

Newsletter

Bristol's Lost City

Talk at M Shed

Saturday 10 January 2015

In the spring of 1914 Bristol was looking forward to a major attraction, the Bristol International Exhibition, set on land at Ashton Gate covering 32 acres and including massive temporary structures and pavilions made mostly from white plasterboard. It was financed by London money and designed to drum up trade with the Empire. In the eight weeks it took to set it all up some 2,000 workers a week, both local and imported, were employed on the site at a cost of £100,000.

Popularly known as 'The White City', the site's attractions included replicas of Bristol castle, Drake's ship *Revenge* and a group of buildings depicting 'Shakespeare's England', the latter designed by Winston Churchill's mother. There was also a figure-of-eight roller-coaster, the Eastern Tea Gardens, Bostock's Jungle, the Bowl Slide, the 'Crazy Kitchen', and a 'House of Nonsense'. A comedic element was provided by Stokes and Croft.

The exhibition was due to run until 14 October but, even before Britain declared war on Germany (4 August 1914), the site had struggled to attract sufficient visitors to pay its way. Winding-up proceedings in the courts had started as early as the middle of June. The receiver decided to keep the site open to allow the planned pageants to take place but on 20 July a winding-up order was heard at Bristol County Court and the declaration of war put a stop to any visitors.

The remainder of the talk described how the site was taken over by the War Office and used for the recruitment of several regiments of soldiers, their barracks and training grounds. A great treat was a film clip from August 1914 of hundreds of territorials returning to Temple Meads from a summer camp in Minehead after war was declared. There was also a rousing patriotic song, *Bravo Bristol*, about Bristol's Own by Fred Weatherley and Ivor Novello. It brought tears to the eyes!

The talk was based on Clive Burlton's book *Bristol's Lost City*. Reference is made to the White City in the M Shed exhibition *Moved by Conflict*. It was a splendid afternoon. We are very grateful to Clive Burlton for all his research and to Mary Bailey for inviting him.

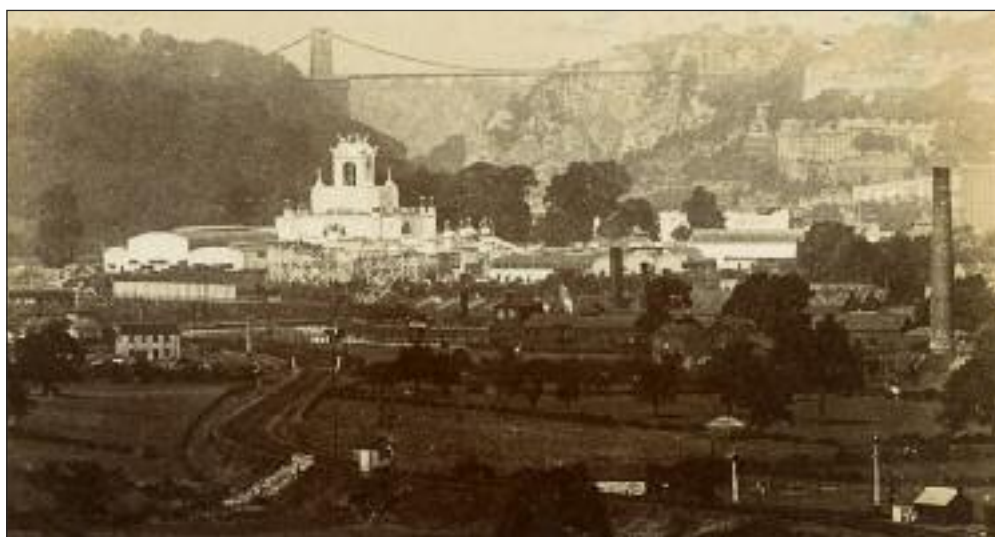
Robert Walters



▲ *Army drill at the White City opposite B Bond warehouse*

Photos © Bristol
Record Office

▼ *View of the White City from Bedminster Down*



Welcome to the Museum's new leadership team

It was all change at the start of this year for the museums service leadership team, as you will see from the Museums Report. I would therefore like to start by welcoming Laura Pye, Head of Culture, and congratulating her new team of deputies on their appointment. I am delighted that Ray Barnett, now Head of Collections & Archives, will continue to be our key contact at the museum, and join the Executive Committee for our meetings. Phil Walker and Zak Mensah are also internal appointments, and I have had the pleasure of working with each of them from time to time in the past. I am sure you will join me in sending our best wishes to everyone in the new team.

The members of the Executive and Programme committees had the opportunity to meet Laura when she joined us, and Ray in January for our annual supper. It was great to be able to get to know each other a little in such an informal context.

And Farewell to Vivienne Bennett and Tim Corum

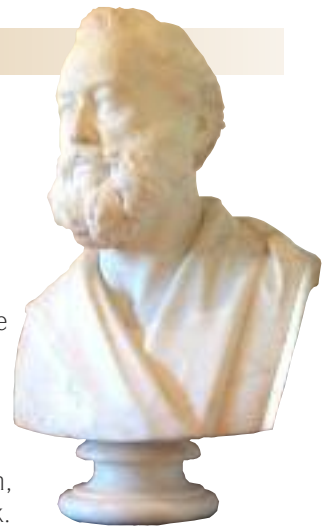
Vivienne Bennett, Interim Head of Culture throughout 2014, successfully led the museum service through some challenging times. Before she left, Vivienne told me 'I have been enormously impressed by the dedication of all the staff here; Bristol is fortunate to have such a passionate group of people caring for its museums and collections. And Bristol Museums is also fortunate to have such a dedicated group of Friends – your volunteering and financial support is so valuable to the museums and I hope that will continue and grow in the future.'

Deputy Head, Tim Corum, left the service in mid-January to take up his new post as Director of Curatorial and Public Engagement at the Horniman Museum in South East London. He wrote to us 'I am really excited about taking on this new role in one of my all-time favourite museums, though I will be very sorry not to be involved in the next stage of development here in Bristol. The Friends support of M Shed was so helpful in seeing that amazing project to fruition, and I can only hope I will encounter such dedicated Friends and volunteers at my next museum.'



