

Newsletter

Bristol's unsung hero

E W Godwin: the greatest aesthete of them all

Saturday 21 June 2014

'There was no-one like him, none. A man born long before his time, of extraordinary gifts and of comprehensive genius' – so said Ellen Terry, Godwin's former mistress, on hearing of his death in 1886. Local historian and author Mary Wright set about illustrating why Edward William Godwin deserved such a eulogy when he is so little known and under-appreciated (at least in his home city of Bristol).

Born in 1837 in Bristol to middle-class parents, Godwin showed a precocious ability for drawing and designing. Influenced by Ruskin and the fashion for neo-gothic, he designed many buildings in this style; one of the best known is the town hall in Northampton. Godwin spread his talents widely, writing extensively in architectural journals and books, designing furniture, ceramics and textiles, as well as taking a close interest in the theatre (hence his liaison with Ellen Terry), not just as a critic but also as a set designer and author of books. It was in the theatre that for him, all the arts came together as a whole: poetry, design and architecture.

Domestically, all was not smooth, however. He and his first wife lived in Portland Square for a while, before having to downsize as Godwin was hopeless at managing his financial affairs. He moved to London to obtain more work but was always plagued by debts. His private life was somewhat chaotic; after his wife died he lived with Ellen Terry for six years and they had two children. The scandal that ensued doubtless blighted his career.

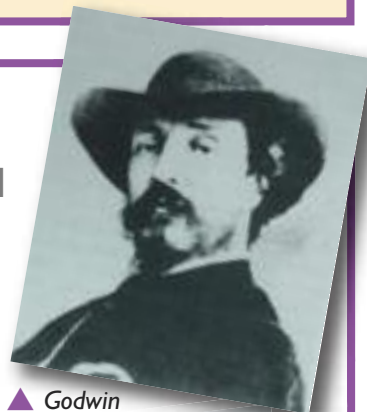
His furniture was heavily influenced by Japanese design and several of his pieces featured in the 'Cult of Beauty' exhibition at the V & A in 2011. Mary Wright expressed her disappointment that more of his furniture was not on display, despite her best efforts at lobbying the museums service.

Many in the audience were unaware of Godwin and his achievements but there is no excuse now for ignorance. Mary Wright showed that, despite the lack of acknowledgement in Bristol for his talent, his influence on those who came after him, particularly those in the arts and crafts movement, was enormous.

Mary Bailey

*Bristol Museum & Art Gallery owns
14 pieces by Godwin this sideboard,
is on display in M Shed*

Photos by kind permission of Mary Wright



▲ Godwin



▲ The carriage works in Stokes Croft, now sadly derelict, was also Godwin's design, as was the church hall for Pip 'n' Jay church in Marybush Lane, now the site of the ambulance station.



From the Chairman

Fundraising success

I am delighted to open my message to you this quarter with the news that in the financial year just ended we have raised the magnificent sum of £21,000, all of which will be used to support Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives. The amount of effort needed to raise money on this scale is significant, and I would like to thank all of the Programme Committee and their many helpers – you know who you are – for their dedication and creativity in putting together and running our impressive calendar of events.

The 2-day book, cake and drinks sale which we ran at the Harbour Festival in 2013 was a major contributor to this sum, and is a great example of how important it is that we keep thinking of new approaches to raising funds and of supporting the service to make sure the Friends are as effective as we can be. At the Harbour Festival six weeks ago we ran a similar very enjoyable and successful event, which also gave lots of our members an opportunity to contribute and to feel part of the Friends 'family'.

Bristol Harbour Railway

At the Harbour Festival, locomotive *Portbury* continued to provide Driver for a Fiver trips for any adult who ever had an ambition to be a train driver. *Portbury* is now fully run in after her major overhaul in 2012, to which we contributed £10,000, and has over 8 years to run on her 10-year boiler certificate. *Henbury* was in charge of the passenger operations at the festival, but will not run again for a while as her boiler certificate has now expired. A 10-year overhaul is expensive, so the railway's plan is to rest *Henbury* for a couple of years and time the major work, when it is undertaken, to allow her next certificate to start at the point when *Portbury*'s still has 5 years to run. That will leave Bristol Harbour Railway with only one steam locomotive in operation for the next 2-3 years, but will establish a future maintenance programme where the major expenditure is more evenly spread.

The Treasure Act and the Portable Antiquities Scheme

Over the past couple of years, we have funded the purchase by the museum of a number of small locally significant objects that have been found by members of the public, often using metal detectors. These objects have been acquired under the Treasure Act or the Portable Antiquities Scheme, depending on the

Post-mediaeval silver spoon found locally and purchased by the Friends under the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Photo © BMGA



measurements in millimetres

▲ **Post-mediaeval silver dress hook found in Wickwar and purchased by the Friends under the Portable Antiquities Scheme.**

Photo © BMGA

type of object. Essentially, the legislation ensures that all relevant finds are documented, and that designated museums are offered the opportunity to purchase significant finds from their local area. At our AGM, Gail Boyle (Senior Collections Officer with a special interest in archaeology) will be showing us some of the objects we have purchased under the scheme, and explaining why they are significant.

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM evening this year is at M Shed on Tuesday 23 September. The AGM itself, while essential, is kept to around half an hour.

Once formal business is concluded we then have some relevant 'entertainment' – as well as Gail Boyle showing us some of our recent purchases of local treasure, Vivienne Bennett, Interim Head of Service, will talk to us about the bigger picture of what is planned for the service. We will also see some archive film of Bristol soldiers on the brink of the First World War, introduced by Clive Burlton, local historian, author, and member of our Executive Committee. After that, there will be drinks and nibbles and an opportunity to chat.

