

**December 2024
Issue 227**

The Friends visit Glasgow

In this edition

- visits to the Burrell Collection, the Hunterian Art Gallery, the Hill House Helensburgh, Kelvingrove Museum and Glasgow Cathedral
- a look at four superb 18th century glasses acquired with the help of the Friends
- a visit to the Bristol Beacon



From the Chair

AGM and Curators' Talks

It was lovely to see over 60 members at our AGM in October, and to hear comments later about how much members had enjoyed the afternoon. I am pleased to tell you that Ray Barnett, until his early retirement 2 years ago Head of Collections & Archives for the museums service, was elected to the vacancy for a trustee on our Executive Committee. Since his retirement he has continued to be involved with the museum service as a volunteer working with the entomology collections and supporting BRERC, the environmental records centre. Until his retirement Ray had a close connection with the Friends over many years as our main contact with the museums service, and I am very much looking forward to working with him again.

Once the formal proceedings of the AGM were completed, we were treated to some fascinating short talks from members of the museum team, broadly themed on our support for the museum and archives over the last year or so. The speakers were each limited to 10 minutes, and some of their topics will be covered in future newsletters. The first of the talks was from Phil Walker, who has been in post as Head of Culture and Creative Industries since March, who spoke about some of the service's recent successes and emphasised the value to his team of our support, both financial and otherwise.

Subscriptions increase

The motion to increase our annual subscriptions to £30 for single and £40 for family/joint membership was passed at the AGM with no dissenters.

Please change your standing order amount as soon as convenient, rather than waiting until closer to the payment date of 1 January.

Docks Heritage Weekend

Docks Heritage Weekend is a regular fixture on the last weekend of September each year – a collaboration between M Shed, *SS Great Britain*, Underfall Yard, Brunel's Other Bridge and Bristol Ferry Boats, generously sponsored by The Bristol Port Company. Richard Avery ran a free shuttle service between M Shed and Underfall Yard in his 1960 Bristol coach – and of course the Friends ran a cake sale! The whole weekend was great fun, with lots of visitors enjoying all the sights and sounds, including dramatized performances of cargo handling on a 1950s working dockside, with actors from Show of Strength theatre company joining the M Shed volunteers. Thank you to all involved – especially our bakers, marmalade makers and sales assistants, who raised over £600 across the two days.

Cover photo: Woodblock print, central panel from a triptych by Utagawa Kuniaki I, *Eastern Magic Lantern Slides of Wakamurasaki*, 1869. Acquired with the assistance of the Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives © Bristol Culture

'Portbury' steam locomotive

Portbury's major overhaul – needed to renew her 10-year boiler certificate – has reached a key stage of replacing her corroded tubes, the part of the loco which transfers the heat of the fire to the water in the boiler that generates the steam. While that work is taking place there is very restricted access to the railway workshop but on special weekends, such as Docks Heritage, the doors are slid back so that visitors can view progress from a safe distance.



◀ In the Railway Workshop at L Shed the boiler of steam loco Portbury has been lifted off the frames (the equivalent of the chassis of a car) to make it accessible, so it can be checked thoroughly and any necessary repairs made, including replacing the steam tubes

©Sue Thurlow

BAFM

The 2024 British Association of Friends of Museums (BAFM) Annual Conference, on Friday 4 and Saturday 5 October, hosted by The Friends of Wisbech and Fenland Museum, Cambridgeshire, was very successful. The overall theme was Friends' groups' support for their museums in these financially challenging times, and as always at conference the focus was on sharing the diverse experiences of the groups so we could learn from each other's successes and challenges. In the afternoon breakout sessions, we discussed and noted what each group had learned worked and did not work as fundraisers for them, and those ideas will be collated and published on the BAFM website so that groups who were not represented at the conference can benefit too. In my breakout group one of the recurring themes under successes was, unsurprisingly, cake.

I am pleased to report that in the BAFM National Newsletter Awards our lovely newsletter was Highly Commended – although it is always a surprise to me when we are not recognised as the overall winner! Congratulations to Tim and Ann for editing and designing the Newsletter each quarter, and to all those, both Friends and museum professionals, who contribute articles and images.

Plans for hosting the BAFM 2025 Annual Conference here in Bristol on 3 to 5 October are progressing well, and we have already booked most of our speakers as well as the conference venue in the Studio at M Shed. The theme of the 2025 Conference will be 'Who do we represent? Diversity and inclusion in Friends groups and in the heritage we support'. In a future issue you will hear how you can be involved in the conference and associated extra-curricular activities, as a volunteer, or a participant – or indeed both.

Sue Thurlow Chair

Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives

Staff news

We have a few new starters across our teams. We are delighted to welcome Lilly Cook into the role of Heritage Grants and Project Officer in the Development team. Lilly may be known to some of you in her previous roles in the Visitor Experience & Operation teams at M Shed and Blaise.

Lucy Bonner has started as Senior Archivist. Lucy comes with a wealth of experience. She has an MA in Archives and Records Management from UCL and has experience working as an Archivist for the London Borough of Bexley, the London Borough of Bromley and the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. Lucy is particularly interested in the accessibility of archives and digital preservation.

In the Visual Arts department, we have welcomed Elisa Ricci as a Documentation Assistant. Elisa is working with Sarah Bustamante-Brauning, our Collections Digitisation Officer, to photograph and digitise our Islamic and Asian Arts collections, including parts of the Schiller collection. This work is made possible by a combination of a legacy left by an anonymous donor, donations from two private donors and funding from the Sir Percival David Trust, for which we are very grateful. The project should allow us to share these collections with the public more effectively.

