

Merger of Friends groups gathers momentum

This edition packed with

- news and photos of Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives with exhibitions including women's art to celebrate Vote 100, the Woman's Hour Craft Prize and a celebration of seven decades of Bristol Music
- reports of trips to Lydiard Park, Oxford, Worcestershire churches, the Siri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Cardiff Theatre and Senedd and many more
- news of the merger of FoBAG and FBMGA and a host of upcoming events, talks and visits you can join



From the Chairman

Merging with Friends of Bristol Art Gallery

I can report good progress on the merger, with arrangements well on track for the changes to take place over the summer.

In the edition of the Bulletin just published, the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery have included a welcome letter from us encouraging their members who are not already ours to join FBMGA. There is also a special application form enclosed to allow them to take advantage of the one-time-only offer outlined in our last Newsletter i.e. new members currently in FoBAG who join us from 1 July 2018 will receive up to 18 months membership through to 31 December 2019, on payment of their first subscription.

If you know members of the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery who are not already our members too, please talk to them about the membership benefits you think will mean most to them, and about our special 2018/19 membership offer, and encourage them to join. The more members we have the more effectively we can support Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives.

Within our events programme we already include arts-focused activities, and in recognition of the merger we have organised – thanks to Muriel Harrison, a FoBAG committee member – some excellent fine art speakers to deliver some of our monthly talks. There are further details in the Events insert.

Our AGM on 25 September will, for this year only, be at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery rather than at M Shed, and will be followed – after refreshments and a chance to socialise – by the last of FoBAG's long-running annual Schubart Lectures (for which there will be a small charge as we have an excellent external speaker). We hope that this arrangement will encourage new members from FoBAG to come to our AGM, and will provide our loyal AGM participants with entertainment a little different from the norm. A booking form for the lecture is included in this newsletter.

Bristol Harbour Railway 40th Anniversary

Bristol Harbour Railway celebrated its 40th anniversary on 24 March, and invited us to run cake and book sales as we do for the Harbour Festival. The BHR team had arranged for Lydney Town Brass Band to lead the celebrations, and they did an excellent job, performing both in the L Shed store where we had our sales tables, and later on board the train as it travelled down the quayside. The band's timetable was carefully planned to avoid disturbing our talk about the Arundells of Wardour which was taking place in the M Shed Studio the same afternoon. Unfortunately a member of the public accidentally triggered a security alarm so that the whole building had to be evacuated in the middle of the talk, which completely threw the timing so that those listening to the second half of the talk, once they were allowed back into



▲ *Lydney Town Brass Band playing for the Bristol Harbour Railway 40th anniversary*

Photo by Sue Thurlow

the building, were treated to an unplanned burst of brass band music as the train left, and again when it returned. Fortunately, everyone including the speaker saw the funny side of the situation.

New acquisition for the Museum: Edward IV halfpenny from the Bristol Mint

We are often the only realistic source of funding for the museum when they want to acquire relatively low-cost items of local interest. We recently funded the purchase of an Edward IV halfpenny to fill a gap in the collection of Bristol Mint coins. Edward IV, 1461-70 and 1470-83, deposed Henry VI in the Wars of the Roses. Henry was briefly reinstated in 1470 before being deposed again and this time killed to avoid any further attempts to recover his throne. The Bristol Mint was reopened to strike coins in gold and silver – including this halfpenny – for Edward IV.

The coin is not in particularly good condition but is rare; halfpence were minted only occasionally, so there were fewer coins produced and (like all coins) they were often melted down for reissues, or easily lost due to their small size



▲ *Image of halfpenny*

© Bristol Culture

British Association of Friends of Museums Annual Conference

This year's BAFM annual Conference is on Saturday 13 October at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle. The theme is 'The value of Friends organisations in a changing social and economic climate'. Full details are on the BAFM website. Newcastle is a fabulous location for a long weekend, easy to fly to, with an exciting range of museums and galleries, great architecture, a vibrant cultural life, and interesting coast and countryside on the doorstep. The conference itself always proves thought-provoking and is a great way of sharing ideas with organisations like ours from across the UK.

Sue Thurlow Chairman

Cover photo: Finalist in the Woman's Hour Craft Prize - Snuff boxes by Romilly Saumarez Smith

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives

Staff News

We are pleased to announce that a new City Archivist has been appointed, after a very competitive recruitment process: it is Allie Dillon, who has done a fantastic job over the last few months in covering the post while it has been vacant.

Our congratulations also go to Gail Boyle, who has been appointed a trustee to the Government's Treasure Valuation Committee. This unpaid post is recognition at a national level of Gail's expertise and her contribution to British archaeology.

We were saddened to hear of the death of the previous Director of the Art Gallery, Arnold Wilson (who took early retirement in the 1980s).

Bristol Archives

We are delighted that the Bristol Archives were awarded Archive Accreditation in March by The National Archives who administer this scheme. Among the features recognised by accreditation are responsiveness to stakeholders, expertise, sustainability, resilience, planning, governance and the long term acquisition, preservation and accessibility of our archive heritage.

Over the annual winter stock-taking period, the opportunity was grasped to redecorate the public spaces and the 'tangerine' has now been replaced with white painted walls.

Blaise Castle House Museum, Georgian House Museum and Red Lodge Museum

Blaise, Red Lodge and Georgian House museums reopened for the new summer season on Easter Sunday. Georgian House and Red Lodge are currently open 11–4 from Saturday to Tuesday and Blaise 11–4 from Thursday to Sunday. All three sites had benefited from their annual spring clean whilst closed to the public. In addition, redecoration works have taken place to increase visitor enjoyment. New panels describing the Slave Trade and John Pinney's connection to it are now on show at Georgian House.

