



Newsletter

November 2022



Hello Friends

At the October committee meeting we discussed plans for the Annual General Meeting, our Friends' Christmas Meal in December and speakers for our Talks in 2023, our Pearl Anniversary year. Yes, it's 30 years since the Friends of Swindon Museum and Art Gallery was founded – something to celebrate.

Monthly Zoom talks and events for the rest of the year

November 30th : **Richard Osgood**, Senior Archaeologist with the MOD, and 'Operation Nightingale' for post combat, post traumatic stress disorder sufferers.

Wednesday December 7th, at 7pm: Friends' Christmas Meal at Fabio's Italian Restaurant, 15 Bath Rd, Old Town, Swindon, SN1 4AS, see Linda's email of 15th September.

Annual General Meeting

Thanks to all who came to the Annual General Meeting held on October 26th. In addition to the committee 23 Friends attended this enjoyable and informative event and it was great to be able to meet in person again after the last two Zoom AGMs, held during the lockdowns.

We were pleased to welcome Cllr Matty Courtliff, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage, Leisure and Town Centre Experience who was happy to discuss the plans to reopen Swindon Museum and Art Gallery at the Civic Offices. Friends had the opportunity to ask questions and important points were raised about curators, displaying the collections, accessibility for all and refreshment facilities. Thanks to Artsite and Sally Taylor for hosting the AGM.

A special thanks must be given to our Chair Linda Kasmaty who has steered the Friends through the extraordinary events since our last live AGM. Firstly there were the covid lockdowns, throughout which (and beyond) Linda has organised excellent monthly speakers via Zoom, and since lockdown has organised several Friends' trips

Then there was the news from Swindon Borough Council in July 2021 that Apsley House would not be re-opening after lockdown and we would see little of the collections until new facilities were opened in the proposed Cultural Culture.

Linda, supported by the Friends and the 'Save our Museum and Art Gallery' group, led gatherings, protests, a petition and a presentation and questions at Swindon Borough Council meetings and Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee meetings. This has contributed to a rethink by the Council and the proposals that the first floor of the Civic Offices will be opened up as the new location for the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery.

Council proposals for a Museum and Art Gallery at the Civic Offices

It was heart-warming to see so many supporters of Swindon Museum and Art Gallery attending the **Public Engagement event at the Civic Offices on the 19th October**, where Francis Yeo, Swindon Council's Museum Manager, presented the plans for the proposed layout of the new galleries. The plans include five galleries including one telling 'The Swindon Story', displaying the geology, archaeology and history collections. Other galleries will display artworks or museum exhibitions. There will be a room for visits by schoolchildren with coach parking on site. There will also be a library, storerooms and staffrooms. Opening times initially will be the same as those at Apsley House (Tues-Saturday) and there are no plans at present to provide refreshment facilities. The Museum and Art Gallery web site is also being revised.

Questions were invited and answered by Frances Yeo and Cllr Matty Courtliff, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage, Leisure and Town Centre Experience.

There is a link to the presentation on <https://en-gb.facebook.com/groups/2854368054892584/>

Swindon Borough Council's Planning Application for the conversion of the first floor of the Civic Offices into the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery is still being considered by the Planning Department. The planning application can be viewed: <https://pa1.swindon.gov.uk/publicaccess/> Search for 'Euclid St' Click on the listed Application, and then go to 'Documents'

Friends' Website, recently updated and speeded up!

Click on <http://www.friendsofsmag.org> to find a wealth of information about our talks, newsletters, news, videos of talks, a link to the blog and to **make a donation to FSMAG**.

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

Try out the Friends **Instagram account**, now with **1,259** 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/>

Oexmann Art Award Competition and Exhibition 2022, Devizes Museum

Picture entry 22nd to 26th November, Exhibition 17 December 2022 to 18 February 2023.

Visit the Devizes Museum web-site to find details:

<https://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/>

Three Talks on Swindon Heritage

Given by Dr Michael Smith Author and enthusiast; former GWR Apprentice at the Swindon Locomotive Works, teacher and lecturer at Bristol University and consultant to Railtrack now Network Rail, at the Central Community, Centre, Emlyn Square, Swindon. These talks were due to start in November but will now take place in January, February and March 2023.

