

Newsletter

‘Crinoline’

Mr and Mrs Woodley Dressing

Saturday 28 January 2012

Many of us who attended the re-enactment of Mr and Mrs Woodley getting dressed as they would have done in 1765 were relieved not to have lived in those days! Dressing in numerous layers fastened with ties and pins was very time-consuming, and women’s clothing seriously restricted movement.

Mrs Woodley wore a chemise, cotton drawers, wool stockings with garters and a design on the ankle (originally to hide the seam), a back-laced corset, embroidered pockets on a waistband, pocket hoops on a waistband, an under-petticoat, a petticoat and finally the gown or sack. This was fitted at the waist with a full back train. One side of the bodice was pinned to the other side and to the corset. Apparently some dresses have been found with the pins still in them. A muslin kerchief was draped around the neck, and a decorated apron was sometimes added as a fashion accessory.

Mr Woodley wore a shift, a neck stock fastened at the back by a button, flat-fronted breeches, designed for riding, a waistcoat with pockets at the waist and a frock coat. He wore black leather buckled shoes with square toes. If he had been pigeon-chested, he might have used horse hair stuffing to disguise this particular flaw.

Hats were an essential part of the outfit. Mr Woodley chose a tricorne hat decorated with ostrich feathers. Mrs Woodley wore a cap at all times – on its own when indoors, and under her hat when outdoors. Wigs were still fashionable and women added ringlets in the evenings. Mr Woodley wore a wig tied with a black satin ribbon.

Our thanks go to the members of the West of England Costume Society and particularly the Crinoline Group, who presented this most interesting display at the Blaise Castle House Museum.

Rosemary Grant



▲ Mr and Mrs Woodley dressed in costumes worn by country people in 1765, designed for domestic activities. Much grander clothes would have been worn to court, where swords were still carried.

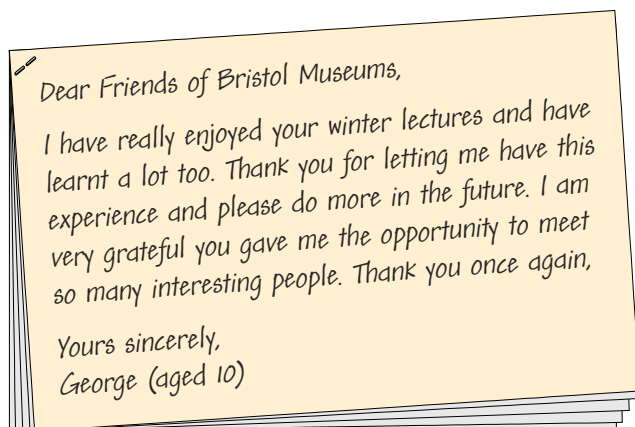
Photo by Rosemary Grant

From the Chairman

The visit of the Art Fund Prize judges to M Shed on 28 March was a significant event for the museum. I was delighted to be asked to meet the judges and talk to them about the valuable work done by the Friends to support the whole service, and the significant contribution of the volunteers, including many Friends, to the success of the museum and its working exhibits and events programme. By the time you read this the winner will have been announced, but in any event it was a privilege to be involved.

Winter Lecture Series

Our sponsorship of the museum's Winter Lecture Series enabled the museum to present a varied and fascinating selection of free public talks by some very talented speakers. The series proved as popular as ever and at the last talk in the series I was delighted to be handed a letter of thanks from someone who had been at most of them, and had actively participated in the question and answer sessions. The letter is short enough to share it with you word for word:



Overhaul of the steam locomotive *Portbury*

Bristol Harbour Railway has enjoyed a successful operation for over 30 years. Its dockside operation is unique in the UK, and it is fondly regarded by many Bristol people. When it came up for its regular 10 yearly major overhaul, one of the two steam locomotives, *Portbury*, was found to be in need of significant work that was beyond the capability of the museum's very able team of volunteers. The work was put out to tender, and we have agreed to provide £10,000 towards the overall cost of £50,000. *Portbury* has been sent to South Devon for the work to be completed, and will be back in service on the dockside in the summer.

Many of you will be aware that at the end of last year the government announced funding for the Bristol Rapid Transport scheme (BRT2) which may impact upon the future operation of BHR, for example in reducing the number of



▲ The March book sale was very successful, raising just over £500. A big thank you to everyone involved.

Photo by Sue Thurlow

days when the passenger service can run down the New Cut. The museum service is committed to minimising the impact on railway operations as far as possible.