British Association of Friends of Museums national conference

The BAFM national conference this year, on the last weekend of September, will be in Swansea. It is a great opportunity to meet members of friends groups from around the country to share ideas, and to gain some insights from the hosts into the cultural life of Swansea. Because of our group membership, any of our members is welcome to take part. You can find all the details on the BAFM website.

Showing our support

Over the past few months we have seen many departures from the Service, often as a result of the funding cuts that are an unavoidable consequence of Government policy on

local authority expenditure, and also on the general tightening of belts in public life. The Service does a great job of rising to the challenges and ensuring that, as far as possible, the impact of the cuts is not seen by the outside world. Some impacts of the reduced budgets are positive; they stimulate creativity, and often result in innovative ways of working. But there is also much uncertainty for all, particularly when people see posts disappearing or find that their own job is at risk.

Where the Friends as an organisation can help achieve the best outcome in the face of the funding challenges we will, although the opportunities are limited. But there is one thing we can all do as individuals; next time you come across someone working in the service, make sure you give them a smile, and tell them how much you (and all the Friends) appreciate what they do.

From the Membership Secretary

We offer a warm welcome to the following members who have joined the Museum Friends recently:

Mr David Abbott	Ms Ruth Pendragon
Mr Phil Curme	Mr Keith Sullivan
Mrs Maureen Curme	Mrs Tess Sullivan
Mrs Margaret Harper	Mr Robert Walters
Mr Tony Jarvis	Mrs Margaret Walters
Mrs Erika Jarvis	

June Hibberd, Membership Secretary

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 23 September 2014 - 6.30pm at M Shed

Enclosed in this newsletter you will find a formal notice of the AGM, a nomination form and a copy of our annual report. The business of the meeting will be kept to a minimum and will be followed by three interesting speakers giving us brief insights into:

- Current issues in the museum service
- Some recent acquisitions funded by the Friends
- Bristol soldiers on the eve of the First World War

Refreshments will be provided as usual.

Please come along and express your views, as we like to get feedback from members.

Election of officers

Three current officers of Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives are willing to stand again: Sue Thurlow, Chairman; Nicholas King, Treasurer; and June Hibberd, Membership Secretary. Richard Avery will retire as Secretary and the Acting Secretary Katherine Martin is willing to stand.

Election of Executive Committee members

The remaining elected members of the committee are: Keith Borissow, Clive Burlton, Colin Edwards, Gary Gostelow, Shirley Hodgson and Brian Vincent. Shirley Hodgson comes to the end of her term of office but the other five are all willing to stand again. We can fill up to eight places on the committee so nominations are very welcome. If you are interested, please complete the nomination form enclosed and return it to the Acting Secretary.

Docks Heritage Weekend

Saturday 4 October & Sunday 5 October 11am-5pm
M Shed & Underfall Yard

A celebration of Bristol's recent maritime past. Discover what made Bristol tick as a port during the 1950s and 60s, and the characters working there. Watch the electric cranes and Fairbairn crane spring to life, and take a trip around the harbour on the John King diesel tug. See the quayside come to life with dramatic re-enactments by Show of Strength theatre company.

Bristol's 'White City'

Saturday 11 October – Friday 27 February 2015
Bristol Record Office Free

Running in conjunction with Moved by Conflict this display explores the extraordinary story of the 'White City' – covering 30 acres it was built in Bristol as a temporary International Exhibition in 1914 to celebrate the British Empire, but closed as soon as the First World War broke out and immediately used as barracks for local soldiers.

Made in China: an imperial Ming vase

Saturday 11 October – Sunday 4 January 2015
Bristol Museum & Art Gallery Free

An empire the size of Europe; an economy at the heart of global trade; a distinctive artistic style. Discover how and why this iconic blue-and-white porcelain vase, on tour from the British Museum, represents a crucial period in China's history.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Saturday 29 November 2014 – Sunday 22 February 2015
Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

Encounter the rich array of wildlife on our planet in this world-renowned exhibition from the Natural History Museum. Celebrating its 50th year in 2014, the competition provides a global showcase of extraordinary images celebrating the drama, beauty and splendour of the natural world with astonishing, creative and sometimes humorous wildlife photography.

Adults £3, Children (5–16yrs) and Concessions £2.
Family ticket: £8

Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives

Quarterly Report

Arts Council Funding agreed for 2015-18

We are thrilled, and relieved, to be able to report that we have been successful in our application to Arts Council England for 2015-18 major grant funding. BMGA has been awarded the third highest Major Museum Partner grant in the country of £4.7m over 3 years. It is an excellent result in the face of very strong competition. Not only is it an endorsement of our work and our track record, but we were particularly pleased that the Arts Council assessment was so strong across all of the stipulated goals and merited 'outstanding' for our plans to put audiences at the heart of our organisation.

Staff news

Intern Rowan Sanderson very sadly died suddenly on 17 May. He was just 23, and had been with us only a few months but had made a very positive impression on all those who worked with him. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues.

On a positive note, Vivienne Bennett, Interim Head of Service, has accepted a further extension of her contract to 31 December 2014.

July saw the departure of 3 of the team: Willemijn van Noord, Chinese Art and Material Culture, to start his PhD at the University of Amsterdam; Alicia Garcia to become a freelance paper conservator, based in Bristol; and Alison Brown, Archives Officer. Harry Metcalf is returning to the paper conservator post after two years of unpaid sabbatical in the United States.

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

Our new model of the Bristol dinosaur, *Thecodontosaurus*, has now been installed to the Dinosaurs gallery. Purchased with generous funding from the Friends, it has proved a real hit with our visitors. People young and old are amazed to come face-to-face with the dinosaur that roamed Bristol 210 million years ago. This life-sized reconstruction incorporates the latest science, and is an exact replica of one built 'live' at M Shed by the Bristol Dinosaur Project and University of Bristol last year.