Plans are being developed which will see changes made to the ground floor displays at Blaise Castle House Museum during next winter. It is also planned that later this year the ground floor library may become available for public activity as stage one of these overall changes. The intention is for Blaise to become a more active and vibrant local museum for north Bristol.

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

The Chinese New Year weekend in February has, as previously, proved to be the best attended of all our activities on site over the year. Around 8,000 people visited

to see Lion Dances and many other performances of martial arts, dance and song as well as participate in the numerous activities provided by many different societies and organisations.

The life-sized 8.5 metre long reconstruction of the museum's internationally significant fossil *Pliosaurus carpenteri*, nicknamed Doris and star of our recent temporary exhibition *Pliosaurus: face to face with a Jurassic beast*, has now gone on long-term display at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. Doris proved a big hit, attracting 76,000 visits, her own fan mail and many families visiting regularly to see her. Thanks to generous funding from the Friends and some hard work by our operations and design team, Doris is now suspended as if swimming above the BMAG café. An impressive sight from several different viewpoints, she will now, we hope, become an iconic and exciting part of a museum visit.

Art

This year, to mark Vote 100, the centenary of women's suffrage in the UK, we are borrowing seven works from the Arts Council Collection by women artists, five videos in a rolling a programme until March 2019, and two paintings,



▲ *Spica*, by Gillian Ayres, 1989

© Arts Council Collection

by Rose Wylie and Gillian Ayres, on display in July.

We are currently working with colleagues from the Musée des Beaux Arts in Bordeaux on a loan exhibition of art by the Bristol School to be held in Bordeaux in 2020, on the Leonardo 500 exhibition next year, which will feature drawings from the Royal Collection, and on a Pre-Raphaelite exhibition here at BMAG in 2020 in collaboration with the Bowes Museum.



▲ *The Hollow of the Deep Sea Wave off Kanagawa, Katsushika Hokusai, circa 1831*
© Bristol Culture

Other work in progress includes a series of three exhibits of Japanese woodblock prints from Bristol's collection for 2018-2019. The first, focusing on the landscape prints of Hokusai and Hiroshige, will open in September.

Exhibitions

Grayson Perry's *The Vanity of Small Differences* at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery until 24 June is proving very popular, with 2,700 visitors over the Easter Weekend alone. It showcases Grayson Perry's six bold tapestries that look at taste and class, shown alongside not one but two versions of *A Rake's Progress* by William Hogarth and a more modern-day version by David Hockney from our collection.

From 30 June BMAG will be exhibiting *Fabric Africa: Stories told through textiles*. This stunning display will showcase some highlights from our World Cultures and British and Empire and Commonwealth collections, reflecting on what personal and provocative stories materials are able to tell.

Then from 7 July in our temporary exhibitions gallery we are hosting the *Woman's Hour Craft Prize* which has been developed by the V&A to celebrate the 70th anniversary of BBC *Woman's Hour*. There will be work by the twelve finalists who have been selected for their originality and excellence in concept, design and process including large hand-woven willow structures, unfired-clay installations and jewellery made with 18th-century pins found on the shores of the Thames. Complementing the exhibition will be a 'make space' with regular events and demonstrations by local artists and practitioners.

M Shed is currently showing *Bristol Music: seven decades of sound*. This exhibition celebrates the vibrant and diverse music scene since the late 1950s. With memorabilia, stories and installations the exhibition aims to take people down a musical memory lane, encourage debate and discussion on what music means to the city and you.

On the first floor M Shed landing you can see our new display on *St Pauls Carnival*. Five newly-trained oral history volunteers gathered memories and stories about the event and these stories have been enlivened with photography and illustration from emerging young artists of African-Caribbean heritage.



▲ *St Peter's Square - Main Entrance to Museum & Art Gallery and Church Tower, © Hugh Casson 1966*

Acquisitions

Thanks to funding from the Friends, among our recent acquisitions is a YoBike, the common-user dockless yellow bicycles that sprang up all over the city in 2017. Our bike, one of the earliest to be introduced, comes with a record of all the locations that it has visited, data that is generated by the GIS tracking system that allows the hiring system to work.

The Friends have also recently supported the purchase of five sketches by Sir Hugh Casson of the proposed development of a cultural centre around Wine Street, including a brand new museum and art gallery. This centre would have occupied much of what is now Castle Park, and was a major element of the Museum's work throughout the 1960s. It never happened, because of the sudden huge rise in building costs in the late 1960s, and the project was finally abandoned in 1971.

Working Exhibits

The new season has got off to a flying start with the Harbour Railway operating on both weekends of the February half term for the first time, and in March marking its 40th anniversary.

Much major restoration and refurbishment work is in evidence on the Fairbairn steam crane, *Henbury* and *Mayflower*, and public trips on the boats and cranes are now in full swing.

From the Membership Secretary

Numbers are keeping steady and we offer a warm welcome to the following members who have joined the Friends since the last newsletter:

Mrs Dawn Ashton	Mr Nigel Nash
Mr Geoffrey Balson	Mrs Eve Nash
Mrs Alison Coleman-Smith	Mr Steve Parsons
Dr Catherine Fletcher	Mrs Jill Prasad
Mr Francis Greenacre	Ms Frances Thompson
Mr Geoffrey Hoult	Mr Anthony Tough
Mrs Jean Hoult	Ms Sue Vallance
Mr Kenneth Hughes	Ms Jackie Van Zwieten
Mrs Mavis Hyams	Ms Ruth Willcocks
Mr Philip Kent	Mr David Williams
Miss Sally Meadows	Mrs Chris Williamson

June Hibberd, Membership Secretary

Lydiard Park, House and Church

Wednesday 18 April 2018

After the bitter wind and heavy rain of the previous day, we set off in glorious weather for our trip. There were daffs by the M32, as well as primroses and even cowslips by roadsides which only a couple of weeks ago had been snow covered.