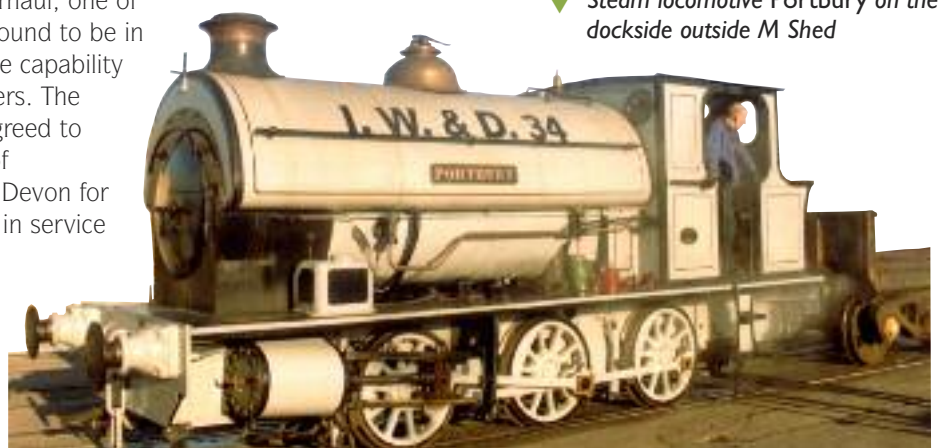
Since M Shed opened, the railway has proved even more popular, and if you would like to volunteer to sell tickets for them on an occasional basis please email Chris Ecclestone at chrisandemily@waitrose.com.

Wall fragment from the tomb of Sety I

The wall fragment has been on loan to the museum since the 1980s and on show in the Egypt Gallery since 2007, but the owner now wishes to sell. It comes from the tomb of Sety I in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt, collected around 1818 by the engineer/showman/archaeologist/explorer/tomb robber Giovanni Belzoni. It is a small piece of painted limestone, carved in low relief. The fragment shows the relief carving of the tomb walls, and is carved with four columns of hieroglyphs.

The tomb of Sety I was reconstructed in London in 1820 by Belzoni using plaster casts and watercolour paintings of its interiors. In 1900 the museum was presented with 130 items relating to Belzoni's work in the tomb and subsequent exhibitions. It forms a unique record of the tomb which is now closed to the public and has deteriorated.

▼ Steam locomotive *Portbury* on the dockside outside M Shed



The acquisition of the Sety I piece will secure it in public ownership at the most appropriate museum (given our strength in this material), where it will continue for the foreseeable future to be exhibited in the Egypt Gallery. We have agreed to provide £4,500, 50% of the cost, to enable the museum to apply to the V&A for matched funding.



▲ Part of the Dundry Hoard

Bronze Age Hoard

In late 2010 and early 2011, 13 Bronze Age Treasure objects were discovered at Dundry, North Somerset, and have been offered to the museum. We have agreed to provide funding of £2,000, 50% of the valuation, to purchase them with the remaining cost to be covered by national grant aid. These rare items fall within the museum's collecting area for archaeology and are important in recording the life of the Middle Bronze Age locally as well as being intrinsically of interest and of relatively high financial value.

Photos, train, wall fragment and hoard © Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives

39th BAfM AGM & Conference

Eastbourne Centre

Friday 28 – Sunday 30 September 2012

Theme: Where There's a Will

The Friends of the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne are hosting this year's conference and have arranged a programme around the theme 'Where there's a will...', which will give emphasis to the important role of the volunteer. There will be distinguished guest speakers and opportunities for discussion. The conference hotel is the Eastbourne Centre, where rooms and conference facilities are of a very high standard. All members of Friends of BMGA are eligible to attend the conference, either for the whole weekend or part of it.

On Friday 28 September there will be an optional tour of East Sussex in the afternoon, followed by a reception at the Towner Gallery, the contemporary art museum for south-east England. Dinner will be at the Eastbourne Centre.

The conference and AGM will take place on Saturday 29 September and in the evening there will be a dinner at the prestigious Cavendish Hotel.

No formal programme has been arranged for the Sunday morning, but there will be an opportunity to pursue discussions or to visit other Eastbourne attractions. The Eastbourne Centre lies within convenient walking distance of the town centre and of the Towner Gallery. Some people may wish to depart before lunch whilst others may wish to extend their stay. The farewell lunch is therefore an option.

The end of September is normally an excellent time to visit Eastbourne so this is an opportunity to spend a stimulating and enjoyable weekend in Sussex. A booking form is enclosed and further information can be found on www.bafm.org.uk under News & Events.

From the Membership Secretary

This month please, especially if you have not had to contact me recently, can I ask members to send me an email, junehibberd@btinternet.com? We are trying to update our email addresses so we can save on postage. You do not have to write me a long message – just put your name at the end! I look forward to being inundated with emails.

June Hibberd, Membership Secretary

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

Mr Robert Adams	Ms Cath Pike
Ms Hilary Betts	Mr Tony Sale
Mrs P Blackie	Mr Stanley Sims
Mr Thomas Caddick	Mrs Jackey Sims
Mrs Sue Chambers	Mr Robert Smith
Mr Tony Cross	Mrs Margaret Smith
Mr Barry Gilling	Mrs Susan Starr
Mrs Judith Gilling	Mrs Charlotte Thomas
Mr Raymond Harding	Mr White
Mrs Ailsa Harding	Mrs Amanda White
Mr Peter Hilton	Mr Lyndon Whyatt
Mrs Diana Hilton	Mrs H J Whyatt
Mrs Dillys Martin	Mr Michael Wilde
Ms Jo Luton	Mrs Sue Wilde

Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives

Quarterly Report

Annual visitor numbers across all sites for the accounting year to the end of March have exceeded 1,000,000 for the first time – quite an achievement!