Photos © BMGA

M Shed

As part of a special Second World War Experience day, Bristol children took part in a steam train evacuation on Bristol Harbour Railway, and had the chance to meet older people who lived through the war, who shared their experiences and memories. The children also used documents, images and objects to find out about the Bristol Homes Front, and visited the Anderson Shelter. 'Make Do and Mend' activities were popular, and everyone involved in the day was dressed in costume – museum staff were dressed as Land Girls and ARP wardens, and children were dressed as evacuees.



Red Lodge

Visitors to the Red Lodge garden this summer will see the building works taking place to underpin the adjoining wall of the Wigwam building of the Bristol Savages. The plants which have had to be removed will be reinstated at the end of the summer.

Bristol Record Office

BRO cares for documents from the 12th century onwards by carefully managing the storage conditions in our strongrooms at B Bond Warehouse. Former archives manager Richard Burley and conservator David Singleton recently improved the environmental management system in these strongrooms by reducing heat loss, turning off the air conditioning and using the building's natural conditions to maintain a stable environment. For this new approach, which reduced our carbon footprint and saved over £6,000 per year in energy bills, we were highly commended in the Collections Practice category of the 2014 Collections Trust Awards.

Bioblitz

The museum's Natural Science team and Bristol Regional Environmental Record Centre (BRERC) were involved in a 30 hour citizen science 'Bioblitz' project over a sunny weekend in early July. They enthused and mentored the public at the same time as recording the biodiversity of Three Brooks Nature Reserve at Bradley Stoke, where 617 species were found and recorded.

Festival of Archaeology

The 24th Festival of Archaeology, which took place in July, is the world's largest celebration of British Archaeology with over 1,000 events held nationwide. As the co-ordinator of Bristol's celebrations, our Archaeology Team planned and carried out a number of family-friendly events across the city. These included 'Riveting Romans:' an event which gave visitors the opportunity to explore Kings Weston Roman Villa and learn more about life during the Roman Period. Unfolding History had a table with Roman food and ingredients, kitchen utensils and recipes illustrating the variety of foods which the Romans ate and introduced to Britain.



Acquisitions & Collections

Broughton herbarium

We have now secured the full funding required to digitize and conserve one of our earliest and most precious collections – thanks to the generous support of the Friends, along with the Science Museum's PRISM fund and the Finnis Scott Foundation. These beautiful volumes of pressed plants were collected in Bristol and Jamaica in 1779-90 by Bristol physician Dr Arthur Broughton. Their fragile nature and potential toxicity (from historic pesticides) currently prevents us from opening them. This project will enable access to the unique historic data they hold about biodiversity across two continents, and engage people with their fascinating story.



Kings Weston family papers

Bristol Record Office recently received papers of the Southwell and Russell families, the Barons de Clifford of Kings Weston House, 1555-1990s, including gossipy letters, family recipes and a journal from Edward Southwell Russell's grand tour of Europe. With this remarkable addition, we now have a

substantial record of one of Bristol's most important historical estates. The papers are not yet catalogued but we hope to start this work shortly.

New website

Digital Manager, Zak Mensah and the team who worked hard to create our new website - www.bristolmuseums.org.uk - were pleased to see a very favourable review of it in the Museum Journal. The reviewer was impressed with the 'bold and friendly' design and commended us for recognising that the 'users' needs come first'.

New geology volunteer team

We have welcomed a new team of ten volunteers from the University of Bristol to work with our palaeontology collections. The volunteers are working on a project to conserve, catalogue and digitize our 'Kimmeridge' collections - fossils from the Late Jurassic period, approximately 155 million years ago. The project aims to support volunteer skills development, and will publish new specimen data and stories on our website.

Exhibitions

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

Jeremy Deller: English Magic
Until Sun 21 September,

The last chance to see Jeremy Deller's critically acclaimed Venice Biennale exhibition on tour in Bristol. Free.

Bristol Record Office

Revealing Stories
to Saturday 4 October

This exhibition, produced by OutStories Bristol, reveals the hidden histories of Bristol's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender/transsexual communities from the 1940s to the present day. Free.

M Shed

Wallace & Gromit from the drawing board
until Sunday 7 September

(M Shed, Temporary Exhibition Gallery, Floor 02)
Don't miss this cracking summer exhibition! Immerse yourself in the story-making process of Aardman's award-winning Wallace & Gromit films. £5.95 adult; £3.95 child; £4.95 concessions. Family tickets £14.95 (two adults & two children or one adult & three children).

Moved by Conflict –Bristol and the First World War – lives changed forever

Saturday 11 October 2014 – Sunday 1 March 2015

World War I had a profound effect on Bristol and its people. Through hundreds of original objects and archives Moved by Conflict explores the physical, social and personal changes made by war. Aimed at adults aged 10+. £3.95/£2.95 concessions. Under 16s free. Developed in partnership with Bristol Old Vic and Bristol 2014, sponsored by Sanlam.

The Friends' Five Days in Suffolk

Monday 12 May to Friday 16 May 2014

Wendy Aldridge-Morris and I thank all those Friends who came to Suffolk with us for making the visit memorable and easy for us to organise. We enjoyed the holiday and hope you did also.

Ruth Welch

Monday 12 May 2014

Hughenden Manor

Our first visit was to the home of Disraeli - writer, aristocrat and the only Jewish British Prime Minister. Although Jewish by birth, Disraeli's family had converted to Anglicanism before he was born. Becoming Prime Minister in 1874, Disraeli became a favourite with Queen Victoria who visited Hughenden twice, once for tea and again after his death.

