



# Newsletter

April 2024



## Hello Friends

Following on from the name change of Swindon Museum and Art Gallery to 'Museum and Art Swindon' the Friends' committee have decided on a name change to 'Friends of Museum and Art Swindon'. A new logo has been designed and appropriate changes are being made to our social media pages. See Page 3.

## Friends' Monthly Talks

- 25 April      The Art of the Tattoo, Gavin Jones  
7.30pm. Venue to be announced nearer the time.
- 30 May      Dr Lydia Miller, Assistant Curator Pallant House Gallery
- 13 June      Dee Ferris, the Brighton based painter of two of the most recent acquisitions to the Swindon Collection, 'Sleepy Hollow' and 'The Places We Go', in conversation with Katie Ackrill.
- 25 July      Wilfred Wright on the Elisabeth Frink Exhibition at Museum and Art Swindon
- 29 August   Harriet Still on Hardy's Wessex exhibition at Museum and Art Swindon.
- 26 September Phillip Dearden who has been researching the work of his grandfather Harold Dearden, Head of the Swindon Art School for over 30 years, with several paintings in the Swindon Collection.
- 31 October   Ann-Rachael Harwood will tell us about 'The Wilson' Gallery in Cheltenham
- 28 November Dr Gill Clarke will talk about the 'Purbeck Artists' exhibition which she will be curating at the Russell Cotes Gallery, Bournemouth.
- 5 December AGM
- 30 January 2025 Flis Tattersall talking about her Shouting Softly project based in Swindon

## Friends' Trips

27 April      Ken Stradling Collection

Visit to the Ken Stradling Collection, 48 Park Row, Bristol

£15 per head for the guided tour at 2pm, booking essential.

Join us on the train or make your own way there.

To book a place contact Rosemary Savage: [r.savage@marshlea.org.uk](mailto:r.savage@marshlea.org.uk)

## Friends' Talk at the Civic Offices

It was wonderful to welcome over sixty Friends to the Civic Offices on the 28<sup>th</sup> March, on a very wet and windy evening. Frances Yeo, Museums Curator at Swindon Borough Council, updated us on the opening of 'Museum and Art Swindon'. As work was in progress in the galleries we weren't able to have a tour. The new website for Museum and Art Swindon has been launched at <https://museumartswindon.com/> Friends are included under the area: About / 'Projects and Partners' and there is a link to our website.

## Museum and Art Swindon, Preview, 18<sup>th</sup> March

Members of the Friends' Committee were invited by Councillor Marina Strinkovsky, cabinet member for heritage, arts and culture, to a preview of Museum and Art Swindon along with the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire Sarah Rose Troughton, Swindon Borough Councillors and members of the press. We were able to see the setting up of the Archaeology Galleries. It was great to see old friends, such as the Highworth Pot and the Coin Hoard as well as new items including the Roman Wine Strainer after it's conservation, funded by the Friends.



## Swindon Advertiser Article about the Preview event, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

By Aled Thomas

### ***'Sneak peak at Swindon Museum and Art Gallery as it nears opening***

*The new Swindon Museum and Art Gallery is nearly ready to open.*

*'The town's collection of paintings and historic artifacts was formerly located in Apsley House in Old Town. But work has been underway to transform the upper floor of the Civic offices in Euclid Street as the collection's new permanent home. The museum is set to open its doors to the public this Spring, providing no unexpected problems arise between now and then.*

*But before it does the great and the good of the borough were invited to look around, as the art and artefacts are being installed. Museum Director Frances Yeo showed the VIP party of Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire Sarah Rose Troughton and council leader Jim Robbins and chairman of the Friends of Swindon Museum & Arts Gallery Linda Kasmaty around the rooms, mostly empty, but with several artworks and artefacts already installed.*

*Ms Kasmaty said: "It's wonderful. I'm almost lost for words and how excited and pleased I am that we will have somewhere to go to see the artifacts and art. It's been four years since we've been able to do it and to see it coming on like this is just wonderful."*