Sadly, we also say goodbye to a couple of long-standing colleagues. Roz Bonnet is leaving South West Museum Development for an exciting new opportunity with Bath Spa University to follow her passion in Learning and Development, and in particular supporting young people. Roz has been a truly amazing colleague for a whole decade with Museum Development and, before that, since 2011 for the Museum Service. Roz leaves us with an incredible legacy from her time working in Museum Development, not just for the South West programme but also her contributions to

Museum Development England, which are numerous.

We also bid farewell to Jayne Pucknell, Senior Archivist for the British Empire & Commonwealth Collection, who retires after 9 years with The Bristol Archives. We thank Jayne for all her hard work and amazing contributions to the service and wish her all the best for her retirement.

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

The past few months have been a busy time across all sites and venues as we head into the festive season, though much of the work has been going on behind the scenes.

The eagle-eyed among you may have spotted various pieces of scaffolding going up and down around BMAG over the last few months. This has been to facilitate works that have been funded by Arts Council England's Museum Estate and Development Fund, including a new roof on the natural history offices on the west side of the building, and new windows being installed in the conservation offices.

While the building works were happening, some artworks usually kept in the fine art store and conservation studio needed to be moved to protect them. So, for a couple of weeks from late September, our ground floor exhibition space became a temporary store and a live conservation area. The team held several talks and events to highlight these stored collections and share more about their work.



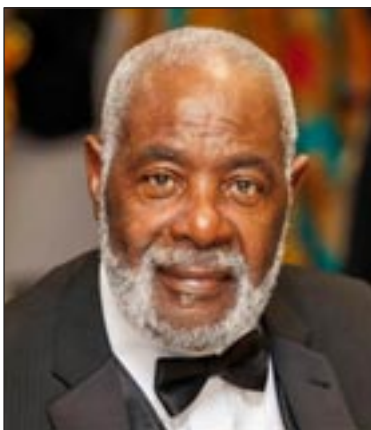
▲ The basement Fine Art Store
© Bristol Culture



◀ The ground floor temporary exhibition gallery
© Bristol Culture

Black History Month

In October, we celebrated Black History Month with two wonderful events. At Bristol Museum & Art Gallery we premiered a new documentary about Guy Bailey, one of the heroes of the Bristol Bus Boycott. The film highlights what Guy has achieved for Bristol, and for England, in the years since he went for that now-infamous job interview. Besides his lifelong pursuit of civil rights activism, Guy has secured housing for community elders, helped give youths a future through sport, and has been one of the pillars of Bristol's African-Caribbean community for over sixty years.



▲ **Guy Bailey**
© Bristol Culture

Meanwhile at M Shed, we hosted a free, all-day, building-wide festival to celebrate Bristol's Black History. There were dance workshops on the theme 'Joy is an Act of Resistance' with Penny Marie – a long-established dancer, choreographer, community facilitator, activist and the founder of the Freedom Soul Dance company. There was also traditional storytelling courtesy of South African cultural activist Kabbo Hue Ferdinand. We rounded off the day with Rankin Snoopy, who brought his legendary Jah Lokko sound system to the party.

Funding

We are delighted to announce that we secured £40,000 from the Art Fund's Reimagine programme. This grant has been awarded to continue our partnership with Rising Arts Agency to translate the learning from the Extinction Silences project (funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation) to staff and sector. This will include training, a conference, and a small peer network with 2-3 other museums who are also leading in this work. It will also fund working with a 3D designer to look at how we can present this work in the World Wildlife Gallery, so that we can

involve visitors in the conversation and consult with the community.

Julia Carver, Curator of Visual Arts made a successful application to the V&A Purchase Grant for £17,500. This will be combined with £12,500 from the Contemporary Art Society and £5,500 from the Friends to acquire 'The Neon Hieroglyph' by Tai Shani (2022, 57 minutes, edition of 3 plus 2 Artist's Proofs) – a gothic horror film with a feminist twist. Tai Shani is a Turner Prize-winning artist, and this work will join a growing collection of feminist art, including moving image works.

Caroline Booth-Morris and Beth Cutter

Co-Development Managers

Events and Exhibitions

Wildlife Photographer of the Year 60

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery until 27 April 2025

Celebrating its 60th year, this incredible show features 100 stunning wildlife photography images, with thanks to the Natural History Museum in London. These photos capture the amazing diversity of the natural world, showcasing fascinating animal behaviour and curious species. Through powerful storytelling and captivating visuals, the exhibition inspires visitors to appreciate the natural world.

With nearly 60,000 entries from over 117 countries, the winning images are selected by international experts for their creativity, originality, and technical brilliance.

▼ **One of the 100 stunning images on display in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition**

© Daryo Ostapenko



Bristol Photo Festival

As part of the city-wide Bristol Photo Festival, Bristol Museums are hosting three exciting photography exhibitions.

Dreamlines (M Shed until 20 April)

This is a collaborative project showcasing Bristol through the eyes of local photographers.

Staring into the Abyss (Bristol Museum & Art Gallery until 12 January)

Hashem Shakeri's debut UK exhibition and captures life in Afghanistan under the Taliban.

The House is a Body (Georgian House until 31 December)

This is Akosua Viktoria Adu-Sanyah's new work inspired by the house's colonial history.

▼ *Snapshots of daily life in Afghanistan as the country readjusts to life under the Taliban*
© Hashem Shakeri



Family Festive Fun

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery until 24 December

There will be daily, free drop-in activities from Tuesday 3 to Tuesday 24 December at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery.

