Q. HOW VALUABLE ARE FRIENDS TO THE MUSEUM SECTOR?
- Alex Walker, Acting Chair of BAFM

Friends groups are a great asset to the museum sector, but probably not fully appreciated. Individual museums lucky enough to have an effective and supportive Friends group know that they can provide financial contributions, voluntary work and act as advocates. But until now no attempt has been made to quantify the impact of Friends’ contributions to the whole sector.

I have been interrogating the data that BAFM collects from groups as they return their annual membership renewal forms. In 2017, 135 groups reported that they made financial donations to their museums. The amounts ranged from £30 right up to an impressive £400,000 - with most being in the £1,000 to £5,000 range. In total BAFM member groups reported giving a whopping £2,742,724 to their museums.

In total BAFM members also reported just over 217,000 hours of volunteering. Voluntary work may be unpaid but it has value. The Heritage Lottery Fund values voluntary work on projects it funds at a minimum of £50 per day. At this valuation voluntary work by Friends is worth well over £1.5M.

What this story leaves out is how valuable contributions from Friends can be towards unlocking further grants for their museum. Most funders require a percentage match towards an award. This can be in cash, and in certain circumstances, the “in kind” value of voluntary work. In these difficult times for museums, contributions by Friends can make all the difference. They also help the museum make a stronger case in their application by showing evidence of support by their community.

What did I learn from trawling through the spreadsheets? That the army of Friends groups across the country makes a significant financial impact on the museum and heritage sector. This contribution reflects the support museums have in their communities – Friends are people who love their museums.

I’d like to understand more about how Friends help their museums. So the membership renewal forms have some minor amendments this year. Firstly we need to know that we have the fullest possible data so we have asked you to give us a little more information, including putting a ‘0’ entry where appropriate rather than leave a blank space which can be ambiguous. We have also given you a few tick boxes to tell us what you have helped fund, for example acquisitions, exhibitions, etc. I hope this will not make the task more onerous for you.

How will we use this information? We also carried out a member survey this year. There will be a report about this in the next Journal. One message from you was that you think BAFM should be an advocate for Friends, and for the museum sector. Knowing more about the fabulous support you all give your museums is the information we need to be advocates. We know that Friends are important supporters for museums and heritage. The information you provide enables us to prove it!

AND BAFM MEMBERS ARE WORTH ALMOST £4.3M PER YEAR!
SO, WHAT IS A BAFM CONFERENCE LIKE?

First Impressions: A Personal View of the BAFM AGM and Conference

- Dr William Telford and Dr Andrena Telford, Friends of Laing Art Gallery/BAfM Conference Working Party

In 2018 the BAFM AGM and Conference will be hosted by the Friends of the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne. As Chair and Secretary of the FLAG working party charged with organising next year’s conference, and not having been to a BAFM conference previously, we were keen to see how it was done by another Friends group, and we must pay tribute to the splendid organisation of the Friends of the London Transport Museum, who welcomed us most warmly to the event. The programme was full of interest, the timings were exemplary, the keynote speakers interesting, entertaining and informative, and the catering arrangements excellent.

It was noteworthy that the first session of the conference began with an active presentation, involving us in thinking about the nature of friendship. The complementary talks by the Director of the London Transport Museum, Sam Mullins, and the Chairman of the Friends, Barry Lejeune, gave us useful insights into a productive working relationship between the museum and the Friends.

We were particularly taken by the afternoon case studies, which demonstrated that, however different the Friends groups might be, they shared common concerns. We admired the upbeat attitude displayed by them despite current difficulties or challenges.

During the day and at the subsequent reception in historic St Paul’s Church in Covent Garden (the Actors’ Church), we particularly valued the opportunity to meet up with Friends from all over the UK, to establish contacts and to benefit from conversations with fellow enthusiasts.