The confirmation of a three-year major grant to the service by Arts Council England was excellent news and will allow further development of the collections with the likelihood of new appointments to help deliver targets.

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

Work continues on the construction of the new public lift, expected to be completed in September. The refurbished public toilets were opened in time for the start of the Leonardo exhibition.

M Shed

M Shed continues to feature in the press both locally and nationally. Visitors passed the 500,000 mark in March. The Norman Parkinson photography exhibition, *An Eye for Fashion*, received particularly wide and favourable coverage, including in France & Spain, plus in the Guardian, Independent, Harpers Bazaar, Eastern Airways In-Flight-Magazine, and Grazia Magazine.

Outside the building, the working exhibits continue to play an extremely important role and the value added by the volunteers cannot be overstated. New opportunities for volunteering have included touring the public around the object store in L Shed, and more of this sort of interaction is planned for the future.

The locomotive *Portbury*, currently having a major 30-year overhaul in South Devon is expected to be back in operation with *Henbury* later in the summer.

Further debate and discussion have involved the plans for the introduction of the Bristol Rapid Transit scheme which will see buses running from the Long Ashton Park & Ride site along part of the current route for the Harbour Railway and along the back of M Shed. Discussions are focussing on how to ensure the two operations can operate from the summer of 2013.

Paul Hamlyn Initiative

This three year funded scheme seeks to change the way we work to make us more closely connected to the communities we serve. Initial meetings have started to challenge the way we work currently to see whether greater transparency and input in all we do, including for example how and what we collect, can be built into our everyday working practice.

British Empire & Commonwealth Museum (BECM) collection

You may have already seen in the media that the collections of the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum have recently been gifted to the Council. This is a very significant development which will enable us to work in future in new ways and with new audiences. Over the past few months we have been working with the BECM trustees to catalogue and sort the collection.

The Historic Houses

The houses are now on summer opening hours.

Blaise Castle House Museum

Up to 30 June : Wednesday to Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays , 10.30am to 4pm.

1 July to 2 September : Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 10.30am to 4pm

The Georgian House and The Red Lodge

Up to 30 June : Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 10.30am to 4pm

1 July to 2 September : Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 10.30am to 4pm

Bristol Record Office

Over 50 accessions have been received so far this year, an unusually high number. In addition, several important and popular archive collections have been transferred to BRO from the Central Library. They include records of the Bristol

Restoration of the St Thomas Bible

One of only three surviving bibles written in England around 1500, this was deposited for safekeeping in BRO in 1950 after being damaged in the war. In 2010, St Thomas Ecclesiastical Charity and BRO successfully applied for a grant from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust. One of the world's leading archive conservators, Chris Clarkson, has begun the painstaking job of restoration.

The St Thomas Bible is sent for conservation. Left to right: Peter Lankester, Churches Conservation Trust; Christopher Clarkson, conservator; Richard Burley, BRO; Brian Richards, St Thomas Ecclesiastical Charity.

© Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives



A blue plaque for Bristol opera singer Elsie Griffin

BRO co-ordinates the City Council's blue plaque scheme. As a child, Elsie Griffin attended St Michael's school performing solo in local concerts. At 14, she started work at Fry's No 5 factory and sang with the 'Fry's Angels'. In 1914, Elsie won a silver cup and singing scholarship at the Bristol Eisteddfod. She recorded 'Danny Boy' and 'Roses of Picardy', and entertained First World War troops. She performed around the world until the late 1950s.

On 8 February 2012, the Lord Mayor unveiled a plaque in memory of Elsie Griffin (1895-1989) at St Michael's on the Mount Without Primary School.

Anne Colley



Commercial Rooms, papers of the Southwell family and papers of several Bristol antiquarians.

Tithe maps of local parishes outside Bristol, along with the most popular digital collections (including several major photo archives) can now be accessed on public computers in the BRO searchroom. Viewing documents in this way provides quick and easy access to large amounts of material and reduces wear and tear on original records.

If you want to follow the work of Bristol Record Office in more detail you are welcome to subscribe to their new e-newsletter by emailing bro@bristol.gov.uk.

Staff News

Allie Dillon joined Bristol Record Office in October as Senior Archivist (Public Services). In this new post, Allie will be promoting the public face of Bristol Record Office and developing their programme of exhibitions, workshops and events.

Bristol Record Office also recently hosted a postgraduate intern, SooMin Leong, who was sponsored by UWE and Arnolfini to work on the Arnolfini archive for three months.

Exhibitions at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

Ten Drawings by Leonardo da Vinci

Continues until Sunday 10 June 2012

The collection offers a rare opportunity to appreciate the breadth of Leonardo's talent and forms a major event in the national Diamond Jubilee calendar.

Artist Rooms

Saturday 30 June – Sunday 23 September 2012

'Artist Rooms' is a Tate-National Galleries of Scotland touring collection. Donated by Anthony d'Offay, the collection offers an inspirational collection of modern and contemporary art. Bristol Museum and Art Gallery will place a spin on the tour with a unique display of conceptual art featuring artists Bruce Nauman, Jenny Holzer, Ed Ruscha and Lawrence Weiner.