An introductory talk gave us a background to the house and gardens, and then we were free to explore on our own. However, refreshments took up much time and we really needed a longer stay to do justice to the house and its contents. The basement contained its own special secrets, which it kept until a visitor commented on map-making he had done there during World War II. Investigations confirmed his claim and the story of the map-makers is now an integral part of the history of Hughenden Manor.

Ruth Welch



▲ *Hughenden Manor – the bunker. Part of the secret map-making exhibition*



Gainsborough's House, Sudbury

Thomas Gainsborough was born in Sudbury in 1727 and went to London in 1740 to study art. He also lived in Bath at one time. At his restored Sudbury house we saw many of his fascinating portraits, although we were advised he preferred landscapes. Two portraits of a girl and boy had obviously been one picture at one time, but no-one knows why they had been made into two. We also saw a visiting exhibition and the Brewer's Map of Sudbury on vellum dated 1714. Thanks to Ruth Welch and Wendy Morris for a super five days away.

Catherine Dixon

◀ *Gainsborough's House*

Tuesday 13 May 2014

Sutton Hoo

Treasures from an Anglo-Saxon leader

The prospect of a visit to Sutton Hoo was one of the main reasons which attracted my wife and me to the Friends' Five Days in Suffolk. Our guide at the National Trust visitor centre explained how Mrs Edith Pretty, a wealthy widow who lived at nearby Tranmer House employed a local, Basil Brown, for a few weeks in 1938 to excavate some large mounds of suspected Roman origin. Sufficient interest was aroused to fund a second season until, in June 1939, the discovery of a rusty rivet and careful excavation of traces of rotted wood revealed the imprint of a 90-foot ship, a burial chamber and wonderful grave goods.



Part of the sceptre found at Sutton Hoo now on display in the British Museum

Suffolk Trip photos by Eleanor Chapman, Catherine Dixon, Judith Jones, Carol Ouvry, Margaret Thewarapperuma

Our guide explained how the identity of the burial is uncertain, but that it probably dates from about AD 625, which is within the period of Anglo-Saxon rule of this area. Perhaps it is Raedwald who was born in AD 599. He ruled East Anglia (present Norfolk and Suffolk) with a royal palace at Rendlesham, four miles up-river.

In August 1939, the local Coroner's Court awarded ownership of the gold and silver items to Mrs Pretty, who promptly presented them to the nation. During World War II, excavation was suspended and the treasures were stored until peace allowed a resumption of the dig. Later other mounds revealed a variety of burials. Some have been professionally excavated, several raided by treasure seekers, and many still await the attention of future archaeologists.

The treasure finds are displayed in the British Museum, but the Exhibition Hall at Sutton Hoo provides an impressive reconstruction of the burial chamber, replicas of the finds, and interpretation panels which help one understand their significance. Now, we must look for an opportunity to visit the treasure in the British Museum!

Roy Taylor



▲ Raedwald (who is probably buried under the first mound to be excavated) popped in for a visit complete with replicas of his clothes, armour, weapons and regalia.

◀ Surrounded by a lovely garden, the red brick and wisteria of the Red House meld into the surrounding countryside.

The Red House

▼ Maggi Hambling's famous sculpture the Scallop focuses the sound of the waves and the wind and is inscribed 'I hear those voices that will not be drowned', from Peter Grimes.



With heads still full of Anglo-Saxon burial mounds we travelled a short distance to Aldeburgh and a mental distance of a millennium and a half. The Red House, home of Benjamin Britten with Peter Pears from 1957 until they died, is about a mile from the coast up a private lane. The home of the Britten Pears Foundation, it is mostly a fascinating museum, with a new building for Britten's archives. As we walked round, Britten's life came alive from his mother's aspiration for him to

become 'the Fourth B' (after Bach, Beethoven and Brahms), to very moving letters between him and Peter Pears, illustrating a meeting of brilliant musical minds as well as hearts. Two rooms were still as they had been, both architect-designed to Britten's requirements: the library with a lovely view out to the countryside where small groups of musicians could play together; and the study, a converted hayloft where he composed every day. The overall impression was of no expense spared to create an environment where musicians could live, work hard and relax.

Then we drove to the coast, and those who could resist the lure of the tea rooms ploughed through the pebbles (or walked along the road) to reach Maggi Hambling's famous sculpture the Scallop. In steel, four metres high, she created it to be a celebration of Britten.

Katherine Martin

Wednesday 14 May 2014

Cromwell's House and Ely Cathedral

We started our day in Ely at Oliver Cromwell's house. He inherited the house from his uncle in 1636 together with title 'Farmer of the Tythes' which gave him a comfortable income. The original building is 13th century with subsequent additions of fireplaces and timber panelling. Here Mrs Cromwell catered for her husband, mother-in-law, two sisters-in-law and six children. We were shown her cooking methods and kitchen utensils. Recipes included Mrs. Cromwell's eel pie. Also on display were Civil War armour and weapons together with details of battles.

At the Cathedral we began at the Norman south door. The Cathedral has the fourth longest nave in the country. In AD 1322, the Norman central tower collapsed, fortunately with no injuries, and was replaced by an eight-sided tower, the Octagon. The width was too great to support a stone vaulted roof, so the roof and lantern were constructed of timber covered with lead. Even so, it weighed over 400 tons.

The Processional Way used by pilgrims leads to the Lady Chapel, the largest in the country. It was much damaged in the Reformation. The stained glass has been replaced by ordinary leaded glass and a modern Virgin Mary with outstretched arms over the altar. The Victorians left their mark, most strikingly by painting the nave ceiling.

On both tours we were fortunate in having excellent guides, and our visit finished most aptly with a cream tea in the Almonry, where the monks used to share their food with the poor.

