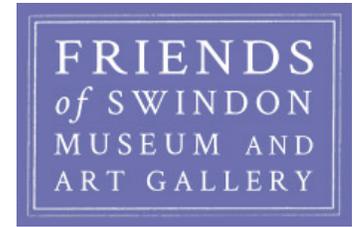




Newsletter

March 2022



Hello Friends

The committee had a busy meeting in March, discussing plans for zoom talks and visits.

Welcome to new Friends

We have gained several new members recently and welcome them to the group.

March Zoom talk

Wednesday March 23rd: **David Dawson**, Director of the Wiltshire Museum, will be sharing the plans for the relocation of the Wiltshire Museum to the old Assize Courts building in Devizes. The Zoom link to the talk will be emailed close to the date.

Thanks very much to **Michael Gray**, conservation architect, whose very informative February talk about St Marks Church in Swindon, covered not only the building but cemetery monuments, stained glass and the social history connected with the church.

Videos of past talks are available at: <https://friendsofsmag.org/you-tube-videos-of-talks/>

Friends' trips

Fresh Air Sculpture *A Celebration of Contemporary Art in a Beautiful English Garden*

The Old Rectory, Quenington, eight miles north east of Cirencester in Gloucestershire GL7 5BN

<https://www.freshairsculpture.com/>

Thursday 9th June 6pm-8pm Lift sharing to be arranged.

Trips in the pipeline

Early May, a walk around the Railway Village and St Marks church with Michael Grey.

Early July, a visit to Rabley Drawing Centre, Mildenhall, Marlborough

Later in the year, a trip to Banwell Bone Caves, north Somerset

On the following pages

Page 2 Details of the monthly Zoom talks planned for the rest of the year, and more good news about the Roman wine strainer.

Page 3 Art on Tour, displays of artworks and ceramics from the Swindon Collections, with talks about the exhibits.

Page 4 Exhibitions in Winchester, Chippenham and London

Page 5 Links to the Swindon Collections, now in storage, and other ways to 'follow' the Friends

Page 6 Articles in the Swindon Advertiser about the closure of Swindon Museum and Art Gallery

Monthly Zoom talks for the rest of the year

April 27th: **Lisa Westcott-Wilkins**, Co-founder and Managing Director of Dig Ventures will be telling us about the **Mammoth Graveyard** uncovered near Swindon. DigVentures began the excavations after being alerted to the site by Sally and Neville Hollingworth, non-professional palaeontologists, who will also take part in the talk.

May 25th: **Sarah Finch-Crisp**, Chair of the Friends of Lydiard Park will speak about the Lydiard Archives, a unique on-line collection of objects, portraits, records, manuscripts, photographs, memories, and ephemera related to Lydiard Park.

June 29th: **Martin Newman** of Historic England and also a member of the Friends committee will talk about 'List Swindon: 75 Years of Protecting England's Heritage'. Martin is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquities, a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and a Fellow or the Royal Society of Arts.

July 27th: A talk from **Kettle's Yard Gallery** in Cambridge.

August 24th: **David Thackray** will give an update on the Swindon Mechanics Institute.

September 28th: Lucy Abel-Smith will tell us about Quenington Rectory Garden, see also page 1
To be confirmed:

October: a talk from **MK Gallery** in Milton Keynes

November: **Richard Osgood**, Senior Archaeologist with the MOD

More Good News About the Roman Wine Strainer



The Roman Wine Strainer was found in Swindon and it's conservation has been paid for by the Friends. A group of us were able to see the intricately perforated metal strainer, which has survived for about 2,000 years. We have asked for the strainer to be put on display at the Civic Offices, for all to see, though this will depend on the provision of the appropriate environmental conditions.

For more photographs: <http://friendsofsmag.blogspot.com/>

Current 'Art on Tour' displays – glimpses of Swindon's paintings and ceramics

<https://artontour489147035.wordpress.com/exhibitions-2/>

A Celebration of Colour

Committee Room 3, off the foyer of the Civic Offices, Euclid St, Swindon, Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm
Enter by the central door, via the steps or the ramp, sign in at the reception desk.

'This exhibition presents a selection of paintings and studio ceramics. It explores the chemistry behind some of the most vibrant ceramics in the collection, and reveals different ways modern and contemporary artists have approached colour through paint. 'A Celebration of Colour' presents work by Gillian Ayres, Basil Beattie and Terry Frost. A new acquisition by Emily Drake will be shown for the first time since entering the Swindon Collection.'