Throughout December the Winterstoke Hall will feature a beautifully-decorated Christmas tree, the perfect backdrop for family photos. You can leave a message for our Christmas wishing tree and send a letter to Santa.

Special events days include 'Dance with Doris' - an extra special silent disco for all the family with Doris, our very own plesiosaur who hangs above the museum café. See the Museums' What's On pages or call in at the museum for more details.

Winter lectures (sponsored by the Friends)

All at 7.30pm in the M Shed Studio and online

23 January: Artistic Invention in Fourteenth Century Siena – The Rise of Painting with Professor Beth Williamson from the University of Bristol

13 February: Colonial History – Two Country Walks Through England's South West with Professor Corinne Fowler from the University of Leicester

13 March: Why Are We So Fascinated by Ancient Egypt? with Dr Campbell Price from the University of Manchester, Chair of trustees of the Egypt Exploration Society

For further details see our Events insert, and book on the Museum's What's On webpages.

Lunar New Year

Celebrations will take place in early February 2025, marking Bristol's longstanding links with East and South East Asia. See the Museum's What's On pages for details.



Lunar New Year celebrations – a breathtaking 'Ballet on Shoulders' performance at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

© Bristol Culture

Trip to Glasgow

15-21 September 2024

Our group of 34 Friends left Bristol in sunshine, encountered heavy rain in Cheshire, where we stopped for lunch at Little Moreton Hall, and then drove through the picturesque Lake District in more sunshine, stopping overnight in Carlisle. The sun stayed with us for most of the week and we enjoyed temperatures rivalling those in Italy. Jordan, our unfazed coach driver, had never been to Glasgow before but he navigated us safely to all our destinations and on the final day returned us to Bristol by early evening.

Mary Bailey

Monday 16 September

The Burrell Collection

The Friends' visit to Glasgow began and ended memorably – first with a visit in brilliant sunshine to the Burrell Collection and on the final day with a splendid afternoon tea in the Willow Tearooms (Rennie Mackintosh designed) on Sauchiehall Street.

The exterior of the Burrell is impressive but the refurbished interior even more so. No wonder the Burrell was Art Fund Museum of the year in 2023! As if the core collection was not enough, there was also a stunning 'Discovering Degas' exhibition on the lower floor which many of us visited.

The redisplay of the collection (from 2022) emphasizes space and light throughout the galleries. The extensive North Gallery has light flooding in, with the trees outside as a backdrop to exhibits. Themed groups of exhibits show links between places and cultures. The collection is accessible – not only physically but also in presentation, with clear and informative signage. Visitors are encouraged to think about exhibits, sometimes in ways to disturb traditional interpretations. Interactive multilingual screens gave fascinating, sometimes humorous, background information – and all the installations were working! One fascinating gallery reimagined a long, rather dark room in Burrell's home, Hutton Castle, with its heavy carved furniture and treasured items carefully placed for his personal enjoyment. It contrasted well with the brightness of the galleries outside.

The extent and variety of the collection is owed to Sir William Burrell (1861 – 1958) and his wife, Constance, who gifted over 9,000 objects to the city of Glasgow in 1944. Burrell's interest in art started in his teens and continued throughout his life. A fortune made in the family shipping business allowed him to indulge his love of collecting, though always with a canny eye to the price. Although his main interest was in mediaeval works, he amassed an impressive collection of Islamic and Chinese art and many fine Old Masters. He was also interested in the latest trends in art and sculpture and purchased works by Rodin, Degas, Cezanne, Whistler and Epstein as well as encouraging the 'Glasgow Boys'. It was thrilling to see so many exceptional works in one place. The range of artefacts is impressive: furniture and carved chests, tapestries and carpets, ceramics, stained glass, lace and embroidery, ornate clothing, armour and weaponry, statuary and paintings, even stone archways and window surrounds. This was a splendid start to our trip!

Susan Hibberd



▲ *Alabaster statue of St Anthony c. 1450*
© Martin Bailey

▼ *Gold disc worn by an attendant at the Asante court in Africa, c. 1870*
© Mary Bailey



Tuesday 17 September

City Coach Tour

The focus of our trip was the architect/designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh so Joan, our Blue Badge guide, ensured we stopped off at the House for an Art Lover. This arts and cultural centre was built between 1989 and 1996 to a 1901 design by Mackintosh and his wife, Margaret MacDonald, for a German architectural magazine competition.

Joan showed us the main sights of Glasgow: the cathedral and the necropolis; the university with its museums; city hall with its amazing staircase; the Ovo Hydro arena and exhibition centre; the Clydeside distillery in an old pump house; the Riverside Museum - pointing out many attractive buildings en route. She also described the age-old rivalry between Edinburgh and Glasgow as the contrast between the quiet elegance of Princess Grace of Monaco (Edinburgh) and the brashness of Madonna (Glasgow). In two and a half hours we learned a lot about the city.

Mary Bailey

Hill House, Helensburgh

We visited Hill House and gardens at Helensburgh in glorious sunshine. Hill House was built in 1902 for Walter Blackie, publisher, by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, architect, designer and artist. The house has gained an iconic status and is regarded as an architectural masterpiece representing Mackintosh's vision and the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement.

The external appearance of this large white house is striking. Standing in an elevated position, its high walls, turrets and towers present a complex silhouette reflecting a baronial style of architecture from the past. Unfortunately, the concrete Mackintosh used on the external walls has cracked and leaks. While deciding what to do, the National Trust for Scotland has put a temporary protective covering over the whole building.