Conrad Finzel, Sugar Refiner, 1793-1859

Sugar refining was among the most significant industries in Bristol in the 18th and 19th centuries. Conrad Finzel's refinery dominated the centre of Bristol for decades, until the late 1870s, on the site now being redeveloped as Finzel's Reach, across the harbour from Castle Park. As well as running the largest refinery in the city, Finzel made a major contribution to the technology of the industry and his philanthropic work included supporting the Muller Orphanage.



▲ **Conrad Finzel**
© Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives

With the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery we have jointly funded the purchase of a magnificent marble bust of Finzel, which until the 1970s resided at the Colston Hall. It later came into the hands of the then landlord of the Shakespeare pub in Totterdown, where it resided from the mid 1980s until 1999. During its time there the bust acquired a new life, known to a generation of customers as 'Ed' and was dressed according to the season. The museum intends to display the bust in M Shed, where its 19th century and more contemporary history will be interpreted for visitors. In the meantime you can see it in the store at M Shed if you take one of the daily, Tuesday to Saturday, behind-the-scenes tours.

If you would like to learn more about the sculptor of the bust, or about the oak plinth on which the bust stands, have a look at Andy King's article on our website, friendsofbmga.org.uk.

Christmas Fair

Those of you who were at our Christmas Fair in December will know that it felt especially festive this year, with a larger number of commercial stalls bringing extra colour to the proceedings. The Bristol University Madrigal Singers were delightful as ever, and the overwhelming feeling was that all of us – visitors, volunteers, commercial stallholders and staff – were enjoying ourselves and really getting into the Christmas spirit. A total of £883 was raised this year so a big thank-you is due to all of you who contributed to that, and especially to Mary Bailey who works so hard behind the scenes to mastermind our events programme, and the Christmas Fair in particular.

◀ ***Our wonderful scientific collection was on show in the background of the BBC's Nature's Weirdest Events – Series 4 shown throughout January and early February.***
© BBC

Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives

Museum Report

New Management Team

Laura Pye, the new leader of the Museums, Galleries & Archives service, took up her new post as Service Manager Culture on the first working day of the new year. On the same day Laura was joined by the new Head of Engagement, Phil Walker, whom many of you will already know, and the new Head of Transformation, Zak Mensah, formerly Head of Digital at the museum service. With Ray Barnett as Head of Collections & Archives, the senior management team tasked with steering the organisation forward is now in place.



▲ *Curators Amber Druce and Lisa Graves with friends next to the shrine for the dead.*

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Other Staff News

In the last quarter, leavers include Vivienne Bennett, Head of Service; Tim Corum, one of her deputies; and Stella Yates. Further restructure-driven changes to staffing in Front of House, Operations and Events teams are ongoing.

The restructure at Bristol Record Office has now been completed with the following staff now in post: Julian Warren, City Archivist; Matt Coles, Archivist; Molly O'Doherty (previously Assistant Duty Manager at M Shed), Searchroom Officer; and Samantha Boyle (previously a Trainee Community Archaeologist), Archives Assistant.

Museum & Art Gallery

The magnificent Ming vase on tour from the British Museum, and pictured in the last newsletter, received about 10,000 visitors, and drew attention to our wonderful eastern collections. The exhibition of exquisite contemporary Chinese ceramics *Ahead of the Curve* was also very successful, with 8,300 visitors by mid-January. The 50th Wildlife Photographer of the Year was particularly popular over Christmas and New Year. With the opening of the new

exhibition *Modern Art in Britain - Reality Questioned* showing work from our own collections alongside those from Swindon Museum & Art Gallery, the result has been a very successful start to 2015.

The celebration of the Mexican Day of the Dead at the end of October is now part of our annual events cycle. Alongside the crafts activities, store tours, talks, storytelling and the shrine - this time dedicated to the writer Gabriel García Márquez and created in collaboration with the University of Bristol's newly formed Mexican Society - we ran our first Death Café. This was part of the preparation for the 'Death' exhibition opening in October. It was an opportunity to discuss death and funerals over tea and cake, and was facilitated by a funeral director and the national celebrant of the year.

Bristol Record Office

BRO recently launched a new, user-friendly online catalogue. It offers improved navigation, to show how collections are structured, and it is now much easier to view catalogues for large archives. The address for the catalogue is unchanged: archives.bristol.gov.uk

We have been awarded generous funding of £45,000 by the National Cataloguing Grants Programme for Archives towards a two-year cataloguing project titled 'Exploring Empire: the photographic collections of the former British Empire and Commonwealth Museum'. Through this project, the most significant image collections in the British Empire and Commonwealth Collection will be made available for research.



◀ *Unloading a locomotive boiler at Kilindini harbour, Bombasa, Kenya*
Image from the BECM image collection ©BMGA



◀ Interior of *Moved by Conflict* exhibition
©BMGA

M Shed

The Dosh Project, produced by the Asian Arts Agency, was recently launched at M Shed. Wonderful digital stories and oral histories are available to view on some of the kiosks at M Shed in the Bristol Life and People galleries; look out for the orange stickers.

We received many positive comments about *Moved by Conflict: Bristol and the First World War: lives changed for ever* exhibition including one from Dominiek Dendooven, Senior Curator at Belgium's In Flanders Fields Museum who said 'I've seen several exhibitions on the centenary so far and the one at Bristol is by far the best. . . '.

Christmas Steam-Up and Talking Cranes on Princes Wharf

In December the Working Exhibits team ran two weekends of steam experiences sold as early Christmas presents for a lucky 88 participants. Our volunteer team treated participants to the chance to drive steam loco *Portbury* and the Fairbairn steam crane, followed by mulled wine and mince pies provided by the Friends. The weekend was a sell-out and received very positive feedback in terms of both enjoyment and value-for-money.