How does one begin to describe St Mary's church? Our guide (boy, was he knowledgeable!) asked us to stand in the 1520 south porch, imagine we were pilgrims on our way to Malmesbury, Winchester or even Canterbury, and look at 500-year-old wall paintings. St Christopher, patron saint of travellers, was almost in front of us, and the Martyrdom of St Thomas à Becket to the left. It is known what the wall paintings all are as they were uncovered in 1901, but then they were re-covered so one had to use imagination in places. This year they will benefit from more conservation work.

Although the nave and part of the north aisle date back to the 13th century, there was a Saxon church founded here in 825 with taxes raised by King Alfred. The Normans added bits, and the screen is Jacobean. The church reached its present size in about the mid-17th century.

The St John family – cousins of Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry Tudor – inherited the lands and small estate early in the 15th century. They put amazing monuments in the church, among them the east window containing a play on their name showing St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist; the Golden Cavalier, a full-size effigy of Edward St John, who died after the Battle of Newbury; the painted ceiling showing the signs of the zodiac among the stars. All wonderful but the polyptych of the St John family, painted in 1615, showing coats of arms (including a Welsh dragon) laid out as a family tree and, in the middle sections, the painting of the 1st Baronet and wife, with his parents in the centre and his six sisters on the right, was truly amazing. The Friends were incredibly privileged to see this as it is not often unlocked and opened.

Our 45 minutes visit was over and the second group arrived, so off we went to the house. A dwelling has been here since 1086. In 1943 Swindon Corporation purchased the whole estate for £4,500 from Lord Bolinbroke. It was in very bad condition, lit only by oil lighting and with no electricity. An American Field Hospital had been in the grounds and a lovely fireplace 'removed' by some American troops was discovered at Tilbury Docks ready for shipment to the USA. Passing through the hall and library, we entered the dining room with the table laid with lovely Coalport china and crystal glasses. In the drawing room was wallpaper dating from the mid-1820s and many impressive family portraits. In the bedroom, the bed panels were inspired by a window in the dressing room which has a wonderful mechanical desk and paintings by Diana Spencer who married the 2nd Viscount Bolinbroke.

After visits to the grounds, lake, walled garden, café and plant stall, it was time to leave, but I for one could have spent hours in St Mary's Church. It was not possible to take everything in. I will have to return. Thank you Pat for an amazing trip with glorious weather.

Ceri Addis



▲ The church exterior

▼ The Golden Cavalier statue. It was originally painted black to look like marble and then over painted in gold



Photos by Carole Venner

Oxford

Wednesday 15 November 2017

Christ Church Cathedral

This beautiful cathedral dates from c 710 when it was a Saxon priory. In 1522 a college was founded here by Cardinal Wolsey which was later taken over in 1546 by Henry VIII, who combined the college and the church of the diocese to become Christ Church. Until the 20th century this was the smallest cathedral in England but, with the creation of new cathedrals which had previously been parish churches, it lost this distinction. However, it is still unique as the only academic institution in the world which is also a cathedral.

It is sited within the walls of the college of Christ Church, and en route to the cathedral we visited the splendid renaissance staircase and dining hall made famous in the Harry Potter films. The cathedral itself has features from every architectural period from late Norman to perpendicular. Much is Norman including the nave, choir stall, central tower and transepts. The oldest part of the interior is the shrine of St Frideswide, the patron saint of Oxford. Her story has been retold by Edward Burne-Jones in a colourful stained-glass window which overlooks the shrine.

The vaulted ceiling is among the finest features, as are the carved panels and many stained-glass windows. The Becket window (c1320) is the oldest and contains a rare panel showing the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas à Becket. The Jonah window (1630s) consists of one central piece of stained-glass surrounded by panels of painted glass. There are also many examples of the work of Edward Burne-Jones.

It feels warm and welcoming. Many years ago I went to the cathedral to hear W H Auden preach. I do not remember what he said, but I do remember the comfortable bedroom slippers he was wearing!

Katherine Martin with additions by Wendy Aldridge-Morris



▶ Nave and altar of the cathedral showing the very fine ceiling

◀ Stained glass window showing the murder of Thomas à Becket



▶ Alice in Wonderland window in the dining hall.

◀ The dining hall



Serpents and Shawms

The Bate Museum showcases the musical and mechanical development of all wind, brass and percussion instruments from Renaissance and Baroque to modern times. It is named after Philip Bate (1909-1999). Not allowed to play an instrument as a child, he took up the clarinet after the death of his strict father and started to collect ancient woodwind and other instruments in junk shops. His pieces and other important donations make up a collection of some 2,000 instruments owned by and housed in the University of Oxford Music Faculty.

The sight of a thousand or so on show, chronologically displayed in category, is almost overwhelming but so interesting for students and visitors to see up close. For example the early mediaeval shawm (a great word for Scrabble) evolved to be replaced by the oboe in a modern orchestra. The serpent is an early form of bass wind instrument, descended from the cornett, and is a distant ancestor of the tuba. It has side holes being usually constructed in an 'S-bend' formation with a snake-like shape. The fact that it was usually made out of wood and covered in dark leather was really surprising.

It is possible to hear live recordings of some of the instruments by using the museum's hand-held devices and plugging in the relevant display instrument. More amazingly, this museum encourages the public to handle and use the instruments. Students are actually allowed to borrow these precious instruments (two of the valuable baroque violins were on loan for the year). Visitors, however inexperienced, are allowed to play some of the instruments on show and even Handel's own harpsichord was not in a case thus offering us the opportunity to stroke the keys reverently. As a non-musician, I was fascinated to see inside the beautifully-painted clavichords, spinets and virginals to see how they actually work. Before 1720, the natural keys were actually black with the sharps in ivory, the reverse of today's modern piano keyboards.