Enthusiasm was much in evidence on the Sunday morning when we joined a select group on a visit to the London Transport Depot at Acton, which houses an astonishing collection of 370,000 objects. Our guide was the Depot Manager, Keith Raeburn, whose commentary on representative vehicles from horse-drawn omnibuses up to modern prototypes kept us entranced. And the sight of gleaming old buses, trams, trolley buses and underground carriages brought out nostalgic memories from us all. It was an excellent finale to a splendid weekend, and we picked up quite a few hints and tips, which hopefully will help us make conference 2018 in Newcastle just as useful and enjoyable.

All photos: credit Andy Maher
Eighty-seven delegates from Friends' groups around the UK attended the 44th Annual BAfM Conference with the theme, Museums and their Friends: A harmonious relationship?

Mike Zeidler (Happy City) introduced the concepts of friendships which contribute to individual well-being. He maintained that volunteering increases confidence and boosts mental health and agility in mid-life and beyond.

The second keynote speakers were the double act of Sam Mullins (Director, London Transport Museum) and Barry LeJeune (Chair of the Friends). The evident good relationship between the London Transport Museum and their Friends is a tribute to them. Sam Mullins described the work of the London Transport Museum and its community projects, emphasising the key role played by volunteers in their delivery. Barry LeJeune described the work of the Friends; identified reasons for the positive relationship and also some potential stresses for the future.

Delegates were able to visit the London Transport Museum during the lunch break, and a small group visited the Depot on Sunday.

After lunch and the formal business of the AGM delegates were presented with four case studies. Of particular interest was the talk by the Chair of the Horniman Friends - Susan Wise - who described why and how that Friends group had been integrated into the Museum’s own membership programme. Liz Philipson, Chair of the Friends of the Geffrye Museum, explained the challenges those Friends face as the museum looks to expand its buildings and public offering (and closes whilst that work is carried out). Ray Sacks of the Friends of the Crystal Palace Subway outlined the challenges faced by a small group, focussed on one piece of history, as part of a larger entity: the Crystal Palace Park. Jason Semmens, Director of the Museum of Military Medicine, spoke of the challenges faced in the transition of a relatively small regimental museum on an army site into a major public cultural museum in Cardiff Bay.

Ending the London Conference by looking to the future, the Friends of the Laing Art Gallery made a presentation that whetted appetites for the 2018 Conference in Newcastle.

A RETROSPECTIVE OVERVIEW OF PLANNING THE BAFM CONFERENCE

Barry LeJeune, Chairman of conference organisers, London Transport Museum Friends

At about 7.30 pm on Saturday 30th September, you might have heard a mighty sigh of relief and a modest prayer of thanks rise skywards from St. Pauls’ church in Covent Garden as that day’s BAFM conference seemed to have gone well!

Planning had started some 18 months earlier, in early 2016, when London Transport Museum and its Friends were asked, somewhat unexpectedly, to host the BAFM conference and AGM again, after having previously done so in 2011. An early decision was the conference theme. We determined to focus on Museums - Friends relationships, knowing that those were coming under strain in some places, as Museums developed their own membership programmes. As the months passed, we refined the details: specific speakers; on-site catering and support; post- conference reception; and much, much more.

Did it all work? This brief overview is being penned less than a fortnight after the event and we have yet to analyse the detailed feedback. But from casual comments made during the day and emails received afterwards, it does seem to have delivered in line with our own objectives and delegates’ expectations.

In the keynote address from myself and Sam Mullins, London Transport Museum’s Director, and in the four shorter presentations from the Friends of the Horniman, Geffrye and Army Medical Services Museums, and from the Crystal Palace Subway Friends, we captured some very different
At the 2017 BAfM Conference in September, we were treated to an excellent presentation by Fiona Greer, Curator of Art at The Scottish Maritime Museum Trust in Irvine and winner of the 2017 Robert Logan Award.

There was a very varied and interesting series of Projects submitted this year for the above Award, however Fiona’s submission, Enriching the Imagery of Scotland’s Maritime Heritage, emerged as the overall leading submission. A huge thank you to Judges Liz McKenzie, Gordon Cummings, Jo Rook and Jasmine Farram for both their time and energy in considering the applicants, not an easy task!