The Talking Cranes have made a welcome return after 8 years of silence. Scripted and voiced by our own staff, two of the dockside cranes engage in conversations about their working lives, their story since the closure of the docks and Life, the Universe and Everything.

From the Membership Secretary

Membership cards are enclosed with your newsletter this month for those members who have renewed their subscription. If you can't find one and you think you have paid please contact me. We offer a warm welcome the following who have joined since the last newsletter:

June Hibberd, Membership Secretary

Miss Judith Couch
Ms Jenny Ellis
Ms Maureen Fraser
Dr Jennifer Horgan
Ms Sophia Keen
Mrs Linda Lissaman-Hill
Ms Jill Lundquist
Mrs Diane Mabbs
Mrs Annette Martin
Mr Peter Miller
Mrs Beryl Miller

Dr Anthony Parker
Mrs D S Parker
Mr Charles Ross
Mrs Susan Ross
Mrs Marianne Ryman
Mr Christopher Spivey
Mrs Marian Spivey
Mr Michael Warner
Mr Lionel White
Mr A Williams
Mrs A Williams

Maps of Bristol

Both Bristol Museum & Art Gallery and the Bristol Record Office hold maps of the city. Thanks to funding from the Friends we have recently added two more by artists who show the city in very different ways. One is a print based on a hand-drawn pen and ink map of the city that took over 500 hours to draw. The map is full of signs and cyphers referring to buildings and events – by the time you read this it should be on display at M Shed.

Exhibitions and Events

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

Modern Art in Britain: Reality Questioned
to Monday 31 August, free

Paintings by artists such as Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, David Bomberg and Eric Ravilious reveal how they experimented with primitivism, illusion, visual puns and abstraction. In collaboration with museums and art galleries in Bristol, Bath, Swindon and Cheltenham.

Hockney: A Rake's Progress
to Sunday 14 June, free

Hogarth's classic morality tale gets a Pop Art makeover by renowned and influential artist David Hockney.

Email message from Laura Pye, Head of Culture, sent to us on 2 January 2015

Dear Friends

Today is my first day in the office as the Head of Culture for Bristol City Council which as you are aware is a new role but is basically the old Head of Museums and Archives post with added responsibility for the City Arts Programme.

I have moved here from Warwickshire where I was the interim Heritage and Culture Manager for the County Council. This was a service which covers a similar mix of services to here including the Museums and Archives, Arts, Archaeology and Ecology teams. Before that my background is mainly in Museums and particularly Museum education and I have moved around a bit having worked in Yorkshire, Liverpool, Lancashire and then Warwickshire where I had been for the past 7 years firstly as the Head of Heritage Education and then as the Interim Service Manager.

It's great to finally be here in Bristol and I am really looking forward to working with you all over the coming months. There is no escaping the fact that these are challenging times for Museums and Cultural services right across the country but I am confident we can work together to ensure that culture thrives right across Bristol and beyond.

People say that your first 100 days in any new post is a great opportunity to view things with fresh eyes and question old practices before it becomes the normal for you and you stop seeing things, which I do agree with and I hope to be able to do. However it's also really useful to hear the views of others who know the service and the area so if you want to bring something to my attention or question something we currently do please email me call or mention it to me when we meet.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year,

Laura

Laura Pye
Head of Culture
Laura.pye@Bristol.gov.uk



Photo © Laura Pye

New York City Apartment/Bristol

Saturday 28 March - Sunday 27 September, free

Experience the ghost architecture of this soft fabric corridor based on the New York home of international artist Do Ho Suh.

Bristol Record Office

Postcards from Bristol

Tuesday 17 March - Friday 17 July, free

Get a taste of the huge diversity of the early 20th century postcards donated to the city by Roy Vaughan, and the stories behind them. Celebrating a volunteer project which has mapped the postcards on the innovative 'Know Your Place' website. Part of a community partnership project led by the University of Bristol.

M Shed

Open for Business

Saturday 21 March - Sunday 21 June

The story of contemporary British manufacturing and industry told through the lens of nine internationally renowned documentary photographers.

Stony Broke in No Man's Land

Saturday 8 November 2014

Local folk group, The Hotwells Howlers, performed a truly memorable event in the Picture Room at Blaise Castle Museum to commemorate the outbreak of World War I. Using images on a large screen, narrative, songs and readings, they created a picture of how the war affected the people of Bristol and the surrounding area. They had obviously researched the topic thoroughly, using old press cuttings, photographs, cartoons, posters, books – whatever they could find – and put together for us a professional performance which was informative, humorous and poignant.

They began with a series of local press cuttings, which indicated that Bristolians were unaware of the severity of the situation, moving on to the recruitment of soldiers and photographs of the International Exhibition site (Bristol's White City) at Ashton Meadows being used for training new recruits. Recruiting for 'Bristol's Own', the 12th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, concentrated on the merchant and professional class – no 'riff-raff' wanted! Cartoons of that period illustrated the popular view that the war would be short and everyone would be 'home by Christmas'. Kitchener's advice to avoid wine and women in France: 'Treat women with courtesy but avoid intimacy' was likely to be ignored by many of the new recruits looking forward to crossing the Channel.