The very friendly guide, Graham Stratford, was both knowledgeable and entertaining. He even managed to get some notes out of the 10 ft long Tibetan horn, the Dungchen. Perhaps I will dig out my old school recorder and have another go!

Christine Purvis

The Museum of the History of Science, Oxford

This museum is housed in the world's first purpose-built museum, the Old Ashmolean. The collections contain an exciting range of scientific instruments dating from the Middle Ages to the 19th century.

There are astrolabes dating from 1260; diptychs from 1567; early celestial globes, including one (of only two in existence) dated c 1534 by Johann Schöner, which is possibly the one featured in Holbein's Ambassador painting.

Star attractions include a blackboard with equations written by Albert Einstein at a lecture in 1931. There are Marconi radios and valves; photographic equipment used by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson; the archaeological camera used by T.E. Lawrence when he worked for the British Museum in Syria, 1910-1914.

At the time of our visit there was an unusual exhibition displaying the work of Anna Dumitriu – Exploring the microbial world, antibiotics and technology through art. She has collaborated for 17 years to create artworks by applying tuberculosis (and other) bacteria to cotton or silk, and then, by adding antibiotics and dyes shows how bacteria grows in different colours and patterns within the textile – very intriguing and imaginative.

Wendy Aldridge-Morris



▲ A selection of instruments for the Friends to try

▼ Harpsichord probably played by George Frideric Handel



Visit www.bate.ox.ac.uk for much more detailed information about the different groups of instruments and to hear some soundtracks.

Photos by Judith Jones and Ann Wood

Three Worcestershire Churches

Tuesday 10 April 2018

Little Malvern Priory

Little Malvern Priory, probably the smallest Benedictine monastery in England, was our first stop at the foot of the Malvern Hills with lovely views across the countryside, even in the mist. Founded in 1127 it has a Norman column and capitals. In 1480-1482 John Alcock, Bishop of Worcester, visited the priory and found it a ruin. He organised major rebuilding, including demolishing the nave and transepts and installing the perpendicular-style gothic windows. However in 1534 Henry VIII dissolved the priory with its six monks and friar and it was sold to the Russell family, whose descendants still occupy the adjoining Little Malvern Court.

This church had an interesting history set in a secluded setting and started us off on a fascinating day.

Catherine Dixon

Pershore Abbey

We travelled on to Pershore where we had lunch before taking the short walk to the Abbey. We were given a short introduction on the building by Dr Steven Blake, our guide for the day.

The church is the remains of a much larger building. Originating in the 7th century, it was enlarged in the 12th century. Over the years it has suffered fires, storms and an earthquake. Following the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539 much was demolished but the local populace saved the Abbey Church to be their parish church.

Alterations were carried out including a restoration by George Gilbert Scott in 1862-64. His work included the removal of the belfry floor and opening up the lantern tower to expose the beautiful internal tracery and provide a unique ringing platform 30ft above the floor.

High above the altar is a large paper figure of Christ holding his arms out to all. At the rear of the church is a fine Norman font, decorated with images of the twelve apostles. It was rescued from a garden in 1921 having been discarded when the Victorians installed a new font.

There are a number of tombs. The most important is that of Abbot Edmund Hert. It is adorned in graffiti from years when it was in a school room. Clearly nothing is new! Another is that of a crusader, thought to be Sir William de Harley, a local knight who fought in the crusades. Sir William is wearing chain mail and his right armpit shows three buckles connecting to the backplate. This is the only carved figure in England dating from the crusades to show this.

To complete our visit we went to St Mary's Church, Ripple, which rounded off a most interesting and informative day out.

Zena Mussett

▼ Alcock's east window, badly damaged during the English Civil War, is one of the finest examples of late mediaeval English stained glass. There is a rare image of Edward V on the left.



▲ Ploughshare ceiling in Pershore Abbey

▼ 15th century misericord showing acorns being collected for pigs in St Mary's Church, Ripple.



Photos by Martin Bailey, Catherine Dixon and Anna Sherman



Imagining the Divine

Special Exhibition at Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Wednesday 7 February 2018

This very complex exhibition deals with five major religions: Greco-Roman shading into Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The thesis is that in the first millennium after Christ the imagery of these religions was rather mixed up but in the second millennium images became more standardised. For example early Christian art depicted Christ as a beardless youth whereas in the second millennium he became the standard bearded figure we recognize from Renaissance art; and at first Buddha was only depicted in parts (eg two large naked feet) whereas he subsequently became the well-known enigmatic seated figure. This view was demonstrated by paintings, sculpture and more day-to-day items such as sarcophagi, mosaic floors, lamps, cups and wall tiles from each of the religions.

We started with five 'modern' (AD 1400-1800) images of each religion: an Italian Christian icon; a Haji certificate; a tapestry curtain for concealing the Torah; an image of the Buddha; and a strip showing the ten avatars of Vishnu. The rest of the exhibition was divided into rooms dealing with each of the religions and, through objects showing the pictorial development of each religion, some of the confusion between them. An early exhibit showed three strong bearded heads of Jupiter/Zeus. Put a quasi-flower pot on one and he becomes Jupiter Serapis (the latter being an Egyptian god). Give another ram's horns and he becomes Jupiter Ammon (another Egyptian god). There was a copy of a mosaic from a synagogue itself in Israel about 5th century BC (remember 'thou shalt have no graven images') showing a very Apollo-like head surrounded by rays of the sun. When the Muslims took over India they found the bust of a well-endowed young woman, turned her backward and incorporated her in the wall of a mosque. There were copies of the Jewish Torah written in Arabic and many examples of Persian (or Sassanian) designs taken up by the Muslims.