Exhibitions at M Shed

Bristol Urban Sport

Continues until Sunday 9 September 2012

Coinciding with the arrival of the Olympic torch into the city, Bristol Urban Sport explores the range of sports that take place using the city's infrastructure - both the natural landscape and the urban environment. This exhibition (on until Sunday 9 September 2012) will bring together contemporary and historical stories to give a picture of people who use the city for sport.

Exhibitions at Bristol Record Office

Know Your Place

An exhibition introducing 'Know Your Place', an interactive website which provides free global access to Bristol's historic maps and encourages users to share their own images and knowledge of the city. The display includes original archival maps and documents to illustrate ways to take local history research further at Bristol Record Office.

On Thursday 14 June at 5.30pm Archaeological Officer Peter Insole will demonstrate how family and local historians can use the 'Know Your Place' website for research and how anyone with local knowledge can contribute their own images and information. The talk is free, but please book a place by phoning 0117 922 2686 or emailing bro@bristol.gov.uk

Clifton Rocks Railway

From Tuesday 10 July 2012

An exhibition (from Tuesday 10 July 2012) revealing the history of the Clifton Rocks Railway, the Victorian funicular railway built within the cliffs of the Avon Gorge.



◀ The older part of the house was built in the 16th century while the newer part of the house was built in the 1920s using stone taken from the ruins of a barn.

▼ The armorials on the south porch (including the initials ER) supported by a lion crowned and a dragon with a fleur-de-lys and Tudor rose are done in pargeting - probably a pun by Lawrence Washington, whose second wife's maiden name was Pargiter.



Sulgrave Manor

Wednesday 21 March 2012

The ancestral home of George Washington looked perfect in the sunshine. Teachers and children from a local school dressed in period costume for a 'Tudor Experience' swirled round providing splashes of colour and movement. In the airy restaurant our lunch of home-made soup and rolls was excellent; the cakes met our high standards for quality and portion size.

The tour was partly about the Washington family but also about life in a 17th Century manor. Our guide was a mine of fascinating information. We started in the cosy oak-panelled parlour (the word derived from the French 'parler'), where the Washingtons had genteel conversation and drank tea out of porcelain bowls from China. A spinet, played by children in those times (adults played harpsichords), gave us a tinkling accompaniment.



▲ The massive bronze head of George Washington stands on soil which was brought from Virginia

◀ The parlour



◀ The kitchen, one of the oldest parts of the house, came complete from a house in Hampshire, and is arranged in its original layout. We were delighted to find the water pump actually worked.



◀ Just one of many items of Washington memorabilia at Sulgrave

The kitchen was dominated by a massive open fire with elaborate spit, charcoal-burning oven, trap in the floor for the hot ash oven, and bread oven to one side under the staircase. Tables and shelves groaned with kitchen implements, some looking curiously modern. We learned the origin of various kitchen-related expressions – ‘upper crust’ (the unburned bit of the loaf) and ‘done to a turn’ (spit-roasted). Bread (poor people baked their bread in communal ovens), pottage and beer seemed to be the main items on the menu in 1650. Wednesday and Friday were non-meat days, with duck and goose being counted as fish.

Upstairs were 18th century ladies’ and gentlemen’s rooms. There was a four-poster bed in which several members of the family slept, ‘pigging’ to keep warm in winter. Ropes under the mattresses were pulled taut every day so the owners could ‘sleep tight’. Other rooms were museums containing samplers, costumes, hornbooks, bells, seals, and Washington memorabilia of every kind including an 18th century baby walker and a handle from George Washington’s coffin. There was plenty to see and we were grateful for the benches thoughtfully placed round the house.

We paused in the Great Hall for an explanation of Washington dynastic history, admiring portraits, stained glass windows with family coats of arms (some bearing stars and stripes), and the dole cupboard. We eventually emerged, experts in Washington lore. Many visited the small but perfectly-formed George Washington Museum to learn how the Washington family settled in Virginia in 1656 to grow tobacco, and the central role George Washington played in the American Revolution.

We took leisurely strolls round the gardens laid out in geometric designs with low box hedges, enjoying the primroses in bloom. The herb garden, full of eccentrically-named medicinal and culinary plants (Black Cohosh, Tennessee Cone Flower, Turtlehead), attracted much attention. Some herbs were American; some were examples of those taken to America by British settlers. There was just time for a second visit to the café for more delicious cake.

This was a great trip, admirably organised by Ruth – a perfect combination of fine weather, an elegant house packed with interest, tranquil garden, expert guide, super café and well-stocked shop. What more could a Friend want?

Rosemary Doggett and Tim Wood

Photos by Ann Wood

The herb garden ▶



Sulgrave Manor was built in 1539 as the home of Lawrence Washington, great-great-great-great-great-grandfather of George. Lawrence, who came from Washington, County Durham, made his fortune from the wool trade. He was twice mayor of Northampton and had 11 children. His great-great-great grandson, John, emigrated to Virginia. Sulgrave Manor was bought in 1914 by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America and the Anglo American Peace Committee to celebrate 100 years of peace since the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. The house was opened to the public in 1921. Sulgrave Manor is held in trust for all the peoples of America and Britain in the hope and belief that sentiments of goodwill and friendship will radiate from it. It is estimated that it costs \$400,000 a year to maintain the manor house.