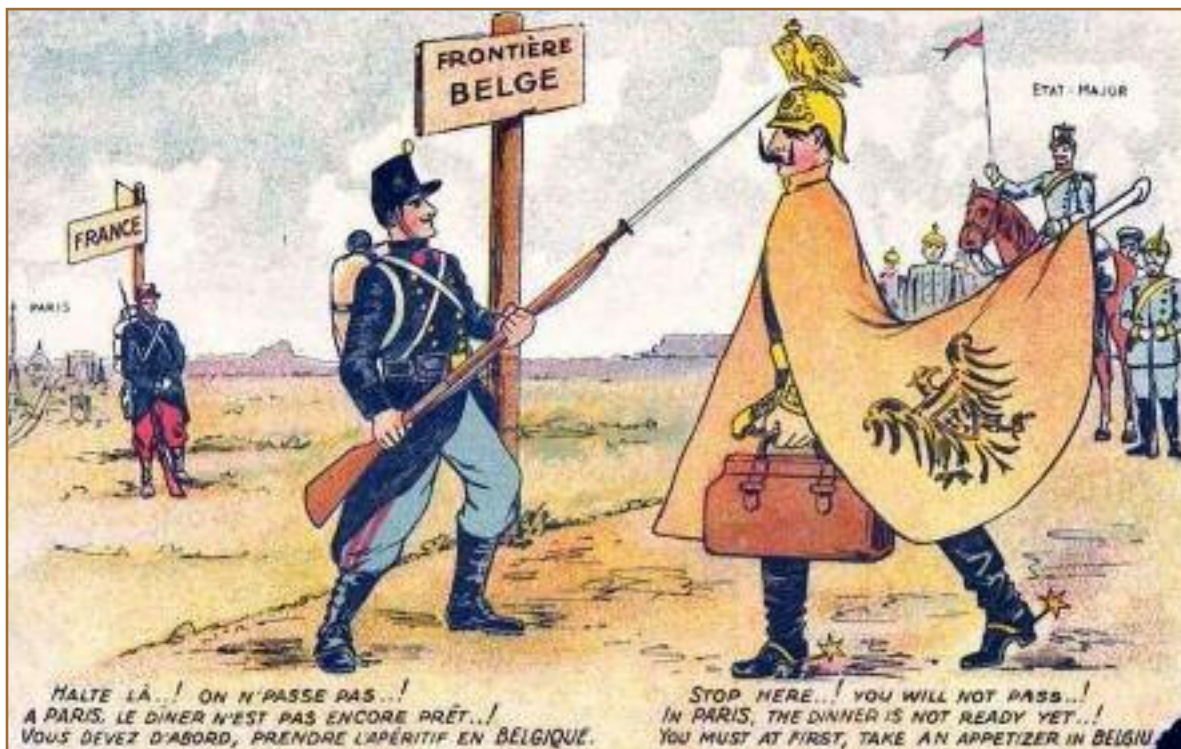
The topics covered were wide-ranging and included: local conscientious objectors; land girls; women knitting socks and sewing uniforms for their fathers, brothers and sons ('Sister Suzie's sewing shirts for soldiers' was a popular tongue-twister song); women serving as nurses in the field hospitals and working in munitions factories; the use of horses, pigeons, cats and dogs in the war effort; ill-fitting uniforms and the weak beer being sold at home – the latter giving rise to a popular song called Lloyd George's beer ('Drown your dogs in it, drop some frogs in it, then you'll see some wonderful hops' is just a sample of the lyrics). A number of the songs accompanying the narrative were humorous but the majority were marching songs or songs highlighting the plight of the ordinary soldier and his longing for home, and a poem written by a young widow set to music. There were also poems and letters written by local soldiers about their experiences in the trenches: a letter from Tommy Atkins from Somerset and Harry Patch writing on the futility of war.



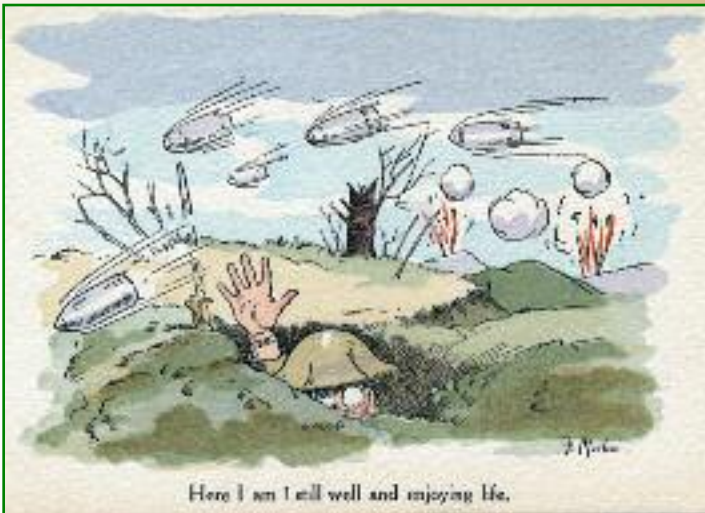
▲ A newspaper cartoon depicting plucky Belgium thwarting the German plans for a swift invasion. 'Belgium put the kibosh on the Kaiser...'



▲ A new recruit struggles to make his ill-fitting uniform more comfortable



▲ A French cartoon depicting the Kaiser's invasion being held up in Belgium



◀ 'Hush, here comes a Whizz-bang...'

A Red Cross nurse ▶



The performance ended with the song of the title: Stony broke in no man's land. Once the war was over and the soldiers returned home, they found a very different challenge: there was little work for a disabled, unskilled ex-soldier in the austerity of post-war Britain saddled with £1 billion of debt. Despite their experiences of war, goes the song, they would rather be back there than fighting to survive at home.

Mary Bailey

If anyone is interested in asking The Hotwells Howlers to perform this event for their own organisation, then contact Olga Shotton at olgahome@btinternet.com.

Images courtesy of David Byrne, Hotwells Howlers Engine Shed

Engine Shed

Station approach, Temple Meads

Wednesday 22 October 2014

Our visit started with a talk in the GWR Board Room of the building designed by I.K. Brunel, which still has the original doors and fireplace. The Marketing Director gave a brief history of Brunel's work and showed us a map of the station in 1880. The railway terminus opened in 1841 and is the world's oldest railway building with Grade 1 status. It was used for refuelling and watering engines. There is also a drawing office and station master's office. In 1852 the office and train shed opened for the Bristol to Exeter line. In 1865-70 a new third station was built and this was in use until 1965, following which the original Brunel building housed the Exploratory then the Empire and Commonwealth Museum. In 2017 Temple Meads Station will be redeveloped and the line electrified. Due to the Grade 1 status, all internal modifications at the Shed have had to be independent from the exterior wall.