Internally there is a freshness about the designs because of the interplay of nature and geometry, and a carefully calculated use of light and space. The hall has panels of dark-stained pine around the stairway. Light from the stair window filters through the tall, straight timbers of the staircase and makes the coloured glass insets glow. The hall is lit by large rectangular pendants decorated with designs of the honesty plant.

Squares and rectangles are everywhere – in the panels of furniture, in the organic motifs stencilled on walls; in the design of carpets; in light fittings; and in glass insets in the doors. The pink rose motif with its petals outlined in silver seems to be the most frequently occurring image. In the main bedroom the walls are stencilled with flowing roses and high-backed chairs with their straight lines of lattice work emphasise Mackintosh's linking of geometry and nature. The drawing room has been described as 'an elegant rose garden' because roses are depicted on the ivory-coloured walls. On each side of the door frame there is a niche for a slender vase of roses to scent the room. The seat in the bay window gives perfect light for reading as well as superb views of the Firth of Clyde and of the gardens with their ponds, terraces and herbaceous borders.

The careful use of uncluttered space and light within the house and the harmony of the designs had been appreciated by us all, so it came as no surprise to learn that the Blackie family had lived and been happy at Hill House for almost 50 years. This would have pleased Mackintosh who had said of Hill House: 'It is not an Italian Villa, an English Mansion House, a Swiss Chalet, or a Scotch Castle. It is a Dwelling House'.

Carol Lear

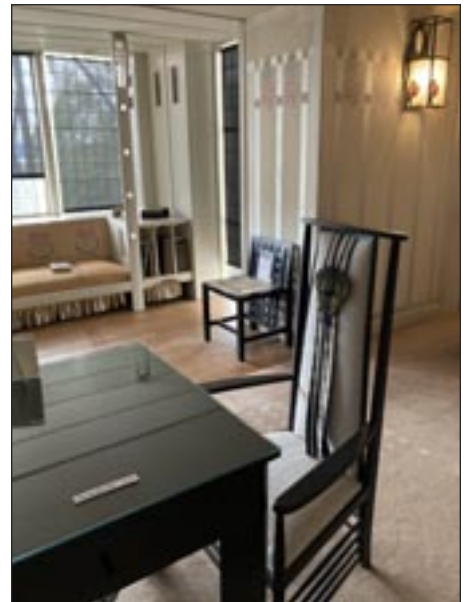
Anna Blackie's bedroom, the Hill House ▶

© Mary Bailey



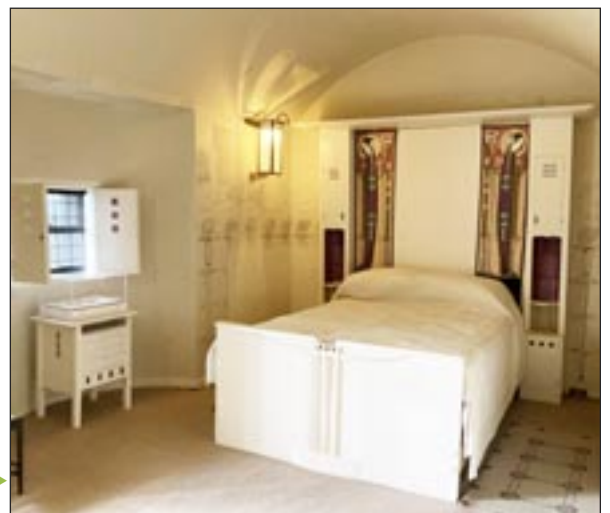
▲ *Impressive staircase in Glasgow's city hall*

© by Mary Bailey



▲ *Reading alcove at the Hill House*

© Mary Bailey



Wednesday 18 September

Hunterian Art Gallery and the Mackintosh House

The Hunterian Art Gallery, the first in Scotland, was set up in 1807 to house the art collection of William Hunter, a Glasgow-trained anatomist and physician. The extensive art collection includes the largest collection of paintings by James Whistler and works by many Scottish artists which are very effectively displayed against a rich dark maroon background.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his wife Margaret MacDonald Mackintosh saw interior design as an art form that included furniture, metalwork, textiles, graphics and watercolours, and which took account of light, colour, space and atmosphere. Their ideas are expressed in the reconstruction of the house where they lived from 1906 to 1914.

The Mackintosh house is situated within an extension of the Hunterian building, with the front door positioned considerably above ground level because of the topography. The original house was demolished in the 1960s and reassembled in 1981. As it is quite small only 12 people were allowed in at one time.

The house has steep staircases, and Mackintosh retained the original earlier Victorian banisters, rails and cornices. The hall and a rather grey dining room are at ground level with a large, light, south-facing studio-drawing room on the first floor, followed by a bedroom on the second floor. The attic contains a gallery of Mackintosh items including a bedroom from elsewhere designed in 1916.

Afterwards we set off downhill for the Kelvingrove Museum in brilliant sunshine. It was estimated that day we walked nearly 5 miles altogether!

Marianne Pitman



▲ 1916 attic bedroom at the Mackintosh House
© Mary Bailey

▶ Dining room at the Mackintosh House`

© Mary Bailey



▼ Wall light fitting in the Mackintosh House

© Mary Bailey



Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum is an imposing red sandstone building, situated in its own parkland in the west end of the city. As we entered, we were greeted by the thunder of its mighty organ giving us Handel's March from Scipio. Lunchtime concerts happen daily, and the gallery holds the world record for daily organ recitals.