To learn more visit
<http://www.sulgravemanor.org.uk/>

Three Gloucestershire Churches

Monday 5 March 2012

It was a gloriously sunny, but bitingly cold day, for our visit to three special churches in Gloucestershire, accompanied by Dr. Steven Blake, our enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide.

First and oldest was St. Mary's at Deerhurst, on the banks of the Severn. The tall central tower and herringbone stone patterns indicate Saxon origins, as do the beautiful sculptures adorning the ends of arches and a graceful stone Madonna above the inner door. Traces of the original paint remain on these Saxon carvings. Norman aisles were added in around 1200, and the windows subsequently enlarged. Intriguing 'hanging' windows and arches adorn the walls, we can only guess at their original uses.

Nearby Odda's chapel was an extraordinary find in 1884, when the owners of the adjacent half-timbered house altered a window and discovered that the kitchen of their house had originally been a Saxon chapel dating from 1056! Built by Earl Odda for the soul of his brother Aelfric, it now stands unadorned in a quiet green sward with house attached.

Next stop was Tewkesbury Abbey, its huge Norman tower glowing in the spring sunshine. A feast of hot soup and sandwiches awaited us, courtesy of the Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey. Inside, solid Norman pillars soar upwards to burst into sprays of vaulting, each with a decorated stone boss. Glowing 14th century stained glass

Photos by Sue Black

▼ *The Friends in procession going to St Mary's Deerhurst*



Dates for your diary

Here are some forthcoming trips to whet your appetite for later in the year.

Hartlebury Castle and Worcester Museum.

Thursday 27 September

The Castle, including the Bishop's Palace, the Hurd library and two magnificent state rooms are likely to be closed in October and this may well be our only opportunity to see this fine building. We will also visit Worcester Museum which is housed in the servants' quarters.

Oxford Castle.

Saturday 13 October

Oxford castle unlocked. A guided tour into the history of Oxford from Norman times to the very recent past with a free afternoon to explore Oxford.

Llancaiach Fawr Manor (Near Cardiff)

Friday 26 October

Step back in time to 1645 in this fine restored Tudor manor house and garden to hear from the servants of the Prichard family. Learn how Colonel Edward Prichard, appointed Commissioner of Array to King Charles I, raised men and money for the Royalist cause in Glamorganshire, but later changed sides and defended Cardiff Castle for Parliament.

Birmingham Assay Office.

Thursday 15 November

Take a guided tour round the world's largest Assay House and see the restored Georgian Soho House where the Lunar Society (which included such illustrious members as Josiah Wedgwood and Matthew Boulton) met.

Application forms for these events will be with the next newsletter



▲ The Pulpit Cloth in All Saints Church

▼ Tewkesbury Abbey

windows look down on the magnificently-carved stone tombs of Marcher lords. These include the 'Kneeling Knight' above Edward le Despenser's tomb. Morbidly fascinating is the stone depiction of a decaying cadaver with its predatory vermin! After the Dissolution, the Abbey was sold to Tewkesbury folk by Henry VIII for a mere £453.

Finally, at Newland we met archivist Averil Kear at All Saints, the 'Cathedral of the Forest'. Originally 13th century, it was rebuilt in the 19th century. The interior is spacious and tombs abound, some large reclining stone figures, some beneath paving, one a forester in his woodman's costume. The Miner's Brass shows a miner with his pick and a candle, reflecting the importance of mining in the Forest of Dean. The Probyn chapel has a beautiful Kempe stained glass window of 1898. Stunning modern additions are the embroidered altar frontal, reredos curtain and pulpit cloth by Brenda Dean. Sitting on a slight rise in the forest, the church is surrounded by tall trees, gravestones and ancient buildings, including a delightful row of white-painted Elizabethan almshouses. Tea and delicious cakes were provided by the Friends of the church.

In the space of one day we toured churches and interiors ranging from the 8th to the 21st centuries, truly a fascinating, time-travelling adventure!