The Engine Shed, part-owned by Bristol University Business Department and Bristol City Council, houses 21 'incubator' (starting-up) companies. We were given a tour of the various offices. It is growing with help from EU funding via an Enterprise Partnership. It is anticipated that companies will expand and move on to other premises with the University tracking their fortunes. The foyer is open to the public with an exhibition of what is happening in the building.

It was pleasing to see the Engine Shed being put to such good use and fascinating to see a building which was at the forefront of innovation when it was first built by Brunel continuing to be a hub for innovation in the 21st century. The internal modifications created a vibrant atmosphere and, as well as discrete offices, there were many different spaces provided including a cafe, comfortable seating areas for informal contact and small intimate booths for two or three people to have discussions. Although the businesses being supported at the moment are all technology-based, it is hoped that the organisation will soon be able to expand to include creative and social enterprise initiatives as well.

Catherine Dixon and Carol Ouvry



▲ Engine shed meeting booths and cafe meeting area.
Photo by Andre Pattenden

The *Dreadnought* journal

Saturday 10 May 2014

*It's farewell to my Polly dear, since you and I must part!
In crossing of the wide seas, I'll pledge to you my heart;
Our ship she does lie waiting, it's farewell my dear,
For I am just a-going on board a bold privateer.*

This old sea song is an echo of a fascinating period in our seafaring history. Nigel Sommerville and Allie Dillon opened a window for us on the first-hand experiences of one man engaged in a busy Bristol trade. Nigel is transcribing and researching the personal log of a nameless ship's surgeon, recording his experiences on board a Bristol privateer, the *Dreadnought*, during a four-month campaign in 1757 against French shipping in the Bay of Biscay. The original log may be seen in the Record Office.

Privateering was an early and extreme form of outsourcing. Private investors, working alone or in partnership, bought or commissioned stout seagoing vessels, sometimes hard to distinguish from warships, with the object of obtaining Royal authorization to sail abroad to disrupt enemy merchant shipping, capture ships, cargoes and crews and share the spoils. Always dangerous, but highly profitable if successful (though ruinous if not), these vessels served the government without risk to the Royal coffers.

In the second year of the Seven-year War, the *Dreadnought* was newly-built and equipped with guns and a commanding officer. A small ad appeared in the local Bristol paper calling for volunteer crew including, specifically, a ship's surgeon. Privateering, being state-sponsored, exempted the crew from press-gang and harsh Navy discipline.

Our nameless Surgeon signed up and set sail from King Road (off Portishead) with about 120 fellows in May 1757. During her voyage, the *Dreadnought* captured two loaded vessels bound for France; lost or severely injured several crew members in accidents and battles; suffered bouts of fever aboard; was shot at in various confused naval encounters (privateers having the annoying habit of flying any old flag which might confound other ships at sea); and regularly became lost.

The captain (also nameless) liked a drink and never refused the hospitality offered by other privateers or friendly merchant vessels encountered by the *Dreadnought*. Sometimes these meetings had unfortunate consequences. Privateering appears to have been (quite literally) a hit and miss occupation. Friends and foes at sea were hard to tell apart and, although the powder and shot was real, some aspects of seafaring, as related by our nameless narrator, did have the aura of comic opera.

With the *Dreadnought* safely back in Bristol, the owners and crew shared a substantial bounty when the captured ships and cargo were sold. Sadly we do not know if our surgeon ever ventured to sea again or if this was his only time as 'a bold privateer'.

Bob Smyth

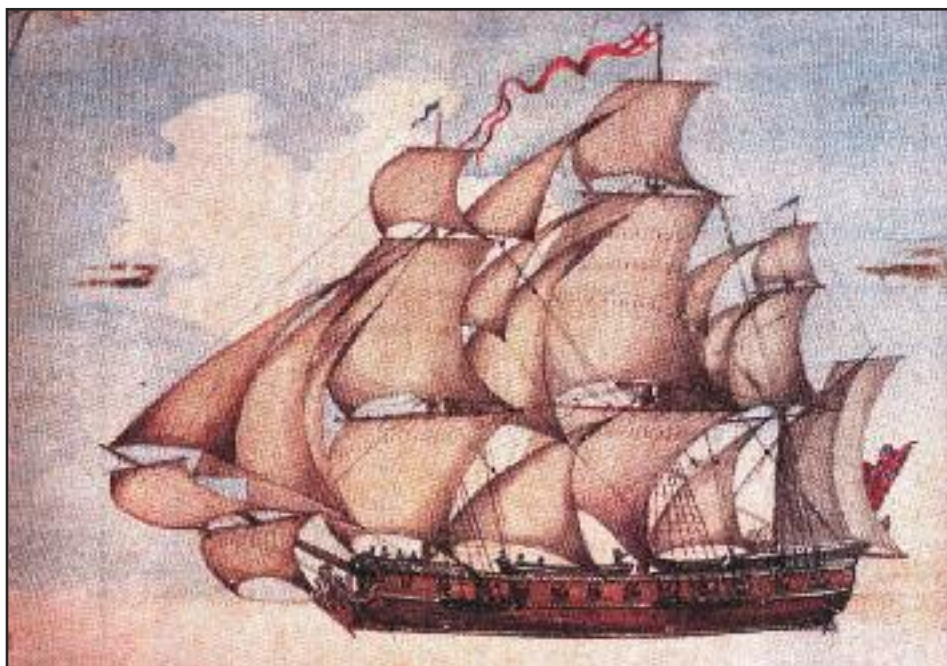


▲ Privateers tied up at Hung Road, Shirehampton in the early 19th Century. Hung Road was a roadstead or sheltered anchorage where ships waited until high water to be towed into Bristol port by 'hobblers' (teams of oarsmen) from Pill.

© Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives

▼ An old Bristol privateer. Sadly no image of the *Dreadnought* survives but she probably looked very similar to this ship.

© Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives





MEMBERS' TRIPS

◀ Stourhead gardens were designed by Henry Hoare I, a wealthy banker who moved to the area in 1717. He built the dam to form the famous lake and the classical buildings that adorn its banks. He died in 1725, the same year in which the house was completed.