Des Peters

Thursday 15 May 2014

Constable Country

Constable's most famous paintings are of the area round his home - Dedham Vale – which is known as 'Constable Country'. John knew the area well. He attended Dedham Grammar School and by the age of 17 he had become devoted to painting, inspired by his walks over the fields from Flatford.

On this splendid morning we were guided by Peter from the National Trust, to Flatford Mill. Peter pointed out on his copy of the painting how Constable used the landscape as a starting point, but employed artistic licence to reconstruct it as he saw fit.

Constable's father had wanted him to take over the mill, which he reluctantly managed for a year, but his overwhelming yearning to paint took him to the Royal Academy. Constable's painting of Flatford Mill sold on the opening day of the Royal Academy Summer Show. He wrote to his friend John Fisher '...its light cannot be put out, because it is the light of nature...'.

Margaret Thewarapperuma



▲ Oliver Cromwell's House where the family lived 1634-46

▼ Ely Cathedral ceiling of the Mediaeval Octagonal Lantern



▲ Flatford Mill as it is today

Peter showed us Constable's painting of Flatford Mill so we could compare it with the modern scene





▲ *Clothier's houses had wicket doors like this one – a small personal door set into a much larger one - which allowed the wool to be brought into the building on the packhorses.*

Lavenham, Suffolk

Spending the afternoon in Lavenham was like wandering through the pages of a child's fairy tale book. Wherever you looked there were half-timbered buildings, large and small, and those without exposed timbers were colour-washed in terracotta or pastel shades. It would have been no surprise to see the Pied Piper skipping round a corner with the children of the town dancing behind him.

Lavenham's history goes back to Roman times but the town we see today represents the heyday of the wool trade in Suffolk. Three hundred and fifty of the buildings are Grade I listed and even those which have no exposed beams on the outside are often timbered inside. Our guide told us that that 'these old buildings do not subside, they simply find a more comfortable way to stand'. Surprisingly, most of the half-timbered buildings were painted all over with a lime wash, giving a silvery appearance, or the wood was left a natural colour, not the 'black and white' beloved of the Victorians.

In the 15th and 16th centuries Lavenham was a centre of spinning, dyeing and weaving, famed for its 'Lavenham Blue' cloth. The yarn was dyed with woad before weaving, hence the saying 'dyed in the wool'. Many of the weavers became wealthy clothiers. The quality of the broadcloth was renowned across Europe and the prosperity of the town grew. The town declined during the Industrial Revolution when the cloth industry moved to the north.

This visit was a fascinating step back in time into a different world.

Carol Ouvry

▲ *After the Reformation the religious guildhouses were preserved and put to other uses. The most famous, the Lavenham Guild Hall of Corpus Christi, built in 1525, was given to the town by the MP for Sudbury. It has had many uses: Town Hall; house of correction, workhouse, nursery school; and a restaurant during World War II. It is now a museum and tea room run by the National Trust*



Friday 16 May 2014

Hatfield House

Our final day had come with a sad farewell to the Mill Hotel with its fabulous water meadow backdrop. We headed to Hertfordshire. After a close shave with an oncoming lorry, we had an unexpected pit stop in Braintree for a gaffer tape reconstruction of the wing mirror! Reaching Hatfield a tad late, we found ourselves in another world.

The Cecil family have lived at Hatfield for seven generations. The original Old Palace, built in 1485, was acquired by Henry VIII and used as a nursery for his three children. The grand Hatfield House was completed in 1611 by Robert Cecil, chief minister of Elizabeth I. Our tour started in the extravagant Marble Hall (named after its black and white floor). We moved through the Library (with 10,000 volumes in many languages), into the Winter Dining Room, through the Chinese Bedroom, along the Long Gallery to the Chapel. My favourite room, the King James Drawing Room, had a myriad of paintings (including the famous Ermine portrait of Queen Elizabeth I) hung over tapestry-lined walls and a vast mantelpiece over which stood a life size statue of James I. The statue was presented by the King himself – the alternative present to the usual bottle of wine one takes to a dinner party!

Afterwards we explored St Etheldreda's Church, Bishop's Hatfield. The oldest part of the church is 13th century. There are many connections with the Cecil family including a beautiful stained glass window which is a memorial to Lord William Cecil's three sons killed in World War I.

Wendy, Ruth and Izzy (our driver) led a real Suffolk adventure – thank you.

Tim Lockwood Jones

▲ *Hatfield House Old Palace built about 1485 by John Morton, Bishop of Ely*



Wiltshire Museum and Lacock

Saturday 14 June 2014

Wiltshire Museum

The museum in Devizes is owned and run by Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (founded in 1853) supported by the local council. There are few paid workers but about 150 volunteers. The refurbished gallery has a well-presented collection and many creative activities for children throughout. Its refurbished gallery houses, amongst other relics, early Bronze-age gold found in a tomb at Stonehenge and a jadeite spearhead. The spearhead had been used by a previous owner as a letter-opener resulting in this tough stone being damaged. David Dawson, the Curator, gave us an interesting introductory talk about the museum and the gold collection. Both Salisbury and Devizes Museums show artefacts from Stonehenge from different ages, to complement the new centre at Stonehenge.

Lacock Village

After lunch in Devizes, we went on to picturesque Lacock Village, which gave us a chance to wander on our own. The Fox Talbot Museum is based in Lacock Abbey in the heart of the village set in attractive woodland. I enjoyed seeing again the window where Fox Talbot took his first photograph with a negative. At the end of June this year it will be the setting for a special exhibition celebrating the 175th anniversary of the birth of photography. It was also interesting to see the mediaeval cloisters and rooms used by the nuns of the Abbey. Wendy and I enjoyed an excellent tea in the bakery.