Sue Black

The Events Programme

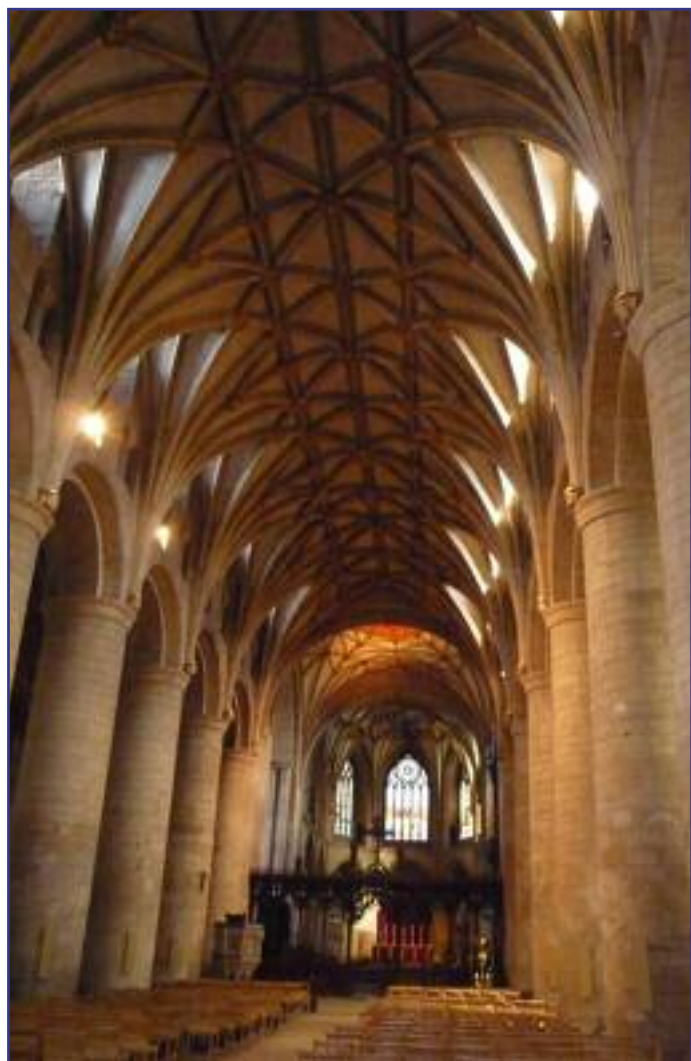
As many of you are aware, our busy programme of events (around 60 a year) is planned and organised by the hardworking members of the Programme Committee (currently ten of us). We aim to provide as broad a range of events as possible to appeal to the different interests of our members. Some of these events inevitably attract more members than others, resulting in disappointment for those who are not fortunate in gaining a place. Along with other organisations, we have considered various options for the allocation of bookings and the first-come/first-served method is definitely the most popular option. When there is overwhelming demand we are now repeating the events so, in the first half of this year, we are running six events for a second time. We hope that by doing this there will be fewer disappointed members. We are also restricting popular events to members only so, if your friends want to enjoy our programme, then persuade them to become members.

As always, we urge you to book as soon as you can after receiving your newsletter.

However, if your application is not successful, bear in mind that you may get a second chance. Those who were unlucky the first time will be given priority the second time around.

We are always happy to receive comments and suggestions of places to visit, so please do contact me: 0117 942 1944 or bailey.m@btinternet.com.

Mary Bailey Chairman, Programme Committee



Making the Most of Marmalade

Saturday 4 February 2012

Blaise Castle House Museum, with its social history collections, made a good venue for a very interesting and entertaining event on marmalade. Mary Bailey gave a brief outline of the fascinating history of marmalade and its origins. The Scottish Queen did not introduce orange marmalade into Britain (Alex Salmond would be disappointed) although she is credited with the pun 'Marmalade pour Marie malade' after a bout of sickness. The name marmalade derives from the Portuguese marmelo meaning quince. Recipes using quince were valued by Ancient Greeks and Romans as aids to digestion and in the centuries following there is much evidence for the medicinal use of quince which also has reliable setting properties. Quince jelly was highly valued as a delicacy and there is a record in 1524 of Henry VIII being particularly pleased to receive a box of quince jelly as a gift. Eventually marmalades made with Seville oranges became popular and evolved into the marmalade we know today. The consumption of marmalade was at its height in the 19th and 20th centuries and there has been a marked reduction in sales in recent years, but it was good to hear the south west is keeping its end up as a major consumer.

Our second speaker Andy Chapman, a chemistry postgraduate student and chef, was excellent – we had science with humour. Pectin is the secret to setting but when we heard about the vagaries of denatured pectin, temperature, acidity, atmospheric pressure and even the type of water it is no wonder cooks sometimes have problems with setting. By controlling these variables science can make a huge difference to commercial marmalade.

We had the chance to taste and purchase marmalades made with different recipes and buy Seville oranges, cakes and recipes. As usual the cheerful volunteers were making and dispensing refreshments, at the derisory sum of £1.50. I for one would have been very happy to pay, say £5 for the lectures, after all it is all in aid of our museums...

Elizabeth Mackenzie



▲ Wendy Aldridge-Morris and Ruth Welch selling Seville oranges

Photo by Mary Bailey

Pirate Ship Moors in M Shed

M Shed has become a safe berth for the pirate ship from Bristol-based Aardman Animations' new movie – *The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists*. The ship dropped anchor in the museum foyer on Tuesday 3 April and will remain moored there for six months.

According to Norman Garwood, production designer at Aardman Animations, it is two halves of different boats. The front of the original pirate ship, lost in a tremendous battle, was replaced with the bows from an elegant French frigate. The pirates added extra bits for the Captain's bathroom, and held the whole ship together with chains, glue and household items, such as a cricket bat and broom. The captain's garden, where he keeps his collection of cacti, is on the poop deck.

Mike Applebee, Senior Set Construction Manager, said: 'The ship splits into 10 sections, to enable animators to access all decks during close-up shots.'