The Christmas House at Stourhead

Friday 12 December 2014

Although I have been to several memorable fêtes champêtres in the grounds of Stourhead, I had never been inside the big house. This trip was an opportunity to satisfy my curiosity. Initially I was amazed how small the big house actually was, especially in comparison to the epic scale of the lake, grottoes and gardens outside. However, it proved to be a satisfyingly symmetrical Palladian building with an elegant but homely feel. Each room sparkled with Christmas finery from different periods – tables groaning with ‘food’ and lit by ‘candlelight’. There were piles of gifts lying ready to open and all manner of historical Christmas paraphernalia to admire – particularly the exhibition of Christmas cards through the ages. Some of the 400,000 annual visitors buy ready-made picnics in the excellent café to enjoy by the lake side. It was far too wintry for that, so instead we tucked into their signature dish of organic beef cobbler. We wandered round the shop, bought some presents in the shop and thanked Ruth Welch for yet another excellent outing.

Tim Wood



▲ There was a good collection of old Christmas cards on view. The older they were the less recognisably Christmassy they looked.

◀ The house had some massive rooms but this one was laid out as a comfortable family dining room all on a very human scale just ready for a small, happy family to sit down and enjoy their Christmas meal.



Photos by Ann Wood

Illustrated Talk

W H Y Titcomb – St Ives, Bristol, Burma and beyond

Saturday 22 November 2014

As suggested by the title of David Tovey's informative illustrated talk on the life and work of his great-grandfather, William Titcomb (1858 – 1930), the artist's travels and subject matter were wide-ranging.

Thanks to David's research, many art lovers are already aware of the important role Titcomb played in the Newlyn School of painting producing work such as 'Primitive Methodists at Prayer, St Ives' (1890) and 'Old Sea Dogs' (1894). These paintings demonstrate his skills in figurative art and his preference for social realism.

During his lifetime Titcomb employed different techniques and materials. The influence of his studies in Impressionist France is clear in the change of style between the sharp-edged Burmese works and the freer use of paint in his plein air Cornish paintings. He also produced charming watercolours, such as his scenes of Old Bristol and 1920s Venice, and contributed black and white illustrations to the periodical, 'The Graphic'.

Probably the most revealing aspect for the Friends was how many of Titcomb's works remain in Bristol (sometimes hidden from view) – in Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, the Cathedral, St Stephen's, the Mansion House, Clifton College and The Red Maids' School. Titcomb came to Bristol in 1909 and died here in 1930, albeit with foreign tours in the interim. He was an early member of Bristol Savages, set up an art school in Clifton and exhibited regularly at the RWA.

As in earlier works, there is real socio-historical interest in many of his Bristol paintings which depict philanthropic institutions such as The Little Blue Maids and The Old Blind Institute; early Scouting and World War I; religious subjects such as John Wesley preaching to the Mayor and Corporation or services in high-Victorian St Stephen's; education at Clifton College and The Red Maids' School; and Bristol streets and buildings, now changed or disappeared.

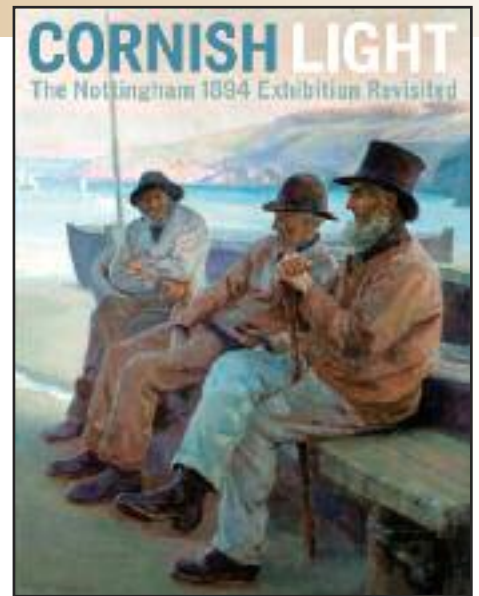
Victorian art can sometimes seem staid and earnest to modern eyes but David Tovey reminded us of a lighter side in such anecdotes as Titcomb's choice of a hard-drinking artist colleague as his model for the teetotal Methodist preacher and the insistence of a Rector of St Stephen's that his budgerigar sit with the choir during services!

We can look forward to viewing Titcomb's Cornish work at a major touring exhibition in Nottingham and Penzance. But it would be wonderful, given the number of his paintings still here and in recognition of David Tovey's success in bringing many of these into the light, if Bristol recognised this significant local artist by staging an exhibition which would appeal to those interested in art and also in Bristol's wider history.

Jan Deighton

The Old Blind Asylum ►

Photos by kind permission
of David Tovey



▲ *Cornish Light*



▲ *Goldney House fountain*



◀ Red Maids



Titcomb's Cornish work will be on show at Cornish Light – The Nottingham 1894 Exhibition revisited at the 2015 Touring Exhibition at:

Nottingham Castle Museum,
3 April - 7 June 2015

and at

Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance,
20 June - 5 September 2015

The Eastern Orthodox Church

Monday 10 November 2014

A large group of Friends visiting the Eastern Orthodox Church were warmly welcomed by Father Kyril and shown round. Although the fabric of the church remained as it had first been built in 1831, there were some obvious differences in the internal layout. Ervingites, or Catholic Apostolics, were the predecessors of the Eastern Orthodox congregation in this church. This short-lived group, who believed that the world would come to an end at the turn of the 20th century, had a strict hierarchy of apostles and prophets, and was completely unknown to the vast majority of us. They died out in the 1960s (having lost credibility when the world did not end) and the church was put up for sale.

At this point the Eastern Orthodox community, developed from the Polish and Russian Orthodox churches which flourished in Bristol after World War II, was looking for a permanent church of their own. They took over the building, gradually adapting it to their own needs. The most notable change was the insertion of the icon screen which completely filled the chancel arch. Other major changes were the removal of the pews, as services are taken standing up, and the removal of the pulpit, the address being made by the priest standing in front of the icon screen beside the small altar table.

