



Newsletter

November 2023

Hello Friends

Breaking News – Return of the CROC – see Page 2

November Zoom talk

November 29th 7.30pm The Modern History of Stonehenge, a talk by Dr Susan Greaney, Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Exeter. This talk will chart the fascinating story of Stonehenge over the 20th century, through historic photographs and personal stories that tell of some key moments and memories.

2023 Friends Annual General Meeting

December 6th 7.00pm at Artsite, Theatre Square, Regents Circus

We are asking members of the Friends to join the Committee and consider taking on the following roles:

Trips Organiser Committee Members

New members of the Committee are needed to help with decision making in the first instance and to take on specific roles as the need arises.

The committee meets on the 4th Monday of the month by Zoom, and sometimes in person.

Please contact Linda if you would like to join us: lindakasmaty@hotmail.com

Friends' Website

Click on <http://www.friendsofsmag.org> for newsletters, news, information about planned talks and videos of past talks. You can now join the Friends, renew membership or make a donation to FSMAG through the website. For news of Friends' activities over the past 11 years visit: <http://friendsofsmag.blogspot.com/>

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

Try out the Friends Instagram account, now with 1,435 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/>

Return of the CROC

'Swindon's 100-year-old crocodile is back from their makeover and looking better than ever.

The much-loved, 15-foot gharial recently went off to be restored by specialist natural sciences conservator Simon Moore, following damage and natural wear and tear to the creature.

Originally a hunting trophy, the Gharial's first known owner was Major Morton Hiles, who lived in India between 1916 and 1922.

Hiles later lived in Warminster and gave the gharial to Warminster School. In 1931, the school's vicar offered the specimen to Swindon Museum, as they needed more classroom space.

Work included:

- Replacing teeth with scrap ivory to restore the original look*
- Replacing the old plastic eyes with new, more realistic glass eyes*
- Restoring claws on the feet*
- Adding back missing pieces of the tail*

The restoration was funded from the regular collections care and conservation budget held by the museums team.

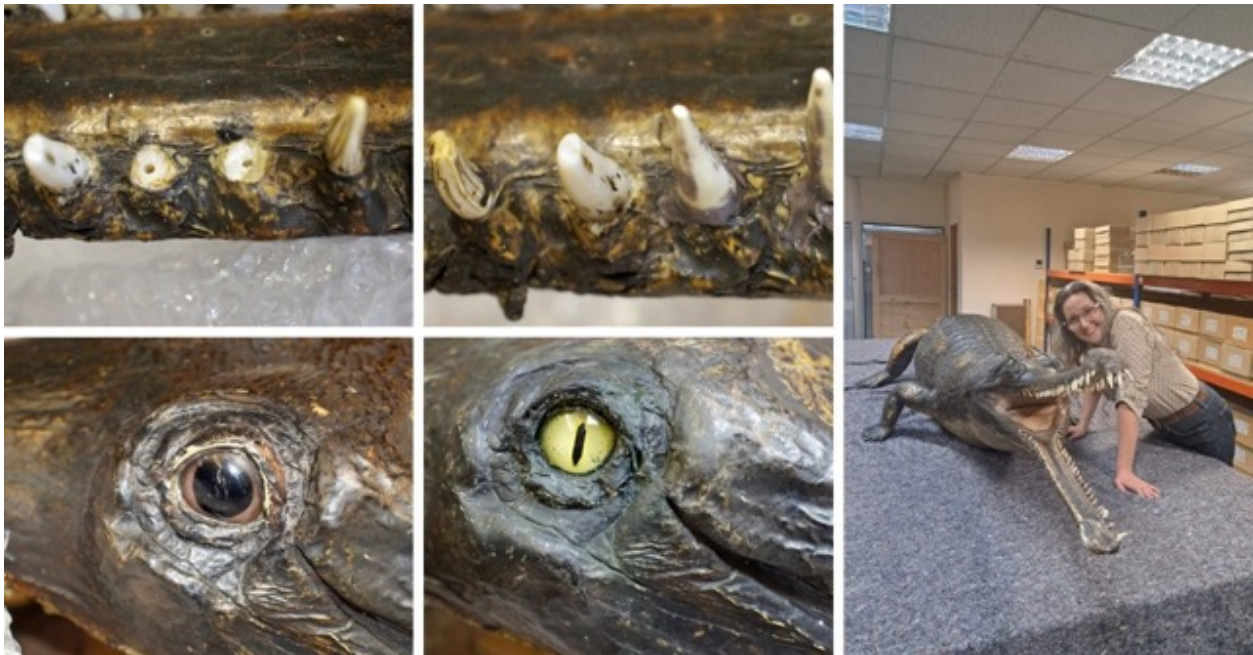
Gharials are currently a critically endangered species, with experts estimating that there are fewer than 1,500 left alive in the wild.' Posted on Facebook 3rd November 2023