The Centre Hall was full of people – sitting at the café, visiting reception, listening to the organ recital, or just passing through – and is big enough to accommodate comfortably all this activity. Kelvingrove was built in 1901, in flamboyant Spanish baroque style, financed by industrialists and merchants wanting a building which reflected their wealth, confidence and commitment to education for all. As in Bristol, it is both a museum and an art gallery. Its redesign in 2006 organised the collections into two halves: Life, covering natural history, prehistory and human history, and Expression, which is mainly the fine art collections.

I tried to visit the 'ten highlights' in the time we had available. My own top choices were all works of art and my favourite was Salvador Dali's Christ of St John of the Cross which is seen as his most significant painting in his later years. It is radically different from other crucifixions. Viewers look down on Christ, positioned above a watery landscape. His head is bowed. We are unable to see His face at all. For Dali it represented his latest theories about religion and science, with Christ representing the nucleus of the atom. For viewers it represents a new perspective on the crucifixion, and a brilliant representation of the muscles in the suspended body.

The story behind La Faruk Madonna by Giuseppe Baldan was fascinating. This triptych was painted in 1941 on the back of old flour bags by an Italian prisoner-of-war for a mud chapel in a British camp in Somalia. The Virgin Mary is in the centre, with a protective angel in each side panel, all shown against a background of the prisoner-of-war camp. That the work survived is testament to the hope it gave to the Italian prisoners.

There were many other attractions: the Glasgow Boys; Charles Rennie Mackintosh; Sir Roger the (stuffed and with tusks added) elephant; kilts for fighting men and tartan as fashion; and a popular Victorian sculpture, Motherless, showing the grief-stricken father holding his motherless daughter asleep in his lap. The mother has died in childbirth or during an epidemic.

All too soon we were meeting up to depart. The front entrance is identical to the back entrance, so I was relieved to locate our group – of course – in the café! Thank you, Mary, for the brilliant week in Glasgow of which this highlight visit was just one small part.

Katherine Martin



▲ *A Lady in Black by FCBdell, one of the Glasgow colourists, c 1925, one of the Glasgow colourists, Kelvingrove Museum*
© Mary Bailey



▲ *The Ingram Street Tearooms, Glasgow, 1901, Kelvingrove Museum*
© Mary Bailey



◀ *Desk in the Mackintosh gallery at Kelvingrove Museum*
© Mary Bailey

Thursday 19 September

Glasgow cathedral, Provand's Lordship and St Mungo Museum

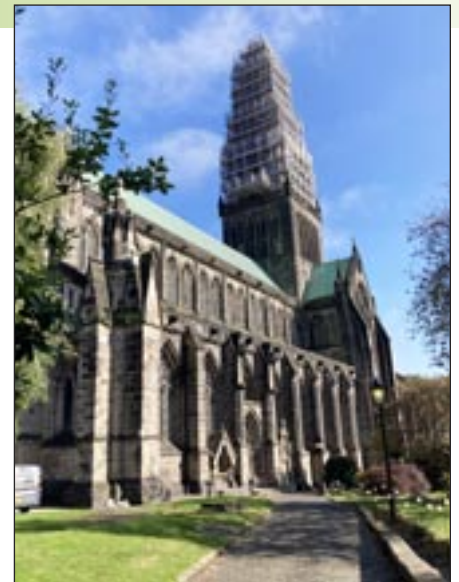
Glasgow cathedral is situated near the university quarter of the city and was founded in 1136 on the site of St Mungo's church. It marks the birthplace of the city and is the only cathedral on the Scottish mainland to survive the Reformation of 1560 intact. There is an upper and lower church – one of only three examples in Europe. Although there is no bishop's seat the building is a cathedral of the Church of Scotland, which is Presbyterian so contains none of the panoply of the Anglican church. The cathedral contains a fine collection of stained-glass windows which range from 12 small panels of 16th century Flemish roundels to outstanding examples of 20th century post-war glass.

St Mungo (properly known as St Kentigern – Mungo is a nickname meaning 'dear one') is the patron saint of Glasgow and the city's coat of arms reflects the four miracles associated with the saint: the tree that never grew, the bird that never sang, the bell that never rang and the fish that never swam. The tomb of St Mungo is in the lower church together with the modern St Kentigern tapestry, made over two years with gold and silver thread depicting the seasons with the tree of life in the centre.

Opposite the cathedral is the St Mungo Museum with galleries of religious life and art (including stained glass), and a Scottish gallery. From the top floor there is a beautiful view of the necropolis – an impressive ornamental garden cemetery with tombs and obelisks.

Across the road from the museum is the oldest building in Glasgow, the Provand's Lordship. Built in 1471 it is one of only three mediaeval buildings in the city and is named after an early resident, the Canon of Provan. It has been recently refurbished and contains period furniture from the Burrell Collection.

Catherine Dixon



▲ *Exterior of Glasgow cathedral*
© Mary Bailey



▲ *St Kentigern's tomb, Glasgow Cathedral*
© Mary Bailey



▲ *David (left) and Elijah, stained glass panels by Sir Edward Burne Jones, St Mungo museum*
© Mary Bailey



▶ *Lamp standard in the cathedral precinct showing the four miracles of St Mungo*
© Mary Bailey

◀ *Restored room of the Provand's Lordship with chairs from the Burrell Collection*
© Mary Bailey



Riverside Museum

The museum is housed in a spectacular building alongside the Clyde, designed by the late internationally renowned architect Dame Zaha Hadid. It replaced the former Transport Museum and now contains the city's transport and technology collections.