Father Kyril had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Christian Church and gave us an erudite tour of the development of Christianity from the early Church to the present time. He pointed out that the Orthodox Church has a continuous tradition from the time of the apostles with no reformation or major changes in form or hierarchy. It is a universal church, with communities worldwide each headed by a patriarch.

His wide-ranging talk raised many questions, and he clearly enjoyed sharing his limitless knowledge with others. We could no doubt have continued to learn from him for many hours more.

Carol Ouvry



The Eastern Orthodox Church Icon Screen. The two large icons flanking the central doorway were painted specifically for this church. Smaller icons on the screen and the walls of the church are reproductions.

Photo by Sue Brettell



Behind the Scenes

Wildlife Photographer of the Year Exhibition

Friday 16 January 2014

This exhibition is celebrating its 50th Anniversary and has been visiting Bristol Museum for 15 years. It also tours 50 countries. There are 14 categories and a young photographer section. It has grown from 394 entries to 42,000 this year. Entries are received from 96 countries with now more Indian photographers, but sadly very few women entrants. The portfolios of five or six photographers told some stories we may not want to hear, but another showed one man's obsession with Birds of Paradise. Every category winner this year is from a different country. Entrants can submit only 30 photos and there are strict rules about digital enhancement. The overall winner was in black and white titled The Last Great Picture – (a group of lions that has subsequently either been shot or poisoned by locals).



▲ *Winter Hang-out*
© Łukasz Bożycki

▼ *Glimpse of the Underworld*
© Christian Vizi



©Christian Vizi (Mexico)



◀ *Just Dreaming*
© Will Jenkins

My favourite photo was a mouse on a puffball at night backlit by the moon, with a mosquito getting in on the act too. A close second was the Golden Birch tree still with leaves on with a dusting of snow and a background of freezing fog.

Rosamund Kidman Cox has been involved with the competition since 1981 as a judge and now producing the accompanying book. She has much enthusiasm and knowledge and gave us some of the details behind the photos. Thank you to her for a super tour and thanks to Carol Ouvry for organising it.

Catherine Dixon

▼ *You Have Been Warned*
© Alex Mustard



Illustrated talk

Two hundred years of chemistry in Bristol

Tuesday 29 July 2014

'Thomas Beddoes would probably today be considered a bit of a geek', was the opinion of Brian Vincent, describing one of his two Bristol heroes of chemistry from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Beddoes was a chemist and physician interested in the idea that inhaling various gases would cure a wide range of diseases. Between 1793 and 1799 he treated patients with tuberculosis at his clinic in Hope Square, Hotwells. On the principle that butchers seemed to suffer less from tuberculosis than others, he kept cows in a byre alongside the building and encouraged them to breathe on his patients. This treatment, however, was not popular with the neighbours. Beddoes set up the Pneumatic Institution in Dowry Square in 1798 to treat patients by administering carbon dioxide and other gases in the mistaken belief that breathing less oxygen would cure them. Humphry Davy also joined the Institution and famously experimented with nitrous oxide (laughing gas). However, the original aim of the Institution was gradually abandoned and it became an ordinary hospital in 1807.



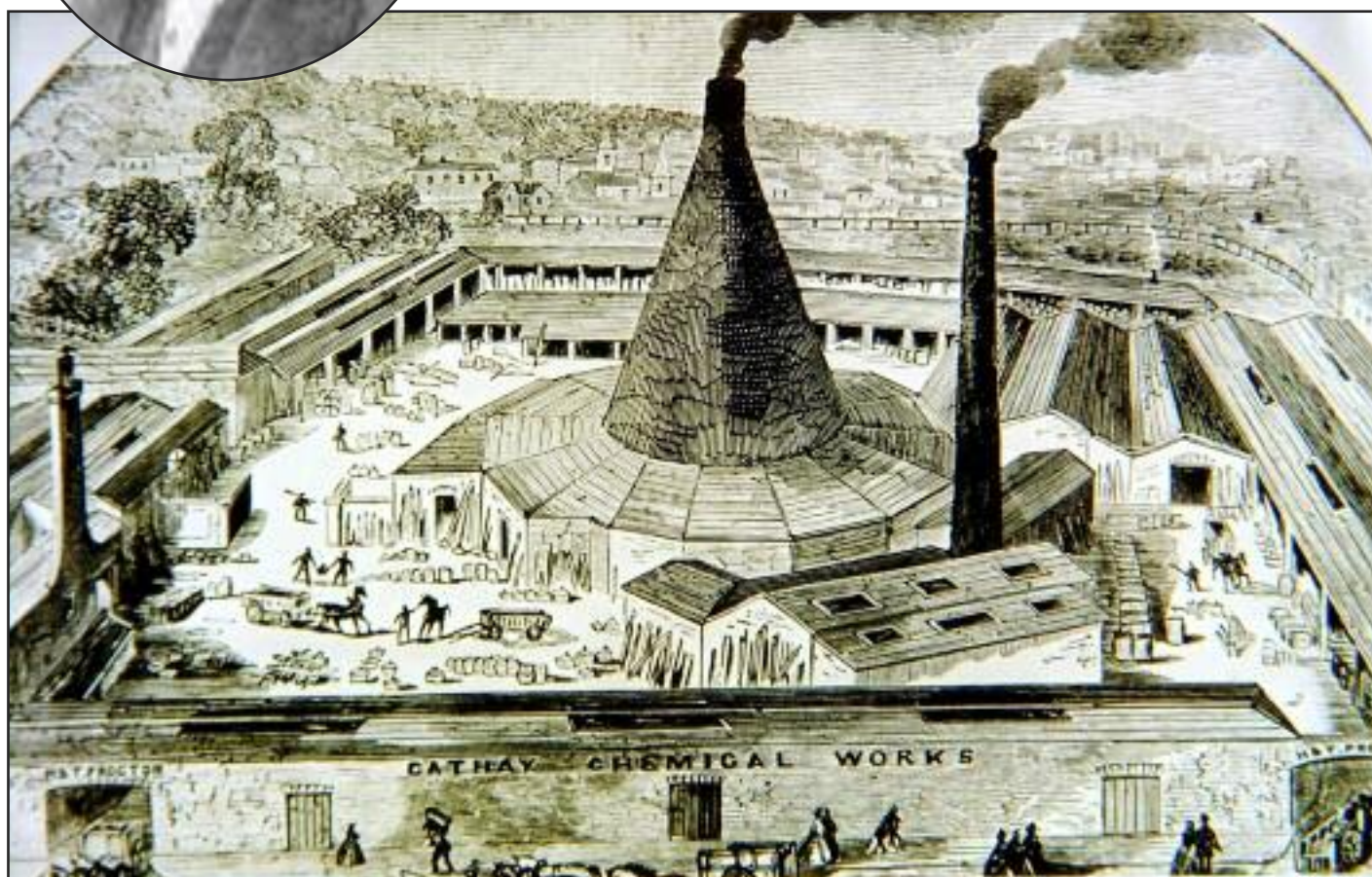
▲ **Thomas Beddoes, (1760 - 1808)**
Founder, The Bristol Pneumatic Institution (1793 - 1807)