Thanks to David Dawson and to David Snelson for a lovely day out.

Catherine Dixon



▲ *Lacock Abbey, owned by the National Trust, showcases 800 years of history with furnished rooms, tranquil gardens and cloisters to enjoy as well as an impressive exhibition of the history of photography.*

Photo by Catherine Dixon

For more information visit
<http://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/>
 and
<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lacock/>

A Song of the Sea

Thursday 17 April 2014

The work of the St Ives colony of artists, exhibition at Worcester Art Gallery & Museum

Philippa Tinsley, Senior Curator for Museums Worcestershire, explained that St Ives became significant between the late 1880s and 1914. The initial attraction was Adrian Stokes (1854-1935), who caused a stir at London exhibitions with a new French-influenced approach to landscape painting, based on the careful consideration of tones and colours; his use of blues in *The Harbour Bar* is an example.

Albert Julius Olson (1864-1942) set up a school in 1895 to concentrate on marine and landscape painting out of doors. The results were idealistic land- and seascapes that captured the poetic nature of the sea. Colour and form were more important than narrative, although stories were sometimes told as in *Gull Nesting* by William Titcomb (1858-1930) which shows boys preparing to climb down a cliff to plunder gulls' eggs.

Students flocked from all over the world, including Bristolian, Reginald Guy Kortright (1877-1939), whose *The Return of the Fishing Fleet* was included in the exhibition. Canadian artist Emily Carr described how students met each morning to receive 'crits' on work done the previous afternoon. Carr complained of Olsson and Talmage 'what one taught the other untaught; it was baffling but broadening'.

David Tovey, curator and foremost expert on the St Ives school, called in while we were there, which was a bonus for those who met him. The gallery staff were friendly and helpful, contributing to a very successful visit.

Don Walter



▲ *A Song of the Sea by Julius Olsson, Worcester City Museum Collection. Colour and form are all important in this painting that shows only sea and sky.*

Frampton Manor

Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 June 2014

Frampton Manor, home of the de Clifford family, is a timber-framed, Grade I listed house which is an amalgamation of building styles dating from the 13th to the 17th centuries. The house was given to the de Clifford family by William the Conqueror. It is understood that Jane Clifford, later the mistress of Henry II, was born here. Jane is better known from folk lore and legend as 'Fair Rosamunde' whom Henry named his 'Rose of the World'. One of the upstairs rooms is known as Rosamunde's Bower in her memory.

So many were interested in visiting Frampton Manor, that two visits were arranged. Our visit happened to be in glorious weather so we could enjoy wandering around the beautiful garden enjoying the birdsong and taking in the perfume on the gentle breeze. The manor is surrounded by a planted garden with topiary; areas left as wild spaces; a kitchen garden; and an orchard. There is a special red and white striped rose named 'Rosa Mundi' (after the Fair Rosamunde). We also had a tour of the Wool Barn near the manor house which was built in about 1550 and is also Grade I listed. It is said to be one of the finest examples of its time and date in the country. Some renovations have been made with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

After a tour of the house with steep steps and narrow passageways we assembled near the Wool Barn to enjoy homemade cakes and a cup of tea in the sunshine. This was another great day out with the Friends. A big thank you to Valerie Andrews for organising it.

Hilary Cleeve

Photos by Judith Jones

*Friends exploring the gardens
round Frampton Manor* ▶



▲ Cider press in the garden at Frampton Manor



▼ *The Friends enjoy another slap-up feed*



Where's it to?

Bristol Photo Quiz

Test your powers of observation with this quiz, which takes you on a trail round Bristol's Harbourside. There are 30 photos of things you will see on your walk and the aim is to encourage you to look closely at your surroundings as you wander round the Floating Harbour and then answer the questions. Costing £1, the quiz will raise funds for Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives. There is no prize, just the enjoyment of taking part.

Copies will be available at our events or to obtain an electronic copy you can email bristolphotoquiz@friendsofbmga.org.uk.

Jolly good boating weather...

Monday 30 June 2014

Under a lowering sky but with enough sunshine to make the water sparkle, we boarded *Bagheera* for a tour of the Floating Harbour. Our guide, Andrew Foyle, explained that the Floating Harbour was so-called because the water level was kept constant by an elaborate series of dock gates and sluices allowing large vessels to remain floating rather than keeling over in the mud when the tide went out.

The tour embraced such historical persons as Bishop Geoffrey of Coutance, who came over with William the Conqueror and re-fortified Bristol Castle, and the engineers and merchants who built the Floating Harbour and carried on the diverse trades which made Bristol prosperous.

We learnt that Cannon's Marsh was a marsh owned by the cannons of St Augustine's Abbey (later to become the Cathedral); that St Augustine's Reach going up the Centre was dug out to enlarge the influx of the River Frome; that the Arnolfini building was built in two separate parts one for a successful iron foundry and the other for a less successful tea importing business which bankrupted its owner.

Passing Welsh Back and Narrow Quay, and under Bristol Bridge (the mediaeval one was demolished to make way for the current structure), we noticed the little entrance to what was once Bishop Geoffrey's Moat. Then through a wonderful brick tunnel carrying the railway into Temple Meads, we reached Totterdown Lock on the banks of which they once buried cholera victims.

Returning we passed Finzel's Wharf where Georges had their brewery; the Albion Dock; the Underfall Boat Yard and the Pump House, into Cumberland Basin which was designed as a boat park for vessels waiting for sufficient tidal water in the river to sail down the Avon. Naturally Isambard Kingdom Brunel had a great part in all of this.

We are most grateful to Andrew for his most informative and entertaining commentary and to Carol Ouvry for organising it.