*Cllr Robbins said: "I've long believed that we don't make enough noise about Swindon's cultural impact and the superb collection the town has. It's a huge thing for a council this size to have such a fantastic art collection, ceramics collection and collection of artefacts. I'm really excited that this will be a place for all Swindonians and hope they will want to come here."*

*Mrs Troughton, who has long been an art-lover said: "Sir Kenneth Clarke, when he was chairman of the Arts Council said: "They take the arts seriously In Swindon" and indeed we do.*

*"This is a quite extraordinary collection of the very best of modern British art. To have works by Gwen John, Augustus John, Henry Moore, LS Lowery, Ben Nicholson, and my friend Maggie Hambling. I texted her last night, and she said: "Art is a gift from the gods which must be honoured and offered back up to them" and we are doing that here."*

*Councillor Marina Strinkovsky is the cabinet member for heritage, arts and culture and is in political charge of the project. She said: "I have been sold on using this building since the idea first came up; I can't think of a better use for this beautiful building – this is almost unique being an art deco civic office, and now it is unique being an art deco civic offices and museum and gallery."*

*Councillors from across the political divide were united in their excitement.*

*Labour's Jane Milner-Barry said: "I hope it spreads out and more of the building could be used to show the collection"*

*And Conservative group leader Gary Sumner, who was deputy leader of his party's administration when the project was started said: "I'd like to see this building given over to it-keep the chamber for civic occasions – but the rest of the building could display this and meetings could be held in other buildings."*

*The layout of the upper storey sees visitors come straight from the lift and stairs to reception, and a shop, and a changing exhibition space. On one side will be sequential rooms for the museum, showing artefacts illustrating Swindon's history from prehistoric times right up to the modern day, with the latest exhibit being a display of artefacts from the Covid -19 pandemic. Other rooms will be used for displays of the Swindon collection of modern art, but with exhibitions of works borrowed from other museums planned as well.*

*There will be a dedicated room for school parties where pupils will be able to eat their lunch and engage in educational activities.'*

## Friends new Social Media Links

Friends' website is now on <http://www.friendsofmas.org>

for newsletters, news, information about planned talks and videos of past talks.

You can join the Friends, renew membership or make a donation through the website.

For news of Friends' activities over the past 13 years visit:

Friends' blog on <http://friendsofmas.blogspot.com>

The two below may change over the coming weeks

Instagram, with 1,531 followers is on <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofswindonmag/>

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/>

## Out and About

### Chippenham Museum

Sindy 60th Anniversary 30 March – 11 May

*'Step into Spring with the Diamond anniversary celebrations of Sindy, curated by local collectors Karen Colley and Bonita Turner.'*

For more information visit: <https://www.chippenham.gov.uk/chippenham-museum/>

### Russell-Cotes Gallery, Bournemouth

Beautiful Bournemouth until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024

*'Step back in time and explore recognisable Bournemouth scenes through the years, from our collection. In this mini exhibition, we will be exhibiting watercolours and lithographs from notable Dorset artists and illustrators like, Eustace Pain Elliott Nash and Philip Leslie Moffat Ward.'* For more information visit: <https://russellcotes.com/>

### Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

**BRUEGEL TO RUBENS GREAT FLEMISH DRAWINGS**

23 Mar – 23 Jun 2024

*'The exhibition will show 120 drawings, with over 30 on display for the first time, including some which have only recently been discovered. These are some of the most exquisite drawings kept in Antwerp and Oxford collections by famous artists such as Pieter Bruegel, Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck and Jacques Jordaens. The artworks will provide insights into how these artists honed their drawing skills throughout their careers.'*

Visitors and Members are strongly recommended to book tickets in advance to guarantee entry. For more information visit: <https://www.ashmolean.org/>

### Wiltshire Museum, Devizes

**A Wiltshire Thatcher – a Photographic Journey through Victorian Wessex**

6th April 2024 - 1st September 2024

*'This exhibition celebrates the work of Ernest Farmer, who today is little-known but was a leading figure in the development of photography as an art form. Through the exhibition, we will show how Farmer captured the spirit of people, villages and landscapes of Wiltshire and Dorset that were so much of a contrast to his life in London.'*

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