Glasgow has a long and proud engineering history, including the construction of ships, railways and motor vehicles. The Clyde was home to several shipbuilding companies responsible for many famous commercial, passenger and naval ships. To reflect this the museum contained lots of excellent ship models. Unfortunately, the most impressive display was not working. A two-level conveyor should have brought a variety of models to each end of a very long display case, where all the descriptions of them were. With the motors not working it was necessary to keep walking up and down to identify each of them.

There was a similar issue with the impressive walls of cars and motorcycles. The display was three storeys high, but all the labels were at ground level. We walked up to view a vehicle and back down to read the information. Still, it did get our steps total for the day ticking along!

There were two examples of the 28,000 locomotives built in Glasgow and exported all over the world. Public road transport is a particular interest of mine and there were examples of single- and double-deck trams and a Glasgow Corporation bus. Not a Bristol, sadly, but an Albion, a Glasgow manufacturer back in the day, so it made perfect sense. There was plenty else to see including a recreated cobbled street, bicycles and a tall ship moored outside. Cafés too, of course; the FBMGA army marches on its stomach. We had a thoroughly grand day out!

Richard Avery

*Riverside Museum, designed
by Zaha Hadid* ►
© Martin Bailey



▲ *Steam locomotive cab*
© Richard Avery



Sharmanka Theatre

An evening visit to this kinetic theatre rounded off the day. Billed as one of Glasgow's top tourist attractions, this promenade display of mechanical sculptures with accompanying music and lighting is funny, absorbing and moving in equal measure. The sculptures, made from bits of scrap and carved wood, were originally created by Eduard Bersudsky and his wife in St Petersburg; they then moved to Scotland in 1993 and have created more sculptures since then. The displays telling the stories behind the sculptures are poignant and insightful, giving much food for thought.

Mary Bailey

*Orient Express, a 2022 exhibit
at Sharmanka Theatre* ►
© Mary Bailey



Friday 20 September

Holmwood

Holmwood, a large family home built in 1857-58, is situated a few miles south of central Glasgow in Cathcart. The day was grey. The exterior of the building seemed somewhat dour, so our spirits fell. We had no inkling of the wonderful burst of colour and design we were about to see.

Brothers James and Robert Cooper shrewdly bought the lease of Millholm Paper Mill just in time to make a lot of money from government contracts during the Crimean War. To show off his new wealth and status, James commissioned Alexander Thomson to design and build a house overlooking the mill.

Holmwood, considered to be Thomson's finest building, is asymmetrical with the ground floor larger than upstairs. The house is very light as there are large windows.

Inside, the public rooms are extravagantly ornamented in wood, plaster and marble, blending styles and colours. There are hints of the Mediterranean with pink walls and blue skies. I particularly enjoyed the parlour with its huge semi-circular window looking down through the garden towards the mill. Despite the ornate plasterwork and dark wallpaper covered in gold stars it has the feel of a family room. Each room is symmetrical with carved doors always in pairs. This is particularly clear in the rather severe dining room with its huge marble sideboard and a frieze illustrating scenes from the Iliad. There is a delightful marble fireplace in the hallway with built-in barometer surrounded by signs of the zodiac.

The main staircase is lit from a dramatic cupola and leads to the bedrooms. The master bedroom with its en-suite bathroom was decorated with gold starred wallpaper and gold frieze.

James Cooper died leaving no heirs, so the family home and contents were sold in 1909 with much of the money going to local charities. The Sisters of the Lady of the Missions ran the house as a primary school in the 1960s and used it as their convent. The dining room became the chapel, and the confessional can still be found behind one cupboard door. When the National Trust bought it in 1994 most of the wonderful decoration was covered in magnolia paint.

Since then, the National Trust has painstakingly restored the internal decoration using references such as *Villa and Cottage Architecture* published in 1868, in which Holmwood is illustrated and described. The walls have been painted to Thomson's designs. Small scraps of the original wall coverings have been left to show the accuracy of the restoration. We were amazed to learn that the evenly spaced gold stars on the walls of the parlour had been individually hand stamped. Sadly, the furniture, carpets and furnishings were dispersed in the 1909 sale.

The young, lively and versatile staff take on a variety of jobs at the same time: conservators, guides and staffing their homely café which was once an open courtyard. Thanks to them for making our tour so enjoyable. Thanks also to Mary for organising yet another quirky and surprising visit.

Sue Pears

Thomson avoided popular Gothic styles and took inspiration from Greek and Egyptian architecture with pillars, friezes and carvings, and Assyrian and Hindu decoration.

© Mary Bailey



▲ **Fireplace in the entrance hall at Holmwood**
© Mary Bailey





Table laid for tea in the parlour
at The Tenement House

© Mary Bailey

The kitchen in The Tenement
House

© Mary Bailey



The Tenement House

With an hour to spare at lunchtime we headed uphill to a red sandstone Victorian building, north of Sauchiehall Street, the ground and first floor of which are occupied by the National Trust. On each floor there would have been two flats and in one of these Agnes Toward lived from 1911 until 1965, with her mother whilst she was alive and then on her own for the rest of her life. The flat has been preserved with all their furniture as it would have been when Agnes was there.

Far from being a slum, as the word 'tenement' conjures, it is a cosy and comfortable home still lit by gas and just as it was for Agnes' lifetime. Leading from the central hallway are four rooms. The bathroom has all mod cons including running water and a flush toilet. The kitchen is dominated by a wonderful range and contains many bits of childhood nostalgia. There is a mangle, kitchen scales, a carpet beater and a clothes airer hanging from the ceiling. The large parlour has a dining table in the bay window and some comfy chairs. The bedroom is also spacious with a brass bed and Agnes' sewing machine on a table by the window. There are beds behind curtains in the kitchen and the parlour where she and her mother slept when they took in lodgers.