Robert Walters



▲ The Arnolfini



▲ Watergate – part of the old moat

◀ Finzel's Reach



Photos by Carol Ouvry

The Viking Life and Legend Exhibition

British Museum

Tuesday 3 June 2014

It was the Vikings' shipbuilding and sailing skills that enabled them to develop contacts with a wide range of other cultures. Many of these interactions were bloody and violent but others more peaceful. Raiding often gave way to settlement and trading.

Viking expansion shaped Northern Europe. Its legacy is still visible through place names, language and genetic heritage. In this exhibition we saw weapons and armour; coins used in trading; hoards; religious amulets and images; and beautiful jewellery all showing how the Vikings created an international network connecting cultures over four continents. Some of the jewellery was in the style of Urnes, the original name derives from a Norse wooden church decorated with animal carvings. We saw items of silk, which was often used in headscarves, from a Viking settlement in Dublin which had connections with the Silk Road from China. From Glasgow we saw examples of Hogback stones which were gravestones shaped like houses with carved rooflines.

Viking graves have been found containing the bodies of warriors, some with teeth filed to make the warrior more menacing, and a great variety of artefacts including gold and silver jewellery. There were many examples of funerary goods including swords, ringmail, engraved helmets, spurs and bridle fittings. The wealthier the deceased the more jewellery was placed in the grave, including armbands, beads, chains, brooches and torcs. Among the most spectacular jewellery were huge gold brooches, some the size of dinner plates, decorated with intricate designs.

The centre of the exhibition was a reconstructed framework of the largest Viking warship ever found. Some of the surviving timbers of the 37-metre-long Viking clinker built warship were shown in place. The ship was actually found under the Roskilde ship museum in Denmark during an excavation.

We marvelled at the Lewis Chessmen made of walrus ivory; silver coins found in Iran; and intricate carvings on gold and silver jewellery. We all came away with a much greater knowledge of the Vikings and the enormous influence they had in many far flung cultures.

Hilary Cleeve

- ▼ *The Lewis Chessmen, berserkers. Late 12th century, Uig, Lewis, Scotland. Walrus ivory.*
Copyright of The Trustees of the British Museum.



- ▲ *Brooch shaped like a ship, 800-1050. Tjornehoj II, Fyn, Denmark. Copper alloy.*
Copyright of The National Museum of Denmark

- ▼ *The Longship (Roskilde 6). The largest Viking ship ever discovered. The thirty-seven metre long warship was built in southern Norway around 1025, and deliberately sunk in Denmark in the mid-11th century.*
Copyright of The National Museum of Denmark.



Photos kind permission of the British Museum

The Bristol Old Vic

Behind the scenes

Monday 7 July 2014

The Friends gathered in the foyer of the Bristol Old Vic for Andrew Stocker's tour behind the scenes. In the newly-opened Pit we learned that a rough stone area had been the wall of the back yard belonging to a Mr. Foot. The original theatre had been built 249 years ago behind 3 houses on King Street and theatre-goers had to pass through his house and yard to reach it.

In the main theatre, we heard that the Pit had been raised 4 times over the years and that the dress circle used to be divided into boxes. The theatre was made 'Royal' by George III and the gallery was added to make more room. On occasion, the main house squeezed in up to a 1000 people. No health and safety in those days! Above the gallery was a 'Thunder run', a zigzag track down which wooden cannon balls were rolled to great effect. Imagine a candle-lit stage and auditorium. Electric lighting was only installed in 1905.

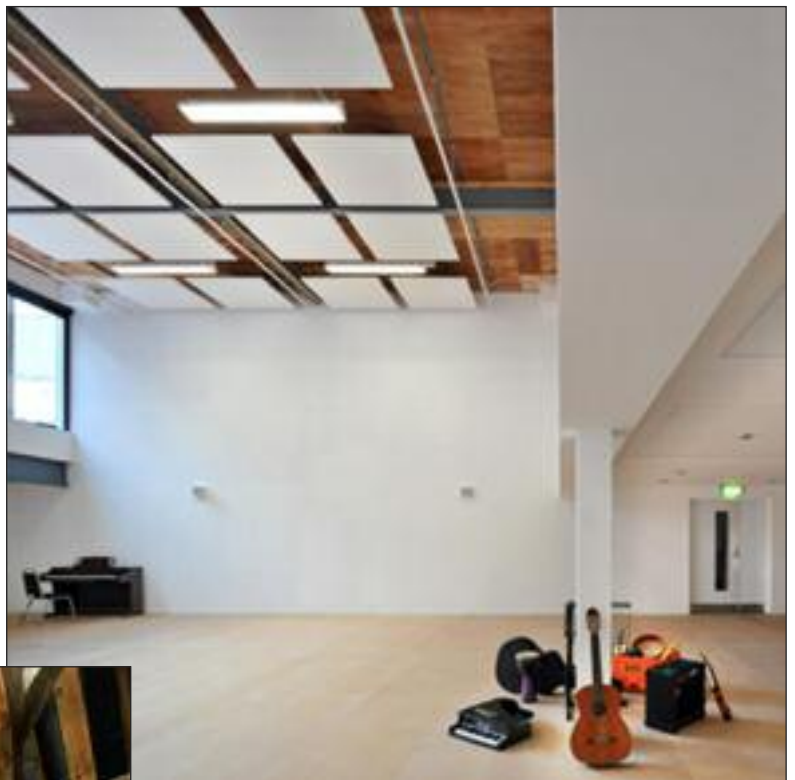
We moved through to huge workshops where scenery is prepared and stored, then upstairs to modern offices and a new rehearsal room - the actual theatre is the smallest part of the whole complex. We were treated to anecdotes about various famous actors such as John Nettles and Tom Baker who, early in their careers, scrawled their names in wet concrete while waiting to go on stage.

