta

Sir Peter Wright's

## The Sleeping Beauty

21 February – 2 March

“Stunning”

The Telegraph

**H** BIRMINGHAM  
HIPPODROME

[birminghamhippodrome.com](http://birminghamhippodrome.com)

 Birmingham  
City Council

 ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

Regional public funding by  
ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND





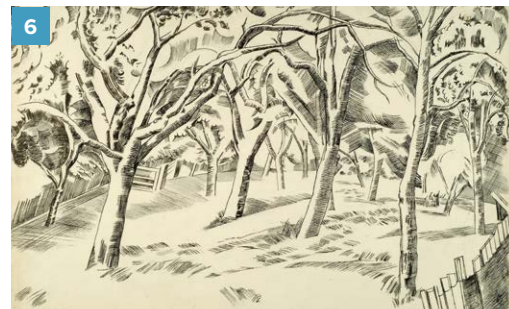
1



2



4



6



7



9

# FRIENDS' QUIZ

BY JIM WELLS

- Birmingham Museums acquired a Gibson Custom Les Paul guitar played by Basil Gabbidon, a member of the band Steel Pulse. Which Birmingham Suburb featured in the title of their most famous album?
- Geraldine Cadbury featured in the summer edition of 'Artefacts', but which sister-in-law gave away her inheritance?
- Retro arcade games Pac-Man and Tetris are currently featured as part of an exhibition in which Birmingham Museums venue?
- This much restored and relocated building is due to be visited by the Friends in 2024. What is it?
- Recently a new five year agreement was signed for the German market to continue in Birmingham, but which German city is the partner?  
a) Munich    b) Frankfurt    c) Ulm
- This ink sketch, purchased by the Friends in 1949, is by an artist best known for his First World War paintings. Who was he?
- These glasses were produced for the visit of Queen Victoria to Aston Hall in 1858 and were purchased for Birmingham with help from the Friends. But who was the manufacturer?
- Which South Staffordshire pub recently caught fire and was demolished by its owners?
- Who lived in a house like this?
- Which building, restored by Birmingham City University, received the Victorian Society's Birmingham and West Midlands Conservation Award for 2022?  
a) Eccles Works    b) Smethwick Town Hall  
c) St Martin's Church

1. Custom Gibson Les Paul Electric Guitar, played by Basil Gabbidon of Steel Pulse.  
2. By Thomas Bowman Garvie (d.1944), 1912, 1979V534; Transferred from Birmingham Reference Library.  
4. By Henry Baker, 1864-75; 1969P9. 6. 'The Orchard', 1922; 1949P9; Presented by the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, 1949. 7. 'Green Wine Glass, Ruby Sorbet Glasses', 1858; 1885M3410.1 and 1999M17.2; Presented by the Friends of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund. 10. Soho House, Dining Room.

All photos by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CCO.  
To access BMT's Digital Image Resource please visit: [dams.birminghammuseums.org.uk](https://dams.birminghammuseums.org.uk)  
On the BMT website there is an option to purchase framed prints of many of the pictures held in the collection.



1. Handsworth 2. Beatrice Cadbury 3. Thinktank 4. Selly Manor  
5. (b) Frankfurt 6. Paul Nash 7. F. & C. Osler 8. Crooked House  
9. Mr and Mrs Matthew Boulton 10. (a) Eccles Works




## 2023 NOVEMBER

 Wednesday 8    \*\*    Visit to the Acme Whistle Factory


## DECEMBER

 Tuesday 5    #    'Cameo Glass' – Dr Kate Round  
 Tuesday 5    #    Meet and Greet the Committee


## 2024 FEBRUARY

 Wednesday 7    \*    'Makers and Machines: Creativity in the Computer Age' –  
 Felicity McWilliams at Thinktank


## MARCH

 Tuesday 19    +    'The Screw Kings' – Henrietta Lockhart at Winterbourne House

## APRIL

 Wednesday 24    \*    Tour of Selly Manor Museum and Bournville Village

## JUNE

 Friday 21    \*    Walking tour around the Moor Pool Estate

- \* Details are enclosed with this mailing (see pages 6-7)
- # Included in the previous mailing, but places are still available.  
Please contact us to book a place (see page 6)
- \*\* Included in the previous mailing and fully booked – sorry!
- + Date for your Diary – information will be included in a future edition of 'Artefacts'

### EVENT KEY



ANNUAL EVENT



DAYTIME TALK



EVENING EVENT



GUIDED TOUR



OUTING

THE NEXT ISSUE OF ARTEFACTS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY 2024