Fiona was the guest of BAfM at this year’s Conference, held at The London Transport Museum, where she received her prize from our President Dame Rosemary Butler.

Her presentation to Conference was extremely inspiring and innovative. Over a period of just eighteen months Fiona has acquired over 50 works of Art for The Museum’s permanent collection. Visitor numbers to this exhibition increased by 52 per cent compared to the previous year. Related activities and events culminating in a Paper Boat inspired large scale Festival of Light, featuring interactive floating light installations and aerial performances attracted 15,000 people to the Museum site over a fourday period... an amazing result. The flotilla of paper boats described by Fiona must have done wonders to raise public interest and awareness. Clearly a person of great energy!

BAfM wishes Fiona every success as she builds upon this achievement. At the time of the Presentation of her Award, Fiona was preparing to host another Illumination Festival of Light this winter and was actively engaged in preparation for a new exhibition of art works by Scottish artist Lachlan Goudie. A very busy time ahead!
UPDATE FROM LAING ART GALLERY, HOSTS OF THE 2018 BAFM CONFERENCE

Drs Andrena & William Telford

The Friends of the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, are delighted to announce that they are to be the hosts of next year’s BAFM AGM/Conference, October 13-14, 2018. At the 2017 AGM/Conference, held at the London Transport Museum, FLAG Vice Chairman, Dr Bill Telford, and Treasurer, Dr Andrena Telford presented a glimpse of the treats in store for attendees, with a roster of eminent speakers, a panel of local Friends groups, a splendid reception and dinner in the beautiful Chandelier Suite of Newcastle’s Georgian Assembly Rooms, and an opportunity to sample some of the city’s fine cultural offerings. The theme of the conference will be “The Value of Friends’ Organisations in a Changing Social and Economic Climate”, a topic of great concern to us all.

Our keynote speakers will be Lizzie Glithero-West, Chief Executive of the Heritage Alliance, Richard Evans, Chair of the Association of Independent Museums and Director of Beamish Museum, and Julie Milne, Chief Curator, Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums. The panel speakers represent an interesting mix of heritage sites: the award-winning and hugely popular Beamish Open Air Museum, the stylish French-influenced Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle, and HMS Trincomalee, Britain’s sturdy last surviving wooden warship. On offer on the Sunday morning are visits to the Great North Museum, the Discovery Museum, the 1930s Art Deco style Tyneside Cinema and a tour of Public Art in the city. Full details of the AGM and Conference, along with a booking form is included in this Spring & Summer issue of the BAFM Journal.

Meanwhile, on the home front, the Friends of the Laing have been supporting the gallery’s current prestigious exhibition of paintings by Paul Nash, on loan from Tate Britain. Training has been provided to Friends so that they can act not just as room invigilators of the exhibition (which occupies three galleries) but as knowledgeable guides, able to offer information to the visiting public as required. Pat Devenport, Chairman of the Friends of the Laing reports that this has been highly successful and of use to volunteers and visitors alike. The ‘Picture of the Month’ talks by Friends continue, highlighting specific paintings in the gallery’s collection, and the afternoon and evening lectures on a variety of topics both enlighten and entertain a full house on each occasion. A recent example was the talk by Dr Robert McManners entitled ‘Shafts of Light’, which gave an insight into the famous ‘Pitmen Painters’ of the North East, and we are all looking forward to Sarah Richardson’s forthcoming early evening talk on the Paul Nash landscapes presently on display. For those who like to practice art, rather than simply admire, the FLAG committee plans to hold a second “Paint a Postcard” competition, followed by a display of the entries, bold, beautiful and bizarre alike! Perhaps inspiration will come from the recent exhibition, ‘Echoes of Abstraction II & The Bottomless Pit of Outros’, which introduced us to the experience of virtual reality.