Some of the more spectacular exhibits were a copy of the mosaic floor (4th century AD) at Hinton St Mary showing Christ with big eyes and no beard – the 'rays' around his head and the P on his head are the chi (X) and rho, the first two letters of 'Christ' in Greek; a Roman sarcophagus (about 200 AD), showing an ordinary chap (the deceased) in a cartouche surrounded by centaurs, maenads, satyrs and the god Dionysus. It was explained that Dionysus is said to have resurrected and might lead the deceased to a better life; and a huge photograph of the 53m high standing statue of the Buddha from Afghanistan, now sadly destroyed by the Taliban.

Our thanks to Pat Walker for organising this fascinating trip.

Robert Walters

Central roundel from the Hinton St Mary Mosaic, Dorset, early 4th century © Trustees of the British Museum



▲ *Scroll drawing showing the ten avatars of Vishnu, Andhra Pradesh, India c. 1771 – 79, Water colour on paper, 26 x 113cm.*

© Trustees of the British Museum

▼ *Bust of Jupiter Serapis, Roman Empire, 2nd century.* © Trustees of the British Museum



The Arundells of Wardour

Saturday 24 March 2018

Thomas Arundell, born around 1502 in Cornwall, went to London when he was 16. Through the patronage of Cardinal Wolsey he became Treasurer and Latin Secretary, becoming involved in the King's 'Great Matter' (divorcing Catherine of Aragon).

Benefitting through the dissolution of monasteries, Thomas purchased Wardour Castle in 1547. He was mentioned in Henry VIII's will as an ennobled man entrusted with the care of Edward VI. Unfortunately Thomas fell foul of the Duke of Northumberland and was executed!

Barry Williamson, whose book *The Arundells of Wardour: from Cornwall to Colditz* provides the entire rollercoaster account of this family, held us spellbound. We learned how Thomas's son, Matthew, also enjoyed a successful life at court, marrying one of Queen Elizabeth I's ladies-in-waiting. His son, Thomas, was a successful soldier but displeased Elizabeth and was imprisoned as a suspected Catholic spy. During the Civil War, Lady Blanche Arundell held out against the Parliamentarians for as long as she could but after explosive mines damaged the walls, Wardour Castle was taken and ransacked.

The fifth Lord bought land which became Piccadilly and the Haymarket. The seventh Lord established a lucrative contract with the East India Company, exporting Cornish tin to China. The eighth Lord built the current Wardour mansion. However, his avarice and poor accounting resulted in a sentence to debtor's prison. He died in debt to the tune of £50 million!

In the 19th century Isabel Arundell married Richard Burton, the controversial Victorian explorer and writer, who translated *The Kama Sutra* and *The Arabian Nights* into English. Today, the castle remains are looked after by English Heritage; this talk was great preparation for our visit there in May.

Jenny Brookes



▲ *The last Lord Arundell and his sister in 1928*

Photo courtesy of Barry Williamson

Siri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara

Monday 19 March 2018

I was delighted that a visit had been arranged to this Sikh temple. I know little about Sikh history and we need to know about our fellow Bristolians. We met at the temple, where we were welcomed into the converted school and sat at long tables. One Friend told me he had been a pupil here in World War II. We had been asked to cover our heads and were told we would have to take off our shoes. After an introduction by Balbir Nirwan, our hostess and guide who explained what we would be seeing, we moved to a very large room, where a priest sat under an orange and patterned canopy. We also sat on the floor (not easy for some of us) to represent that everybody is equal and humble.

Sikhs believe there is only one God. Their holy text, the Guru Granth Sahib, contains the words of Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism recorded as 974 poetic hymns. Sikhism teaches that all are equal and that Sikhs should love one another as equals. Sikhs have three main pillars of faith:

- Vand Chhako - giving time and money to the community. Every Sikh should engage in Seva (selfless service) whenever possible.
- Kirat Karo - working hard to earn a truthful living.
- Naam Japo - meditation on the word of God with love and devotion.

There are five articles of faith that all baptised Sikhs should wear. Sometimes called the 'Five Ks', they are symbols of equality and honesty. Keshh – uncut hair on the head and the body is symbolic of brotherhood and faith; Khanga – a small wooden comb used to keep the hair clean and tidy; Kacchera – undershorts which symbolise living a faithful and dignified life; Kara – a bracelet which, as a continuous circle, symbolises God; Kirpan – a sword or knife symbolising power and freedom of the spirit. Sikhs are allowed to use the kirpan only in self-defence, or as defence against injustice and tyranny.

After this interesting talk we had a vegetarian meal and some chai tea. It was a very enlightening visit and I am so glad I was able to go.

Val Chowen

▼ *Balbir Nirwan, our guide, explaining the Sikh customs in the prayer hall.*

Photo by Martin Bailey



Cardiff Millennium Centre Theatre and Senedd

Thursday 25 January 2018

We were dropped outside the Theatre and National Assembly (Senedd) and were immediately impressed by the situation overlooking Cardiff (Tiger) Bay and Penarth. The Theatre is a stunning achievement by architect Percy Thomas. Welcoming us at the longest desk in Europe (32m) our excellent guide explained the shape of the building as a hull of a boat sailing over the glass windows of the foyer representing the sea. Thousands of tonnes of Welsh slate and other local materials were used in the building, which was opened in 2004.

The Theatre complex houses the Welsh National Opera and National Orchestra as well as providing performance space for major musicals, comedians and bands. The design incorporates four identical rehearsal or performance spaces of the same size as the main theatre so that musicals can rehearse next door to the main stage when a separate event is performing. The design allows rapid transfer from one performance to the next and explains the vast range of events that are housed there.

We were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour, entering through the stage door, visiting dressing rooms and eventually observing a rehearsal of Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* from a soundproofed box in the 'gods'. The theatre seats over 1800 and is arguably one of the best performance venues in Europe.