The place feels so personal with all Agnes' carefully kept and obviously loved possessions scattered around. If you get the chance do go and visit.

Sue Pears

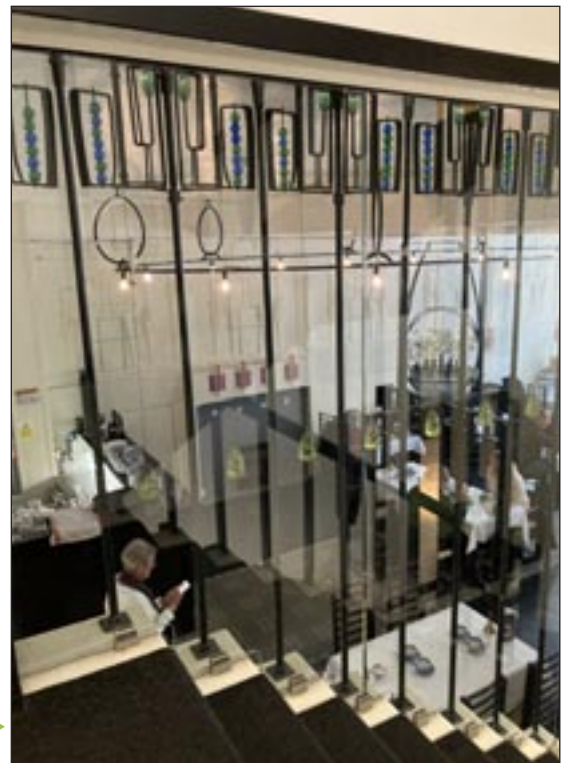
Mackintosh at The Willow Tearooms

As a final indulgence to end our visit to Glasgow we took afternoon tea at the famous Mackintosh tearooms on Sauchiehall Street, now owned and run by the National Trust. With an enormous list of teas from which to choose, plus tiers of tiny sandwiches and cakes, it was slightly overwhelming. Of course, the service and presentation were excellent, and doggie bags were even provided for those who wanted to enjoy their cakes later. The décor was as Mackintosh had designed it, so a fitting finale to our Glasgow experience.

Mary Bailey

Mackintosh glass panels in the Willow Tearooms

© Mary Bailey



Four recent glass acquisitions

Thanks to the support of the Friends, we have recently acquired four superb glasses from the Peter Lazarus collection. The glasses will become part of the displays in the glass gallery at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery.

Peter Lazarus was headmaster of the Downs School at Wraxall, near Bristol and a leading expert in the field of glass. He began collecting in the early 1960s and amassed an extraordinary collection comprising 265 drinking glasses. In addition to establishing his own collection, Peter assembled important collections of glass for Harveys of Bristol and Cinzano (UK) Limited. In 1983, Bristol Museum & Art Gallery acquired 164 glasses from Peter's collection, which are on display in our glass gallery. A further eight were purchased in 1989. The four examples which we have recently acquired include a cordial glass with a rare mauve twist stem (ca. 1770), an English drinking glass engraved 'Sampson Austen 1759', a large, engraved goblet commemorating a silver wedding anniversary (1746) and a Silesian engraved goblet and cover (c.1740-60). The addition of these pieces helps to further the development of our outstanding collection of drinking glasses. The acquisition was made possible with support from the ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives and Giles Woodward as Trustee of the Estate of Jean Allan.

The city of Bristol has a long tradition of glassmaking, the history of which is reflected within our galleries at Bristol Museum and M Shed. References to glass manufacture in the region date back several centuries but by the end of the 1600s tall glass cones had become an iconic feature of the city's skyline and the glass industry flourished throughout the following century. Crown or window glass, bottles, lead glass and coloured glass, for example the so-called 'Bristol Blue', are examples of the products for which the city's craft workers became renowned.

Like other local establishments, the glass industry responded to Bristol's role as a manufacturing and trading city. Raw materials were available locally or could be



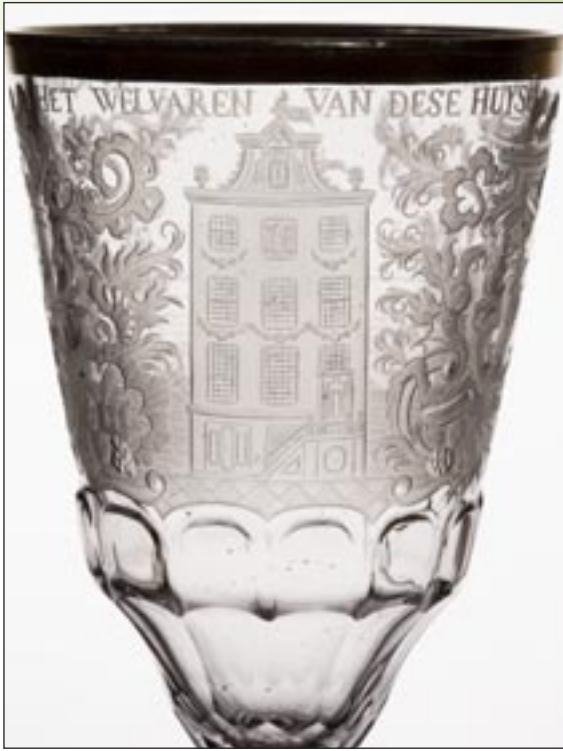
▲ Drinking glass engraved 'Sampson Austen 1759' and to the left a detail of the bowl
© Bristol Culture