Much more was said and seen than I have indicated here to fill a fascinating and informative morning.

Mirian Pearce



▲ Theatre auditorium



▲ the new Clore Rehearsal Room



◀ Georgian roofspace – containing the unique 'Thunder run'

Photos by kind permission of The Theatre Royal
Photos © Philip Vile

A double design treat

Friday 11 July 2014

The Gordon Russell Design Museum

After a brief visit to the new Gloucester services, an offshoot of Tebay with local produce and farm shop housed in a hidden grass-roofed building, we moved onto the Cotswold town of Broadway to visit two small museums.

The Gordon Russell Design Museum, opened in 2008 by Terence Conran, is tucked out of the way down a side street. The museum, which is small but very interesting and informative, is housed in an old furniture workshop which has been tastefully converted. Gordon Russell was a furniture-maker and designer who built up a large company from small beginnings. The original workshop was part of the Lygon Arms where good-quality furniture inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement was made. This was very expensive, so after World War I Gordon Russell was inspired to produce more affordable pieces using some factory methods. He built up a workforce of around 100 craftsmen. When Modernism and the Bauhaus became popular he stopped designing furniture and branched out into metalwork, calligraphy and many other areas of interest. However, he encouraged others to work at the cutting edge of design throughout the 20th century. Gordon Russell designs were to be found in hotels, conference rooms and restaurants, as well as private homes.

There are a number of interesting pieces including a cabinet made for Lloyd George from holly wood. The story goes that the tree had blown down in his garden and LG wanted something made from the wood. Unfortunately, his tree proved rotten so new wood had to be purchased on the quiet! Other interesting items were wooden World War II aircraft parts, radio cabinets from the 1930s and one for a 1938 television set.

Mirian Pearce

Ashmolean Museum, Broadway

Tudor House in Broadway has been used for various purposes since 1673 including 80 years as H W Keil antiques business. After restoration, the house opened in September 2013 to display items from the Ashmolean Museum, many of them with a local flavour. Rachel, the House Manager, welcomed us and gave a brief but fascinating tour of the three floors and its history. We saw a standing livery cupboard of 1630, one of only a few in the country due to its being so impractical. The Gordon Russell black metal wall lights did not look out of place, but were not used due to the smell from the pig skin. My favourite item was a locally-made Sheldon tapestry with a picture of the Return of the Prodigal Son. There was also a cabinet of curiosities and a travelling exhibition by John Singer Sargent, who had stayed in the area.

Thanks to Rachel for the tour and to Ruth Welch for a lovely day out.

Catherine Dixon

Photos by Judith Jones



▲ Gordon Russell Museum – The Paris Cabinet made from English walnut with inlays in ebony, yew, laburnum and boxwood



▲ Detail from a tile panel by Morris and Burne-Jones at the Ashmolean

◀ Tapestry panel showing the Return of the Prodigal Son

Herefordshire Churches

Thursday 1 May 2014

The poor May Day weather did not detract from our enjoyment and if the weather failed our expectations, our guide Stephen Blake, most certainly did not. We were to see the Romanesque work of the mid 12th century Herefordshire School of carvers and Stephen meticulously drew attention to details which we otherwise may have missed or whose significance we might have failed to grasp.

We visited three churches selected to illustrate the chronological development of the sculpture.

First to Shobden, where we were greeted with coffee and home-made cakes. The Norman church was demolished in 1752-6 by Richard Bateman, a friend of Horace Walpole, and is an extraordinary Gothic replacement in the manner of Strawberry Hill. It is a kind of wedding cake fantasy recently redecorated with carefully repaired external stonework. Of particular note were the triple-decker pulpit and the ogee arches with pendants above transepts and the chancel, all coloured delicate cream and sky blue. All that remains of the Norman church are the font; the Romanesque chancel arch; and north and south doorways re-erected nearby as a folly. Sadly, exposed to the elements these 'Shobden Arches' have become badly weathered.

After lunch in Leominster we continued to Kilpeck, a complete three-cell Norman church, plain inside, but profusely carved outside. This small, remote church is renowned for its fine Romanesque font; the dragons, strange beasts, birds, intertwined foliage and elongated figures with almond-shaped eyes that adorn chancel and doorway shafts; and its 85 corbels, many in a fine state of preservation. Stephen Blake suggested these were warnings of the temptations of the flesh. A few have been lost; was this the work of a Victorian lady who took exception to their explicitness?

Our final visit was to see the font at Castle Frome, described by Pevsner as one of the masterworks of Romanesque sculpture in England. The sculpture here was of the baptism of Christ with St John, the hand of God and the dove of the Holy Ghost, surrounded by the emblems of the four evangelists. So ended a long but very rewarding day.

John Rollinson



▲ The font at St Michael's Church, Castle Frome. It is carved from a single piece of rock, and rests on three giant beasts. A snakelike pattern adorns the stem and the rim is plaited.

Photo by Anna Naugle-Sherman

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**Bristol Museum &
Art Gallery,
Queen's Road,
Bristol,
BS8 1RL**

Tel: 0117 922 3571

general.museum@bristol.gov.uk
**www.bristol.gov.uk/page/
museums-and-galleries**

FBMGA committee

Patrons

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Sue Thurlow
07836 693589
suethurlow@waitrose.com

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0117 962 4872

FBMGA website manager

Brian Vincent
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brianvincenthome@aol.com

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0117 962 4771
Gary Gostelow
0117 971 1323

Programme Committee Chairman

Mary Bailey
0117 942 1944

FBMGA website

www.friendsofbmga.org.uk

Newsletter edited by Tim and Ann Wood

tim-wood@blueyonder.co.uk

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