In the afternoon we started our tour of the Senedd. Passing through airport-style security we went through a well-appointed café and foyer area with outstanding views of Cardiff Bay to enter the public gallery above the circular assembly chamber. The building, completed in 2006 (and six times over budget) is architect Richard Rogers' realisation of the dream to devolve power to Wales.

The Chamber was surprisingly small and highlights the collaborative style of government that comes from proportional representation with an elected Speaker, First Minister and 60 members. The art work in the centre of the floor 'The Heart of Wales' is complemented by the gold and silver mace, a gift from the people of New South Wales. The building is designed as a model of sustainability with geo-thermal heating pipes providing a major part of the system. Welsh slate and Canadian cedar dominate in the construction.

We had an outstanding day, thanks to Gary Gostelow, and recommend that all Friends should try to visit the remarkable theatre building.

David McGregor



▲ Inside the theatre, our guide explained the incredible acoustic engineering, drapes (duvets) are lowered over the panelled walls when amplified groups play to prevent ear damage.

Photos by
David McGregor



▶ This light has a pattern of diamonds representing the fossilised ferns seen in coal in the Big Pit and is capped by a representation of a miner's lamp.



◀ The Chamber

Bristol Through Maps

Illustrated Talk by Jeff Bishop

Saturday 13 January 2018

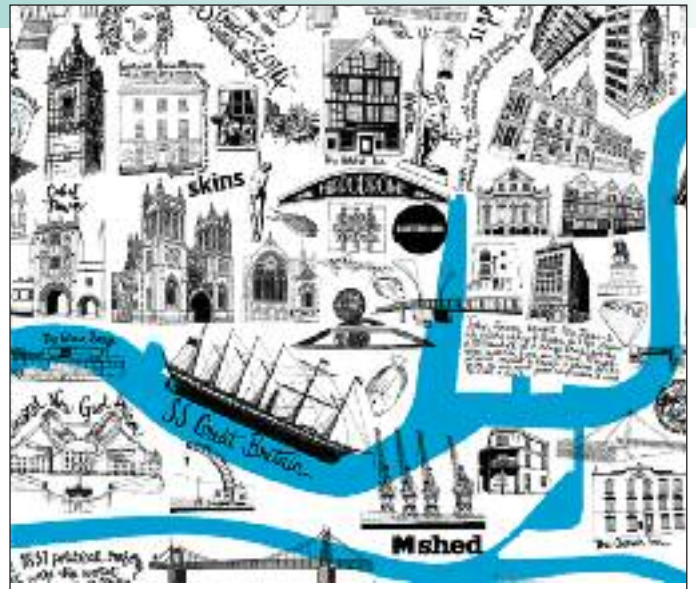
Jeff Bishop is the author of the recently published *Bristol Through Maps; Ways of Seeing a City*. Jeff's interest in maps started very young, as a result of a school project. He has used maps and map-making in his professional role in helping communities to have a voice in neighbourhood planning.

Maps take many forms, including on paper, on computers and in our heads. Jeff structured his talk around eight different types of map, ranging from the earliest, used in books, through maps to hang on walls, way-finding maps, estate maps, mental/memory/artist's maps, proposals maps or plans showing intended developments, panoramas, and key features plans. The information maps give us can be selective and depends on the approach and interests of the map-maker. Jeff gave examples of how maps can be misleading, for example in the scope of information provided and size of features depicted.

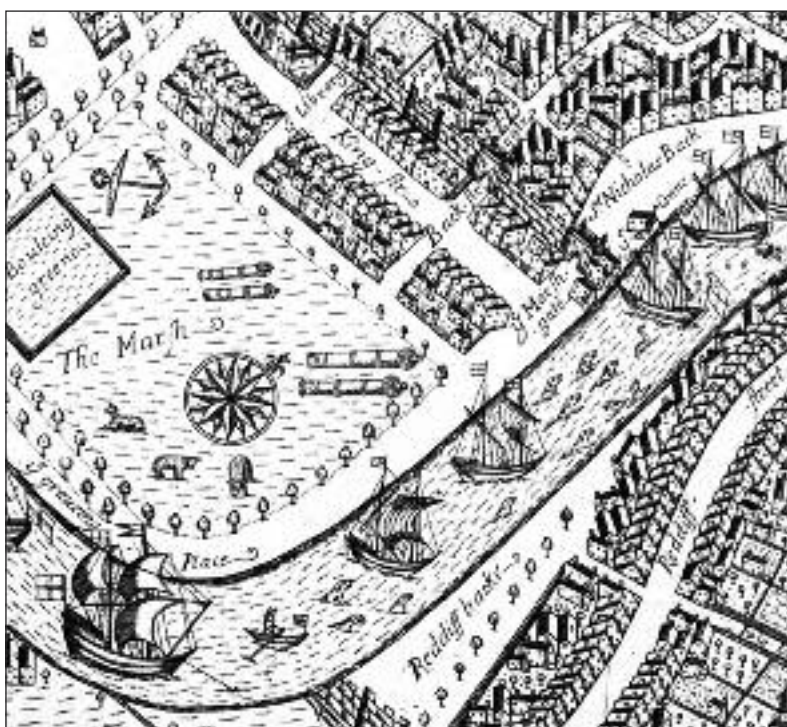
Maps shown during the talk included Ricart's map of Bristol of 1480, the earliest surviving map of any city in the UK. Millerd's map of 1673 includes the chapel on Bristol Bridge, rope makers' trestles in the Temple area and animals swimming in the water, which are thought to be dogs used for pulling boats into the docks. Donn's map of Bristol of 1769 was notable for having residents' names shown, possibly because they helped pay for its production. Copies of the map were for sale at 5 shillings - £1,500 in today's money! Proposals maps included Leigh Woods 1864 and the City Centre Plan of 1966. Luckily these two are mainly of historic interest, proposing as they did residential development in Nightingale Valley, and a large road cutting through Clifton Wood and Cotham!