▲ Goblet commemorating a silver wedding anniversary, 1746 and below a detail of the inscription
© Bristol Culture



▲ Cordial glass, ca.1770 and to the left a detail of the stem
© Bristol Culture



Silesian engraved goblet and cover, ca. 1740-60 and to the left a detail of the engraving on the bowl

© Bristol Culture



imported, and the coal required as a fuel source could also be found nearby. Markets for glass were also growing. An expansion in local building work resulted in a greater demand for window glass. The increase in the availability of sugar, grown and planted by enslaved African people forced to labour on British plantations in the Americas and Caribbean, resulted in a growth in liquor distillation. Combined with the trade in wine and locally produced beer and cider, as well as the bottling of Bristol water for medicinal purposes, this created huge demand for glass and bottle manufacturers. Lead glass products supplied local markets and fed the growing appetite for luxury goods overseas.

Although the four glasses were likely not made in Bristol, they provide an insight into glass manufacture and trade during this significant period in European glassmaking history. The glass inscribed 'Sampson Austen', now forms part a small group of drinking glasses similarly inscribed with names of individuals, while the cordial glass – used for serving flavoured sweet liqueurs – with its blue/mauve twist stem, will sit alongside a group of other examples with different colours. The large, engraved goblet commemorates the silver wedding anniversary of Esaias Linkenburg and Johanna Scholten in 1746. The glass was probably made in England, possibly Newcastle, but has been beautifully engraved in the Netherlands. The bowl is engraved on one side with an image of Cupid with a basket of fruit seated between two columns, above a string of 25 fruits. On the other side of the bowl is a Dutch inscription with an anniversary blessing for the couple, who married in Amsterdam on 1 April 1721. The glass is a remarkable commemorative piece and the only example of a glass celebrating a wedding anniversary within our collection. It demonstrates the impressive engraving skills that flourished in the Netherlands in the mid-18th century.

The goblet and cover, c. 1740-60, was made in Silesia and is engraved with a design of a merchant's house and sailing ships with trade goods by a harbour. An inscription engraved around the rim may be translated as 'To the welfare of this house and the growth and blossoming of business'. This glass will create a dialogue with other pieces that similarly depict maritime trade and colonial activity in our collection, for example a glass commemorating a British privateer, the Oliver Cromwell.

It is the only glass in our collection with engraving attributed to Christian Gottfried Schneider of Warmbrunn (1710-1773). Warmbrunn was a spa town and a major centre for independent glass engravers who produced souvenirs and commemorative pieces. Schneider was the most important glass engraver in this region. There is nothing comparable to this goblet and cover within our collection and it is therefore an exemplary collecting opportunity for Bristol Museum.

A huge thanks to the Friends for helping us to acquire these glasses.

Amber Turner Curator, Applied Art

The Bristol Beacon

Monday 21 October 2024

Built on the site of a 13th century monastery, the Colston Hall opened as a concert venue in 1867. It suffered fires in 1898 and 1946 when rebuilding was necessary. The building closed completely in 2018 for refurbishment, reopening towards the end of 2023 as the Bristol Beacon.

We were welcomed by our guide Daniel, the Senior House Manager. The foyer area, Bridge House, is light and airy as it contains over 600 glass panels. With air cooling, solar panels and use of recycled building materials it is ecofriendly. There is a target for the whole building to be net zero by 2030.

We moved on to the Lantern Theatre. Its entrance has a brand-new floor and overlooks the restaurant. It is another bright area with a glass roof and coloured tiles on the walls. There is a frieze showing the heads of the benefactors of the original 1860s building. The city coat of arms is displayed here. It is one of the many items which English Heritage has required to be kept displayed following the refurbishment. The Lantern theatre saw many productions during its time as the Little Theatre. Daniel Day Lewis made his stage debut here. Like all the performance areas, it is flexible. The stage can be raised or lowered, and a rack of tiered seats can be pulled out. On the day we visited, it was being set up for a conference. The stage has changed ends since the Little Theatre days making it closer to the dressing rooms. This also has the advantage that actors needing to move behind the stage no longer need to go outside the building and along a gantry to do so.

We moved on to the main auditorium. Some of us had seen it lit in glorious colour the previous night on television as it was the venue for the finals of *The Young Musician of the Year*. We were reminded that this space has some of the best acoustics in the whole country. There are many types of wood used in the construction. Coming from all over the world, they are sustainably sourced and chosen for their acoustic properties. The design reflects the shipping heritage of Bristol with metal supports resembling the masts of the sailing vessels. The size of the stage can be changed, with a section that can be lowered or removed. The curtains along the walls can be adjusted to change the acoustics. A large section of the seating can be collapsed and stored in the upper cellar under the stage to accommodate a standing audience. This increases the capacity from the usual 1650 to 2100. Daniel described it as a constantly evolving and changing space in continuous use for a whole range of entertainment.

Finally, we went to the lower basement. It looks like a wine cellar with its low arched ceiling and can be adapted for many types of performance or hired for parties. The Education Space here is used for music education for all age groups across Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

Many thanks to Daniel, whose enthusiasm for the Bristol Beacon made our tour so enjoyable and informative, and to Carol Ouvre for once again arranging such a special visit.

Sue Pears



▲ Inside the Lantern theatre
© Judith Young



▲ View from the stalls in the main auditorium
© Judith Young

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