In 1948, while at Oxford University reading Russian, Mercia visited Bulgaria for the first time. After graduating she enrolled in a Bulgarian language course at the University of London’s School of Slavonic and East European Studies. From 1963 to 1989 she was a teacher and lecturer in Sofia, Bulgaria. She was elected a foreign member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in 1987 and was granted an honorary degree by Sofia University in 2007. From 1958 to 1973, Mercia was the Chairwoman of the London based Society for Friendship with Bulgaria. She is an honorary citizen of Karlovo and Blagoevgrad and is the bearer of a number of Bulgarian state decorations in addition. Her latest book is ‘Once upon a time in Bulgaria’, Manifesto Press, 2016.

The Friends of Worthing Museum and Art Gallery

Our President, Dr Mercia Macdermott has been presented with The Order of the Golden Age. The title of the award refers to the 9th and 10th Century flowering of written culture in Bulgaria. It is the highest honour in the realm of Arts & Culture in Bulgaria and is in recognition of her books on Bulgarian national heroes and history. Members of the Friends were delighted to hear her good news and see the chain and medallion which she brought in to show everyone.

The Friends continue to enthusiastically explore the North East, with visits to Ripley Castle in Yorkshire, Bywell Hall and Aydon Castle in Northumberland, and Ormesby Hall and Wynyard Gardens in Teesdale. They also ventured over the Scottish border to visit the historic town of Jedburgh, where Mary Queen of Scots fell seriously ill and later lamented, “Would that I had died at Jedburgh.” With a highly successful tour of East Anglia under their belts this year, the Friends are all set to visit Chester and the Welsh borderlands next year. So it’s all go at the Laing, where we hope to welcome Friends from all over the UK later in 2018!
It was lovely to receive several entries this year from groups who have never previously entered, and to see these new entrants winning prizes in the large and small groups category. Additionally, in the middle category (groups with membership between 250 and 750) we had an enthusiastic entry from a group who were not actually BAFM members and were therefore unfortunately ineligible (more on that later). Had this group been members of BAFM, this category too would probably have had a prize winner from a novice entrant.

A lesson from this year’s competition is that entrants should not underestimate the importance of a covering letter. Several groups sent in outstanding covering letters which really tipped the balance in their favour when deciding between 2 closely matched entries for the allocation of prizes. Another tip is: be enthusiastic, be cheerful, be optimistic in tone!

**WINNER:**
Society of Friends of the National Army Museum Newsletter

**RUNNER UP:**
Friends of Birmingham Museums Magazine “Artefacts”

**JUDGES’ COMMENTS ON THE WINNERS IN THE LARGE GROUPS CATEGORY:**
Society of Friends of the National Army Museum Newsletter (First Prize)

This newsletter has featured among our winners on previous occasions and continues to impress. As always, the content was richly varied and of interest even to readers with no army connection. (Sample of content: Lawrence of Arabia, Thomas Hardy, Roulette, Rudyard Kipling; a WWII spy). The article on Women Soldiers gives overdue attention to women's roles. We loved the photograph of the Queen looking at her own army uniform on display, and the paired photos of Chelsea Pensioners from Waterloo (pictured in 1880) and the similarly posed photograph of Chelsea Pensioners today, who had taken part in D-Day.

**WINNER:**
Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives Newsletter

**RUNNER UP:**
Friends of the Royal Marines Museum Newsletter

**HONOURABLE MENTION:**
Friends of Gressenhall
After 2 years of Museum Closure, this issue trumpets the newly opened Museum with the strap line: “NOW SHOWING! AT YOUR NEW NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM…” and “Now you can tell your friends why they should become Friends”. This is both enthusiastic and inviting. It also matches a key purpose of BAfM, and of this competition – seeking and gaining new Friends.

The new style cover and masthead are more contemporary and eye-catching than the old format. This high quality and infectiously enthusiastic publication is a great promotion for the Museum. One Judge summarised as follows: “For the past two years the National Army Museum has been “moth-balled” whilst their building has had a major refurbishment, which must have severely curtailed SOFNAM’s activities. The Museum re-opened in March 2017 and the Newsletter submitted is the Spring 2017 edition.... In the circumstances this edition has the advantage of something to celebrate, but for the same reason may have omitted more mundane, otherwise regular items. However, it still scores very well... an exciting format and diverse, interesting articles.... No mention of BAfM so no points there. But I gave it full marks for “Wow”. The front cover gets the reader sharing SOFNAM’s excitement over the new museum, which continues inside.”