Photographs

Top row: Missing Teeth, New Teeth,

Bottom row: Old Eye, New Eye

Side: Restored Gharial with Swindon Borough Councillor Marina Strinkovsky, Cabinet Member for Heritage, Art and Culture



Update on conversion work at the Civic Offices

Frances Yeo, Swindon Museums Manager attended the first part of our October Committee meeting and showed us videos of the work progressing on the conversion of the first floor of the Civic Offices into the new Museum and Art Gallery. Fitting out of the interiors of the galleries, installation of lighting, secondary glazing etc. is about to start with a possible opening date in the first quarter of 2024, if all goes according to plan.

Thanks to Richard Osgood, for his very interesting October Zoom talk about how 'Operation Nightingale' helps in the recovery of armed forces personnel suffering from post combat, or post traumatic stress disorders. The talk is now available on our website:

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

Richard has recently written a book about Operation Nightingale, 'Broken Pots Mending Lives' For more information:

<https://www.oxbowbooks.com/9781789259384/broken-pots-mending-lives/>

We asked Richard how we could show our appreciation for his talk and he asked that we send a donation to Aldbourne Heritage Centre. Here is the reply, which our treasurer Bridgid Harkness received in response to our donation of £100.

'Wow! This is completely unexpected. Thank you and the FSMAG for such a generous donation. We will thank Richard separately for making the suggestion. The donation comes at a good time - as Richard probably knew - since we are about to start a fundraising effort to purchase a new climate-controlled display case to ensure the best possible conditions for the preservation of the items which Richard and Operation Nightingale have found over their digs in Aldbourne. Your donation will be the first in the pot!

Once again, very many thanks for your generosity.

John Dymond, Trustee, Aldbourne Heritage Centre'

Recent Friends Trips

On the 18th October about thirty Friends and friends of Friends had an informative and enjoyable day out to Kelmscott Manor, home to William, Jane, Jenny and May Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. We enjoyed excellent guided tours and were able to appreciate artwork, weaving, tapestries, embroideries and furniture designed and made by them all, not to mention the beautiful buildings and gardens.

On the 28th October twelve Friends took the Barnes Coaches' day trip to Lymington where we were able to visit the St Barbe Museum and the exhibition 'Parallel Lives: Eight Women Artists'. Lovely to get a chance see the paintings, prints and sculptures created by these artists, often in difficult circumstances. The Zoom talk about the exhibition given by Dr Gill Clarke is available here: <https://friendsofsmag.org/you-tube-videos-of-talks/>

The Friends have donated £100 to the St. Barbe Museum as a thank you for the talk.

We hope to make use of more Barnes Coaches' day trips to enable us to see exhibitions in the future.

Out and About

Two exhibitions at the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes

Lest We Forget: The Black Contribution to the World Wars in Wiltshire and Eric Walrond: a Caribbean Writer in Wiltshire.

Saturday 11 November - Saturday 17 February 2024

'Lest We Forget aims to respectfully tell some of the stories and experiences of the Black community living and working in the Armed Forces in Wiltshire during the World Wars of the 20th Century.'

'The Eric Walrond Exhibition spotlights his time in Wiltshire, drawing attention to his writing and the political issues which he sought to tackle'

For more information visit : <https://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk>

Winter Opening Times 10 am to 4 pm (Monday 30 October to Friday 22 March 2024).

Before making your journey, please check the Visit Us page for details of potential changes to these times, e.g. Bank Holidays.

Entry to the exhibition is included in your admission ticket - book online.

Tickets cost from £7.50 (concessions available). Free for under 18s.

Spotlight On Modern and Contemporary Art III

Chippenham Museum 18 November – 24 February

'The third part of Chippenham Museum's exhibition series celebrating North Wiltshire's creativity. 'Spotlight On' will feature works by 40 artists with links to the local area, including Richard Deacon, James Tower, Maria Lalic and Colin Crumplin.'

<https://www.chippenham.gov.uk/chippenham-museum>

From the Outside In:

Responding to Art and Sculpture from the Russell-Cotes Africa Collection, Russell-Cotes Gallery, Bournemouth until 1st January 2024

'This exhibition features unseen objects and sculptures from a range of countries – from Sierra Leone to the Democratic Republic of Congo <https://russellcotes.com/event/african-art/>

Colour Revolution

Victorian Art, Fashion & Design

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford Open now until 18 Feb 2024

'Dispelling our monochrome idea of Victorian Britain. Discover a revolution of colour.'

<https://www.ashmolean.org/>

For a linked article on 'How Victorian Women Shaped Colour Technologies' see:

<https://www.ashmolean.org/article/how-victorian-women-shaped-colour-technologies?>