Lunchtime Talks: Friday 8th April, 12 – 12.30pm

Check for any changes at: <https://artontour489147035.wordpress.com/talks-and-tours/>
and email: ArtOnTour@swindon.gov.uk to book your space. Booking is essential.

There are also 18 paintings from the Swindon Collection on display in the foyer of the Civic Offices, Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm

The Art of Industry

STEAM Museum of the Great Western Railway, Firefly Avenue, Swindon, SN2 2EY
From 19 January, Monday – Saturday, 10am – 5pm, Sunday, 11am – 4pm

This exhibition brings together artworks from the collections at STEAM Museum and the collections formerly housed at the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, now closed.

'Paintings, drawings and prints capture the dynamism and transformation of the railway in the 20th Century.' 'The Art of Industry' includes work by Leon Kossoff, Margaret Neve and Ken White, amongst others from the Swindon Collection.'

Lunchtime Talk: Friday 18 March, 12 – 12.30pm

Visitors will hear about pieces in 'The Art of Industry' display, and gain access to a collection of paintings, prints and drawings by Swindon railway artist Hubert Cook, displayed within the museum.

Check for any changes at: <https://artontour489147035.wordpress.com/talks-and-tours/>
and email: ArtOnTour@swindon.gov.uk to book your space. Booking is essential.

Local Legacies: Ceramics from the Swindon Collection

Highworth Museum, Visitor Information Centre, 7 High Street, Highworth, SN6 7BE
15 February – 14 May 2022, Tuesday – Friday, 10am–3pm, Saturday, 9am–2pm

'Local Legacies' presents studio ceramics from the Swindon Collection. The selected pieces have local roots, and provide links to broader narratives of 20th Century and contemporary ceramics. This celebration of Wiltshire-based makers is co-curated with Highworth Historical Society, and includes work by Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, Ivan Martin and Jo Taylor.'

Any questions or comments? Contact Councillor Robert Jandy, RJandy@swindon.gov.uk

Ongoing exhibitions elsewhere

'Extraordinary Everyday' The Art and Design of Eric Ravilious until 15th May 2022

The Arc, Jewry Street, Winchester (formerly the Winchester Discovery Centre)

For linked events go to <https://www.arcwinchester.org.uk/events>

'80 years after his death, this dazzling new exhibition will guide visitors through his brilliant career, showcasing wood engravings, watercolours, books, ceramics and lithographs. Among the many highlights are stunning watercolours from public collections, such as Train Landscape, and rarely seen works from private collections, including Room at the William the Conqueror.

Partnering with 15 lenders from across the UK, this specially curated exhibition for Hampshire Cultural Trust will show Eric Ravilious' love for the simple pleasures of everyday life (a mug of strong tea, a train ride). He saw the extraordinary in the everyday and, at the same time, made everyday things seem extraordinary, whether this was in the design he made to decorate an eggcup or in his marvellous watercolours.'

Wiltshire on Paper: Post-War Prints from the Bath Academy of Art

Chippenham Museum 8th January – 2nd April, Monday – Saturday, 10am – 4pm,

9-10 Market Place, Chippenham, <https://www.chippenham.gov.uk/chippenham-museum>

'Centred on the Bath Academy of Art in Corsham, the decades following the Second World War, saw an explosion of creative printmaking in this corner of Wiltshire. The first in a series of displays celebrating the Golder-Thompson Gift to Chippenham Museum, the exhibition will include works by Clifford & Rosemary Ellis, Gillian Ayres, Howard Hodgkin and many more.'

The World of Stonehenge, British Museum, until 17th July 2022

The exhibition includes artefacts from Salisbury Museum and Devizes Museum.

There are talks about the exhibition available on the museum's YouTube channel

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDy2RvseIW8ZPY4z7rBVfNg?view_as=subscriber



The exhibition includes a large display of stone hand axes.

Here's a reminder of the hand axes in the Swindon Collection, found locally and as they were displayed in Apsley House.

Let us know of exhibitions and events, which may be of interest.

email: admin@friendsofsmag.org

Let's not forget the Museum and Art Gallery Collections now in storage

Here are a few links from the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery website

<https://www.swindonmuseumandartgallery.org.uk/>

The Swindon Collection of Modern British Art and Ceramics

<http://www.swindonmuseumandartgallery.org.uk/info/4/collections/4/collections-1/2>

Several items in the Ron Sloman Gift are included in the Art on Tour display at the Civic Offices.

