



Newsletter

August 2021



Hello Friends

We had a lot to talk about at our July Committee meeting, not least the distressing news that Swindon Borough Council decided not to re-open the Museum and Art Gallery after the end of the Covid closure, but more about that on the last page. Meanwhile, we carry on

Monthly Zoom Talk

25th August 7.30 - 8.30pm Nicola Cornick will give us a virtual tour of Ashdown House's Royal Portrait Collection

Many thanks to Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeologist for Wiltshire for her very informative talk about Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the Swindon Area, in July.

<https://friendsofsmag.org/you-tube-videos-of-talks/>

Monthly Zoom talks to come

29th September 12.30pm talk on the Ingram Collection of Modern British Art by Jo Baring,

27th October David Dawson, Director of the Wiltshire Museum, will be discussing the Eric Ravilious exhibition 'Downland Man' opening on 25th September.

24th November Grant Aston, ceramicist. His piece 'Radioactivitat' is in the Swindon Collection.

15th December Live Christmas Social!

We were hoping to meet up in the Gallery, but instead we are arranging a Christmas Social for the Friends at a venue in Old Town. More news to follow.

Trips to look forward to

Wednesday 20th October, 'A Century of British Art - Bournemouth Arts Club 1920-2020' at the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth. Tour guided by Dr Gill Clarke, the curator of the exhibition, which will include nine paintings from the Swindon collection.

More details to follow. The exhibition dates are 1st October 2021– 1st March 2022

Possibly early November, the Eric Ravilious exhibition 'Downland Man' Wiltshire Museum, Devizes. 25th September 2021 – 30th January 2022, see above for the talk on 27th October.

Welcome to new Friends

We have eight new members who have joined the Friends during the last month, taking our total above 250. Thanks for joining.

Friends Website

Click on <http://www.friendsofsmag.org> to find details of talks, newsletters, news, videos of talks, a link to the blog and you can also **make a donation to FSMAG**.

We are putting together a list of paintings, artefacts, restorations etc. which Friends have contributed to Swindon Museum and Art Gallery over the years, to be added to the website.

Purchase of paintings by Janet Boulton

In December 2019 the Friends purchased four paintings by the Wiltshire born artist, Janet Boulton. The Friends have paid for framing and we hope to photograph them before they disappear into storage.

Photography exhibition

Three committee members chose the FSMAG winner of the Photography Open Exhibition held at Swindon Museum and Art Gallery in March 2020. The winner, who has received a prize of £100 from the Friends, is local photographer Mark Somerville. <https://www.marksomervilleart.net/>

Joseph Ingleby and Turtle Storm



The sculptor, Joseph Ingleby, gave a Zoom talk about his work to the Friends in October last year. His sculpture Turtle Storm was installed in Queen's Park over twenty-five years ago.

Linda Kasmaty, Chair of FSMAG, suggested that a plaque should be installed, identifying the piece and its maker, as the original has been lost. South Swindon Parish Council oversaw the installation of the new plaque, which was unveiled when Joseph and his family visited Swindon in July. Joe explained that the piece was created for his degree show at West Surrey College of Art and Design in 1986 and was 'inspired by the environmental suffering of turtles in the Pacific Ocean during nuclear tests in the 1980s'. He was pleased to see that clambering children had helped to develop a shiny patina on the sculpture over the years.

You can see Joseph's talk here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOBwohIseD8>

'Celebrating Michael Ayrton' at The Lightbox, Woking, 29th May-8th August

'This exhibition celebrates the centenary of artist and polymath Michael Ayrton (1921-75), a painter, sculptor, and draughtsman whose remarkable and wide-ranging talents make him a key, but underexplored, figure in post-war British art'. His painting 'Roman Window' on loan from Swindon Museum and Art Gallery is included in the exhibition and is used on the poster.

Instagram

Did you know that the Friends have an **Instagram account**? If you or your friends use the platform you can find the Friends here: <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofswindonmag/>

We share news of talks and other events etc on the account so do give it a follow.

Don't forget the Friends page on the '**We Are Swindon**' website:

<https://weareswindon.co.uk/swindons-charity-hub/friends-of-swindon-museum-and-art-gallery/>

SAVE OUR MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

Apsley House is the home of Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, including the nationally significant collection of 20th century British art. As a home for the collections, it is not perfect but Swindon Borough Council has turned it's back on several opportunities to apply for Government 'Cultural Recovery' funding to help reopen the building and improve accessibility. An internal Council report recommends the permanent closure and disposal of Apsley House, putting the art and artefacts into storage indefinitely while we await the construction of an 'Art Pavilion' in the proposed Cultural Quarter to be built near Swindon rail station. There is as yet no funding for these proposals. Over the coming years, the Council plans to continue the Art on Tour idea of taking the art to the people and into classrooms, but while most of the artworks and artefacts are hidden away in storage we can't see much value in this sort of outreach. We believe the collections are a hugely important asset to the town and that the Museum and Art Gallery has a vital role to play in the community. The collections should remain on show until they can be moved to a new home.

An action group Save our Museum and Art Gallery, SOMAG, has been formed to campaign for the reopening of Apsley House or the re-location of the collections in a new home.

We have a lot of support from local people and professionals in the art and museum worlds. See <http://friendsofsmag.blogspot.com/> for photographs of our rally outside Apsley House.

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

- Sign the Change.org petition 'Save Swindon Museum and Art Gallery' **3,000** signatures so far
- Join the 'Save Swindon Museum and Art Gallery Facebook group and check for campaign information.
- Contact Swindon Borough Council:
David Renard, Council Leader: drenard@swindon.gov.uk
Robert Jandy, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage, Leisure and Town Centre Experience:
RJandy@swindon.gov.uk
Local Councillors, details on the Swindon Borough Council web-site
https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20021/councillors_democracy_and_elections
Or write: c/o Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH
- Contact your Members of Parliament
Robert Buckland MP for South Swindon: robert.buckland.mp@parliament.uk
Justin Tomlinson MP for North Swindon: justin.tomlinson.mp@parliament.uk
Or write: House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA



Join the SOMAG mailing list
email:
admin@friendsofsmag.org
phone: 07765 050470

ASK YOUR FRIENDS TO HELP TOO
FREE OUR CROC !