Maps are obviously a subject of wide appeal as the talk was very well attended and lively discussion afterwards was prompted by questions about the many types of other maps which Jeff had not had time to cover in the talk, including Ordnance Survey, military maps, coaching routes and railway maps. Some of the early maps shown in the talk can be seen on the landing at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, which will no doubt prompt many members to make a visit for a closer look.

Frances Russell



▲ Extract from a map by Barton Willmore showing key features in Bristol
© Barton Willmore



◀ Extract of Millerd's map of 1673
© Bristol Culture



▲ Ricart 1480
© Bristol Culture

Gloucestershire County Cricket Club

Monday 12 February 2018

Tucked away behind the Stumps Café at the County Ground, in a room that was once the marketing office for the apartments above, is a delightful collection of cricket memorabilia. This is the MLC, the Museum and Learning Centre, which is run by an independent registered charity, the GCCC Heritage Trust.

We were welcomed by Rex Body, Chair of the Trust. His wife Wendy, who is Secretary of the Trust, gave us a brief history of the development of the MLC. The Club provided the space and services while the Trust raised the money to set it up. In partnership with Clip Exhibition and Display, who took the ideas and turned them into reality, the MLC opened in April 2017.

The museum is open on match days and for special visits. The display cases are crammed with caps, ties, blazers, shoes, trophies and all sorts of things to interest even a non-enthusiast such as me. There is a wonderful collection of signed bats going back to the 1890s, including one given by Brian Lara to umpire David Shepherd on his retirement. The walls are lined with photographs, and bowling and batting statistics for GCCC cricketers from all over the world. If you get close enough, Mark Alleyne will even talk to you about his career with the Club. Women's cricket has its own little space. There is an activity area for the children and, of course, a stretch devoted to WG Grace, his family and cricketing career. We even see the chair he gave to his housekeeper once he became too large to fit into it!

Over tea and cake, we were treated to an entertaining early history of the Club by Roger Gibbons, the Heritage Trust and Club Archivist. We began in June 1854 at the Full Moon Hotel in Stokes Croft where Dr Henry Mills Grace captained a team to take on the All England XI. In 1870, they moved up a level to the First Class game and Durdham Down. Then to Clifton College and finally in 1889 the first match was played in their permanent home at Ashley Down. We heard anecdotes about WG Grace and other early characterful members of the Club. We were lucky to be shown a bat that rarely comes out of safe keeping, the one used by WG to score his one hundredth century.

Thank you so much to Rex, Wendy and Roger for giving us an excellent afternoon and to Carol for organising the whole thing.

Sue Pears



▲ The cricket ground showing the Pavilion, a popular events venue

Photo by Catherine Dixon

Weston Super Mare Museum and Pier

Thursday 22 February 2018

Weston Museum has been redeveloped and now shows off its artefacts in modern displays. I enjoyed seeing the local landscape marble and potato stone. Although modernised, the museum has kept the flavour of the Weston Gas Light Company's original building and Clara's Cottage still has all the detail of a 1900s small house.

Left to our own devices for lunch, I went to Florentine's café in the Winter Gardens. We all met up again at the Pier to walk the planks to hear the history of Weston's piers in a very pleasant conference/wedding room. Birnbeck Pier was the first to be opened in 1867 but now, sadly, is in a poor state of repair. The present Grand Pier was opened in 1904. Following two fires in 1930 and 2008, it has been modernised and is no longer Grade II listed. The pier has 397 'legs' or 'piles' and is very popular for its entertainments including slot machines and rides.

Sue Stops had kindly given us some 2ps to spend in the pier's arcade (I lost them all). We finished our tour with a cream tea in Tiffins at the end of the pier; this made up for losing all our money.

Thanks to Sue for organising a super day out by the sea, with the sun out and the tide in (most of the time). Having not been to Weston for some years, I am resolved to visit again, if only to try and win back my 2ps!

Catherine Dixon



▼ Weston Pier

Photo by Judith Jones



▲ The cellar kitchen

◀ The judge's bedroom

Presteigne and the Judge's Lodging

Wednesday 7 March 2018

We arrived in Presteigne in time for lunch and a walk around the town, following a brief coffee stop in Ross-on-Wye. We met up again at the Court House and Judge's Lodging, closed for business in 1990 but re-opened in 1997 as a museum mainly because all the original furnishings and fittings were still there. The building looks very impressive in a small street with houses and shops. It was built in 1829 to replace the original Shire Hall, which was in a dangerous state after a wall was knocked down to allow a fire engine to be stored in the basement.

Inside are the restored judge's apartments and dingy servant's quarters. The lodgings were described by one Lord Chief Justice as 'the most commodious and elegant apartments for a judge in all England and Wales'. When the Judge was not staying, the lodging was rented out to local dignitaries to help pay for the new building and furnishings, even though it had been built as cheaply as possible - the stone-coloured columns outside, for instance, were made from cast iron to save expense.

In addition, there is a vast courtroom. We learned that one criminal escaped from the courtroom five times. This even though on the last occasion he was shackled by the wrists and ankles, and his trousers had been removed!

Although the building was eventually converted to electricity, when making it a museum it was decided to revert to real candles and oil lamps in the living rooms and corridors above stairs. The courtroom gasolier flickers with open flame gas burners, and gas lights in the basement reproduce the original dingy effect. It was certainly dark below stairs as the two holding cells, although they had 'en suite' facilities, had no windows.