A link to a **full list of the Swindon Collection of Modern British Art** (including paintings, pastels, drawings, prints, sculpture, frescos photographs, collage and ceramics) has recently been added, click on the link towards the bottom of the web page.

You can also view some of Swindon's Collection of Modern British Painting and Swindon's Local Art Collection on the ART UK website.

<https://artuk.org/visit/venues/swindon-museum-and-art-gallery-5267>

Swindon Archaeological Collection

<http://www.swindonmuseumandartgallery.org.uk/info/4/collections/4/collections-1/3>

and a **3D virtual tour of the archaeology gallery**

<https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=xEMpfF81p4N>

The Victoria Hall Historic Collections

<http://www.swindonmuseumandartgallery.org.uk/info/4/collections/4/collections-1/6>

Including the **Swindon Collection of Musical Instruments**

45 Wonderful musical instruments available to see on

<http://minim.ac.uk/> Choose 'Browse by Collection - Swindon Museum & Art Gallery

Swindon Social History Collection

<http://www.swindonmuseumandartgallery.org.uk/info/4/collections/4/collections-1/4>

Earth and the Natural World

<http://www.swindonmuseumandartgallery.org.uk/info/4/collections/4/collections-1/5>

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**.

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofswindonmag/>

Try out the Friends **Instagram account**, now with 1,057 followers.

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/>

On February 9th The Swindon Advertiser printed this letter from Linda Kasmaty, Chair of the Friends of Swindon Museum and Art Gallery

'Whatever has happened to the wonderful things we used to see in our Museum and Art Gallery?

Like many venues, Apsley House, the building that housed Swindon's beloved crocodile and the Egyptian mummy, closed because of the pandemic.

Unlike other venues, it remains closed. Swindon Borough Council's leaders say a new museum and art exhibition facility should be built in the centre of town, as part of a planned cultural quarter.

So the collections have been put into storage, and Swindon residents can see a few of the artworks via worthy but small exhibitions called Art on Tour.

Swindon Borough Council's leaders admit it will take at least ten years for the new facility to be built. The Save our Museum and Art Gallery Group have asked the council to ensure that the collections have a suitable home until then. In December 2021, the Cabinet decided to convert the entire top floor of the Civic Offices into a museum and art gallery. So far, so good. But something does not add up.

In March 2019, the council estimated it would cost £1,864,000 to convert the first floor of the Civic Offices. It now claims it will cost £400,000. We have asked how the cost of conversion can have fallen by £1,464,000, but had no answer.

Our rapidly growing town is already identified by the Arts Council as having low cultural engagement. This is shameful. A significant part of our culture is locked up somewhere, out of sight.

For two months, we have been trying to meet the Culture Councillor, Robert Jandy, to discuss when we will have a museum and art gallery fit for the town.

Swindon risks becoming a dormitory town, with huge housing estates and no facilities. Instead, let's create a place we can all enjoy, and let's start by valuing what we have got. Swindon Museum and Art Gallery remains closed and it is not good enough.

Linda Kasmaty

Chair of the Friends of Swindon Museum and Art Gallery and Save our Museum and Gallery'

Also on the 9th February the Advertiser printed this response from Councillor Robert Jandy

In response, councillor Robert Jandy, the cabinet Member for culture, heritage, leisure and town centre experience, reiterated Apsley House on Bath Road was no longer fit for purpose.

He said work has been ongoing to design and finalise detailed costings for the conversion of the Civic building so it can display more of the collections and be more accessible to visitors.

Mr Jandy said: "This is really important.

"Swindon's modern art collection is superb, and it deserves to be displayed in a place and in a manner that everyone can enjoy. Inevitably this is a complicated process, and there are procedures that we must follow.

"A planning application to change the use of the civic building has been submitted and a programme of works will be developed around a major upgrade of the lift that will allow as much of the collection to be made visible as soon as possible.

"Much of the work can be done in house and we are confident that officers are now able to get on with the important job of converting the civic offices and delivering the facility that the Council and its residents expect.

"The collections are currently stored in accord with curatorial requirements and the art on display at the civic campus has been refreshed and it looks fantastic.

"A room on the ground floor has also been converted to provide a taster of how the new facility will look and I would encourage anyone who wants to view our fabulous artwork to visit our Celebration of Colour exhibition to see for themselves."

With thanks to the Swindon Advertiser