The second hero was William Herapath (1796-1868), Bristol-born and a radical reformer as well as a chemist. He was a founder of the Bristol Medical School (1828), where he became professor of chemistry and toxicology. Famous as a chemical analyst, he gave evidence at several criminal trials involving poisoning but was also concerned at the lack of public hygiene and campaigned for the provision of public baths.

▲ **Professor William Herapath (1796 - 1868)**
Professor of Chemistry and Toxicology, Bristol Medical School, 1833 - 1867

▼ **Cathay Chemical Works of H & T Proctor, Prewett St, Redcliffe, ca. 1830**



From heroes of chemistry to chemical industries: Brian gave us a long list of such industries in Bristol – soap, tanning, beer, ceramics, glass, metal, sugar-refining, paper, copper-smelting, zinc, tobacco, chocolate and even starch, to name but some. Most of these are now long gone and Bristol must have been a very dirty, smelly city in their heyday.

On to some of the academic institutions where chemistry was taught: Brian described the development of the University of Bristol from its roots in the University College, founded in 1876 in premises in Park Row to promote science and literature, open to both men and women. In 1893 the Bristol Medical School merged with it, followed in 1908 by a merger with the Merchant Venturers' College after a promise of substantial funds by Henry Wills. In 1909 the university was finally granted its charter and the School of Chemistry, where Brian is Emeritus Professor of Physical Chemistry, continues to flourish.

Mary Bailey

Photos by kind permission of Brian Vincent



▲ The original University College Building in Park Row; chemistry had rooms on the top floor. Photo taken in 1874 (2 years before it opened).



▲ Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The trip focused on the new Staffordshire Hoard held at Birmingham Museum where, sadly, no photography was allowed. If you want to see pictures of the hoard and learn more go to <http://www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk/about>

The Staffordshire Hoard and the new Birmingham Library

Wednesday 12 November 2014

The display and interactive technology in the Hoard Gallery was cutting-edge. It was also deceptively small at first glance, tucked away almost as far from the museum entrances as we are used to with some of our Queens Road galleries. However, as most of the objects are measured in centimetres and take up limited space, the range on display is enormous. The story-telling and interpretation that has gone into the presentation was impressive.

Equally impressive is the exterior of the new Birmingham Library. The architect, Francine Houben, described the swirling circular patterns as a motif of the city 'recalling industrial gasometers ...and the jewellery trade'. Viewpoints and outside terraces are key features, with the interior essentially a rising series of curving floors offering a full modern library service. The building stood comparison with the renovated Liverpool Library that impressed members on our recent trip there.

But what lessons are there for us? In the Hoard Gallery, all the room guides are volunteers. As for the Library, only a week or so after our visit, big redundancies and cutbacks were announced which was very a dramatic development for an initiative which had scarcely been open for a year...

Keith Borissow



◀ The new Birmingham Library opened in September 2013 as a £188m replacement for the city's 1970s-built Central Library which was closed in July 2013. It is the largest public library in the UK and the largest public cultural space in Europe.

Photos by Elly Chapman

Rembrandt: The Late Works

Saturday 29 November 2014

Visiting this exhibition of the late works of Rembrandt at the National Gallery was quite special. Forty paintings, twenty drawings and thirty prints, many of which were unprecedented loans from all over the world, were gathered together for the first time.

The entrance to this major exhibition is black and uninviting but by stepping into the first room you come face to face with Rembrandt himself. Walking into that room we were faced with an explosion of colour and light that trumpeted his amazing skill. Four self-portraits executed with honesty and expertise lit up this room, promising that Rembrandt had much more to show us.

Drawings and prints were arranged so that visitors could understand how Rembrandt experimented with traditional forms of painting and printing techniques. He worked with traditional subjects using his observations of everyday life as he searched for new ways to present his work. When questioned about the value of recording such scenes he replied that everything is worth recording.



▲ Rembrandt, *Self Portrait at the Age of 63, 1669*

© National Gallery, London



Rembrandt experimented with paint and its application. He was one of the first artists to paint with broad brush strokes and use a palette knife to lay paint on a canvas. The bridegroom's sleeves in the painting *The Jewish Bride* are created by layers of gold paint.

Rembrandt became known for his portraits. The rich and famous were happy to pay large sums to have their portraits painted. Even when he was out of favour he charged high fees being very sure of his worth. His paintings of guild members in Amsterdam reflect the way he experimented with light and how he positioned his sitters; the wife of Jacob Trip facing out, not to the side as was the custom of the time.

In spite of tragedies in his later personal life, debts and loss of status, Rembrandt continued to paint and produced some of the finest works of his career which we were able to study in this exhibition. It was well worth the long journey to London and many thanks to Wendy Aldridge-Morris for her organisational skill.

Shirley Hodgson

◀ Rembrandt, *A Woman bathing in a Stream (Hendrickje Stoffels?), 1654*

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