The model was hand-crafted by Bristol model-making company Cod Steaks, who made all the film sets, in a similar way to a real boat, but with birch ply 'frames' and jelutong planking instead of oak. They glued approximately 30,000 lentils on to the hull to look like rivets. It was aged and distressed with artwork to give it a real sense of nautical history.

Mary Bailey



▲ The pirate ship weighs over half a tonne, is 15ft from bowsprit to stern, and 15ft from hull to main mast. It took 7 people six weeks to complete and many more weeks in the studio adding rigging, chains and ironmongery.

Photos by Mary Bailey



The Queen's Jubilee Portrait Exhibition

Tuesday 21 February 2012

More than 50 of us enjoyed this fascinating trip to see the exhibition of Impressionist Paintings and portraits of the Queen at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff.

The Queen's portraits ranged from formal to informal; from conventional to rather daring; from the very first press photo after her accession to a revealing and touching recent photo of her with Prince Philip. Highlights were a photo of her in the Coronation robes, taken by Cecil Beaton, showing her wearing the Imperial State Crown, embellished with the Black Prince's ruby and Queen Elizabeth I's pearl earrings. What amazing links back over the centuries. The formal photos of the young and beautiful Queen were balanced by the more relaxed and informal photos of the family by Anthony Armstrong-Jones. Well-known paintings included Annigoni's in 1969 making her look severe and formal in a red cloak. Lucian Freud's controversial 2001 portrait showed her with a 6 o'clock shadow. Andy Warhol, and Gilbert and George also challenged convention. A portrait by Justin Mortimer showed the Queen's head separated from her body. This promptly led her to commission Mortimer to paint the Lord Chamberlain! A favourite photo was one in which the Queen stood quite alone in the rain at Wimbledon, holding a blue edged umbrella, unnoticed by spectators in the galleries above. This collection of portraits and photos was not a bit deferential, and unexpectedly fascinating.

Many of the Impressionist (and later) paintings in the Museum were collected and eventually donated by a remarkable pair of sisters, Gwendoline and Margaret Davies. They were grand-daughters of the philanthropist, David Davies, who made his money from railways and coal mines. Gwendoline and Margaret, who grew up in a strict Methodist environment, were determined to spend their considerable fortune for the good of all. They were great patrons of the arts and donated 260 works from their important collection to the National Museum of Wales in the mid-20th century.

We enjoyed the stunning collection in the bright and airy galleries, enlightened by various tours during the day. Some made forays into other areas of this lovely museum, and returned with tales of Scott of the Antarctic, and of being attacked by woolly mammoths. It was altogether a very stimulating outing! Thank you, Shirley.

Sue Black

▲ *'Medusa' by Hew Locke is a spectacular portrait made of beads, bugs, toys and trash – more than an image of the Queen it is a kind of 'dark talisman' reflecting Locke's idea of the state of the nation.*

▼ *This T-shirt was made at the time of the Queen's planned visit to Aberystwyth to open a Science Centre Campus at the University of Wales. This was the first time a visit had to be cancelled because of anti-royalist protests by students.*



▶ *A Friend examines one of the photographs of the Queen and Prince Philip*



Photos by
Shirley Hodgson

University of Bristol Theatre Collection

Monday 26 March 2012

The University Theatre Collection, the largest collection of its type in the country apart from the V&A's, is used for research and teaching. It was founded in 1951 by Glynne Wickham, who set up the University Drama Department. The studio theatre was originally in the Wills Building and Harold Pinter's first play 'The Room' was performed there. Since the recent acquisition of the Raymond Mander & Joe Mitchenson Collection a new store has been built at Langford to house costume, archives, audio/video and large prints.

Jo Elsworth, the Director, showed us a wide variety of interesting items. The earliest was a 1572 map of London with two bear pits clearly visible where the Globe and the Rose theatres were later built. We passed round a subscription token dated 1766 for the Bristol Theatre (now the Theatre Royal) enabling the holder to attend any performances. The department has been involved in the present restoration work at the Theatre Royal and they will hold all related plans and artefacts in the archive.

Hogarth's etching of David Garrick as Richard III was followed by a collection of rare 18th Century coloured sketches of gesture and pose for major characters. Contemporary audiences would have been able to interpret the emotions portrayed by the body language.

Eric Jones-Evans left his collection and a bequest to the University including his classic make-up box. Jo said that the department had to get the balance between using items which might deteriorate, and storing everything away. The most difficult and expensive things to store are videos and DVDs, which have a short shelf life and have to be transferred to a digital form before they deteriorate completely.



▲ Eric Jones-Evans' make-up box includes powders, compact rouges, grease paints, rabbits' foot for applying rouge and lucky charms



◀ Silver token dated 30 May 1766. Theatre Royal, Bristol. One of fifty tokens issued to the subscribers who funded the building of the Theatre Royal granting free entry to the proprietor to every performance

Photos courtesy University of Bristol Theatre Collection



Stephanie Cole's archive included her 'This is Your Life' book and items from 'Tenko' such as the dress she wore throughout filming and the 'Huddies' box in which she kept the few personal and medical items the guards allowed

It was great to see Alan Tagg's original set designs for 'Look Back in Anger' for the Royal Court and 'The Entertainer' by John Osborne, and the gloves Sir Laurence Olivier wore for the part of Archie Rice. We were shown some interesting programmes, a prompt book and photos, one of which was of Judi Dench in her first part as Ophelia, together with reviews (not all complimentary). Finally, we were taken through the store rooms including the Henry Irving Archive and part of the Mander & Mitchenson Collection.