Organised by the Mechanics Institute Trust: <https://mechanics-trust.org.uk/>

Roman Swindon and Environs Conference in honour of Bernard Phillips

Saturday 12th November 2022 10am – 5.15pm

'STEAM and Swindon Museum & Art Gallery are hosting our first Archaeological conference. To celebrate the life and works of Bernard Phillips, a man who was involved with excavations across the region, we have brought together speakers on a range of topics. We will look back and get updates on some well-known sites, and also hear about the latest excavations being carried out within the Borough.'

'In collaboration with Wiltshire County Council Archaeological Service and Wiltshire Museum. Kindly sponsored by the Association of Roman Archaeology.'

The conference will support the development of the new Archaeology Galleries at Swindon Museum & Art Gallery.

<https://www.steam-museum.org.uk/event/romanswindon-and-environs-conference/>

Tickets cost £22 and include a buffet lunch. Book on-line :

<https://shop.myonlinebooking.co.uk/steammuseum/sessions.aspx?tid=46>

The programme includes:

Welcome and overview of Bernie Phillip's contribution to archaeology in Swindon and beyond, *Mike Stone and Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger.*

A tribute to Bernie's work on Roman sites, *Bryn Walters and Mike Stone.*

Littlecote Roman Villa and its Mosaic, pictured below, *Peter Johnson.*



Wanborough Roman Town and recent geophysics surveys, *Kerry Donaldson and David Sabin.*

Recent discoveries on the Southern Connector Road, *Headland Archaeology.*

Recent Roman and Saxon discoveries at Wroughton, *Royston Clark, AC Archaeology.*

Recent research at Roman Cunetio, *Mark Corney.*

The excavations and publication of the Groundwell Ridge Roman complex, *Peter Wilson.*

Recent discoveries at Witchelstowe and Ridgeway Farm, *Bruce Eaton Andy Manning, Wessex Archaeology.*

The Chiseldon Cauldrons, *Andrew Fitzpatrick*

Pre-Raphaelites, Drawings and Watercolours

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 15th July until 27th November 2022

'There are over 100 artworks on show. These include works of extraordinary beauty, from the portraits the Pre-Raphaelites made of each other, their studies for paintings and commissions, to subjects taken from history, literature and landscape.' <https://www.ashmolean.org/pre-raphaelites>

Booking is essential, including members

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

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

Changing faces

21st July – 1st December 2022 Lydiard House Museum, Lydiard Tregoze, Swindon, SN5 3PA

'Changing Faces' presents Modern portraits from Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, alongside paintings of the St John Family at Lydiard House Museum. The works show the transformation of portraiture in the Twentieth Century, and celebrate its endurance as a genre in British art. The art trail includes portraits from the Swindon Collection by Leslie Cole, Lawrence Gowing, Raymond Mason and Stephen Tomlin.'

Opening times: Wednesday – Sunday: 11am – 4pm (last admission 3.30pm).

Admission charge to Lydiard House Museum is applicable, information here:

<https://www.swindon.gov.uk/lydiardhouse/info/11/plan-visit/4/plan-visit-1/7>

Highlights from the Swindon Collection

Civic Offices, Euclid St, Swindon, Ongoing, Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

Enter by the central door, via the steps or the ramp, sign in at the reception desk.

'This exhibition brings together 20 works of art from Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, to showcase the variety and quality of the Swindon Collection of Modern British Art. It includes paintings and prints by world famous artists, and artists with a special connection to Wiltshire and Swindon.'

Some changes have recently been made to this exhibition

A Celebration of Colour

Committee Room 3, off the foyer of the Civic Offices, Ongoing, Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

Enter the building 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.'

The Art of Industry, STEAM Museum of the Great Western Railway,

Ongoing, 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. 'The Art of Industry' includes work by Leon Kossoff, Margaret Neve and Ken White, amongst others from the Swindon Collection.'

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

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