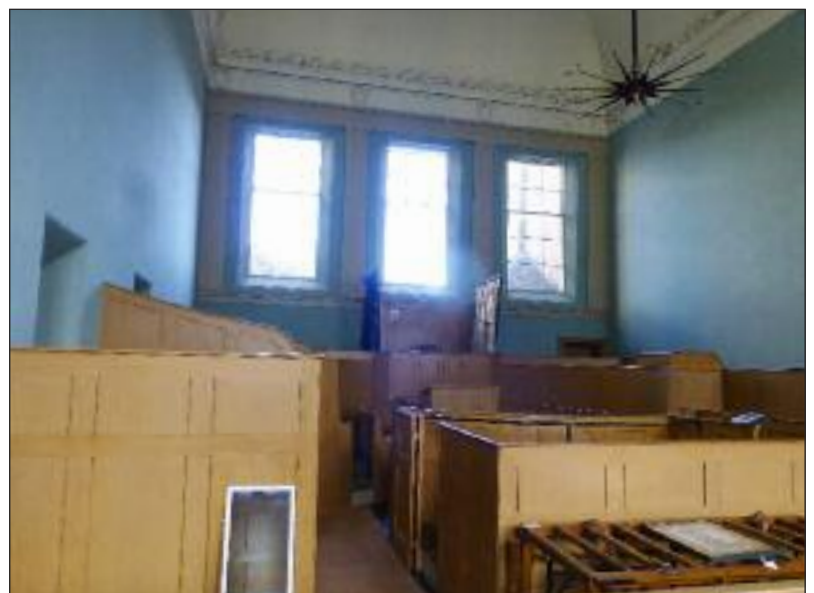
After having tea and biscuits we travelled home via the snow-capped Brecon Beacons. Thanks to Wendy and David Snelson for organising the visit and to Gary Gostelow for leading on the day.

Catherine Dixon

▼ The great courtroom gasolier, with 18 open-flame burners blazing



▼ The courtroom



Photos by Catherine Dixon and Carole Venner

The Matthew

Illustrated talk by John Wilson

Saturday 17 February 2018

I knew about John Cabot in the way we probably all learn about great explorers at school but that was about the length and breadth of my knowledge. I am now a good deal more informed thanks to the knowledge and enthusiasm of our speaker, John Wilson, who is currently Chairman of Trustees of *The Matthew* of Bristol Trust.

I had no idea, for example, that our shipping trade is as great now as it was in the mid-19th century. The telephone and internet seems to have shrunk the world, but physical goods from abroad still have to be transported thousands of miles. Trade that once seemed exotic, bringing spices and silks from distant lands, has now become commonplace.

There was nothing exotic about the life of the sailors on the original *Matthew* when John Cabot sailed from Bristol to Newfoundland in 1497. The 18-man crew spent most of their voyages on deck, eating and sleeping in the open, forced there by a combination of lack of space and fear of fire.

Jumping forward 500 years, John told us how the replica *Matthew* was completed just 22 years ago. I feel in awe of being able to recreate anything when there are neither plans nor drawings to work from but from opepe, oak, douglas fir, teak and larch, recreated it was, complete with two and a half thousand square feet of sail. As John explained how the building took place, we also learned about the genesis of 'knot' and 'sea miles', 'bells' and 'watches' and telling time and much else about mediaeval navigation. I did enjoy this, having no idea previously about how these words acquired their particular nautical meanings. I also enjoyed discovering that the rigging of *The Matthew* has links with Egyptian feluccas, having seen those myself on the Nile.

The modern *Matthew* (which has a twin sister ship in Bonavista, Newfoundland) now sits in the harbour outside M Shed and is a charitable trust. She carries out various educational activities including introducing many children and young people to the sea and the practicalities of sailing, and particularly helping disadvantaged youngsters through encouraging them to take part in the active life of the ship. She has recreated the original voyage across to Newfoundland, battled with gale force winds sailing from Falmouth to Vannes, and carried thousands of tourists round Bristol harbour. I am filled with wonder!

Caro Bailey

Photos courtesy of *The Matthew* of Bristol Trust

Check out her Facebook page
(<https://www.facebook.com/TheMatthewBristol>)



▲ The Matthew at sea



▲ The traverse board was a memory aid used in dead reckoning navigation to record with pegs and cord the speed and direction sailed during a watch

Lapworth Museum of Geology at Birmingham University

Wednesday 17 January 2018

On arrival, we were greeted by the director of the museum, who described the history of the museum and led us around the various displays. Charles Lapworth was a teacher in Scotland for 17 years before being appointed in 1881 as first professor of geology at Mason College, where he continued until retirement in 1913. This became the University of Birmingham in 1900. His appointment was based on his spare time studies and mapping of the geology of the Southern Uplands of Scotland, including identifying the Ordovician geological period, which had not previously been recognised.

We were shown how the £2.7 million redevelopment in 2016 has improved presentation for all ages and degrees of interest, while seeking to avoid any 'dumbing down'. Many of the old display cabinets have been retained, but with additional low-level displays at child height. Other samples are now displayed on shelves in new wall-mounted cabinets – all white and uncluttered, with clear captions. The specimens look their best after accumulated dust has been removed by a team of volunteers using deionised water.

Many displays are designed to illustrate particular local interests including Wenlock limestone trilobites and crinoids, the South Staffordshire coal field and Shropshire lead mines. New features include an interactive translucent globe about five feet in diameter with internal projectors which can be selected to show the locations of tectonic plates, earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis, as illustrations of our active Earth planet.

Behind the scenes, the stores are now equipped with modern roller-mounted mobile shelves and drawers to accommodate the reserve specimens and make them more accessible. We are grateful to Jon Clotworthy who introduced us to his museum, and to Wendy Aldridge-Morris who organised our visit

Roy Taylor

Photos by Roy Taylor

Traditional display cases adapted to add a child's view.



▲ Lapworth Museum entrance at left, overlooked by 'Old Joe' clock tower



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The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the FBMGA or Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives

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