Thanks to Jo and Carol Ouvry for organising this very interesting visit to a little-known archive in Bristol which is open to the public and free.

Catherine Dixon

To learn more visit <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatreollection/> and <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/centenary/look/cabinet/makeup-box.html>

Electric cranes

Part of our £75k contribution to the creation of M Shed funded the restoration of the power supply to the four 1951 electric cranes on the quayside. In April the cranes lifted some of the larger objects for the Bristol Urban Sports exhibition up to the Temporary Exhibition Gallery on the top floor - including a Bristol-built 1947 Formula 3 racing car, a 1980s Seebold powerboat (pictured) and a rowing eight used by Bristol Rowing Club.



Photos courtesy of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives

Strawberry Hill and Ham House

Monday 12 March 2012

We left Bristol in fog but arrived dead on time at sunny Strawberry Hill, Twickenham. This was the eccentric home of Horace Walpole (1717-1797) younger son of Sir Robert Walpole, the first Prime Minister. Walpole found a modest Stuart dwelling and transformed it into a Gothic fantasy to house his vast collection of pictures, miniatures, objets d'art, and personal possessions accumulated during expeditions to Europe. The contents were sold off 150 years ago, much of it going to the USA, and only the shell of the building now remains. Our amusing and informative guide, Justin, showed us how the house had been developed and how the Trustees are restoring the house to its state at the time of Walpole's death.

Walpole and a group of amateur architect friends based the designs on great Gothic cathedrals and abbeys. Pierced arches, grilles and tracery picked out in gold inspired by mediaeval tombs abound. Occasional areas of bright colours give extra touches of drama. Impressive stained glass windows provide vivid, unexpected focal points and magical lighting.



▼ Rear view of Strawberry Hill



▲ Fireplaces were modelled on mediaeval tombs and church decorations.

▼ Close up of the door fixture in the Blue Bedchamber



Take a virtual tour of Strawberry Hill on
<http://lwlimages.library.yale.edu/strawberryhill/>



▲ The impressive 17th century north front of Ham House

After a light lunch we moved on to Ham House in Richmond. This Jacobean mansion set on a bend in the Thames, was built in 1610. Ham House is the creation of an enterprising courtier, William Murray, and his tenacious daughter Elizabeth. William was educated with the young Charles I, becoming his whipping boy. Charles gave William the lease of Ham House and its estate in 1626. William's daughter inherited the house, married the wealthy Duke of Lauderdale, and the couple transformed Ham House into one of the grandest Stuart houses in England. The house is virtually untouched since its heyday in the 17th century, and still retains many of the original pictures, furniture, and hangings, all maintained with the magnificent contemporary garden by The National Trust, and demonstrating the opulent lifestyle of the rich and powerful in Stuart times.

Jane and Richard Malim

Ham House stands beside the river Thames. This statue of Father Thames in Coade Stone is by John Bacon the Elder. Ham House has the oldest Orangery in Britain, an icehouse, a dairy and is surrounded by spectacular gardens.

Photos by Mary Bailey



Visit to St. Patrick's Church, Redfield

Thursday 23 February 2012

From the outside St Patrick's church appears to be an undistinguished, functional red brick building, but the interior is full of surprises. The first of these is a wonderful chandelier hanging in the foyer. This had been found in a barn in pieces and restored to its magnificent state by a member of the church.

Our guide Amelia Dunford, the Pastoral Assistant, outlined the origins of the church and the efforts of Father William Dillon in 1923 to raise the money to build the church and a school which is now one of the top primary schools in Bristol.

The layout of the inside is very open, giving worshippers an excellent view of the whole of the interior. Some stained glass windows came from the old Pro Cathedral which was destroyed many years ago. In contrast, behind the altar and on the west wall, are two very large round modern windows made by Creative Glassworks of Bristol. The designs are based on Celtic patterns. On the north wall are twelve modern glass plaques engraved to depict the Stations of the Cross and the Crucifixion of Christ.

The whole of the ceiling above the Nave is painted with a geometric star pattern and the side walls below this are decorated with six large paintings, three on each side, below the arched ceiling. Our guide told us that some members of the parish had been used as models for the people in the scenes.

The altar is very modern and made of perspex. Amelia told us someone had described it, rather irreverently, as looking like a stack of CDs. The Sanctuary walls at the side and behind the altar are covered with huge modern mosaics showing the angels ascending into Heaven, the Last Supper and Christ being baptised. The mosaics on the side walls show scenes of Abraham and Isaac on one side and Cain and Abel on the other.

Angela Essex

Photos by Judith Jones



Exterior view of St Patrick's church

One of twelve dramatic engraved plate-sized plaques depicting the journey to the Cross and the Crucifixion



The altar, mosaics, and spectacular modern stained glass window. The mosaics and some of the stained glass were made by Polish and Italian artists.



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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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