Extra credit is given for this being a solely volunteer, one-man operation with no funding or sponsorship, and for being compiled during the “adversity” of major changes and a closed Museum.

Friends of Birmingham Museums Magazine
“Artefacts” (Runner Up)

Our second prize winner represents an entirely different type of entrant since “Artefacts” benefits from advertising revenue and sponsorship by professional designers. As a result, it has a highly professional feel and the appearance of a glossy magazine. The cover image is very eye-catching, and again captures that Magazine feel. (Though one Judge said the photo on the back cover was more interesting than the front! - see above) A slight drawback to the magazine style cover is that it is perhaps not immediately obvious that this is a Friends’ newsletter, and one Judge found the amount of advertising intrusive. However, as a promotional tool for a group of city museums this style seems appropriate, it is packed with information not just on Friends’ events but other events throughout the city and local area that might be of interest to readers.

The excellent covering letter set out the aims and objectives of the Friends and their newsletter, and this helped the Judges see that the newsletter appears well designed to deliver those aims. There is a very clear contents page, clear information on how to join the Friends, excellent Friends News and - a novel idea which helped secure the “wow factor” - an events key identifying which type of event each diary item is (eg. talk, guided tour, outing or evening event) the key also identifies whether or not booking is necessary, and whether an event is fully booked or has places available.

While one Judge felt the layout became a bit “samey” with too much text and too small illustrations, another “couldn’t fault it”. This latter Judge summarised this entry as follows: “I loved this newsletter, it is well laid out, interesting and informative and makes it easy to join. I loved the crossword (though I haven’t solved it yet!). This newsletter would have scored still higher had it included BAfM news.”

For more Judge’s feedback on the winners in the small and medium categories, please see P. 18.
The Friends of Chertsey Museum enjoyed a visit to The Friends of Tunbridge Wells Museum, Library and Art Gallery

Chris Dunster, Chair of the Friends of Chertsey Museum

Wednesday 6th September 2017 saw a group of 28 Friends of Chertsey Museum visit Tunbridge Wells Museum, Library and Art Gallery. We received a very warm welcome from the Tunbridge Wells Museum Friends, from Mayor Julia Soyke and from Jane March, Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Leisure and Economic Development.

The trip was arranged following a BAFM Area Day at Brooklands Surrey in 2016 during which Anne Stobo, Chair of Tunbridge Wells Friends, extended an invite to Chertsey to visit Tunbridge Collections.

A great day started with coffee and cake followed by talks on:

• Tunbridge Ware (first made in the late 1600s/early 1700s as a souvenir sideline by woodworkers but quickly developed into distinctive and fashionable household items. Jane Austen was known to have pieces of Tunbridge Ware and refers to it in her 1810 novel ‘Emma’).
• The Camden Loan Portraits (a group of striking 18th century family portraits of a local aristocratic family, painted by the Masters including Gainsborough and Reynolds).
• The Architecture of Tunbridge Wells (a fascinating visit to the Grade II listed Edwardian Baroque Opera House, which although it now operates as a pub still has an annual opera production. When visiting look up!).
• A post lunch tour of The Pantiles (a lovely Georgian colonnade, mostly listed, which today includes specialist shops, art galleries and restaurants).

Chertsey Friends had a delightful day and we are very grateful for all the hard work that had gone into arranging an engaging and informative programme. On a personal note I also enjoyed the use of the Tunbridge Wells research library – very helpful with a genealogy query!

Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria

Women of the Royal Academy Friday 11 May - Saturday 28 July

In 2018 Abbot Hall draws on Lakeland Arts’ collection to showcase two dedicated displays featuring works by Royal Academicians, past and present in celebration of the Royal Academy’s 250th Anniversary.

History of the Royal Academy RA250
Thursday 1 March - Saturday 9 June

The first exhibition traces the history of the Royal Academy through the Abbot Hall Art Gallery collection. Hung chronologically by the date artists were elected to the RA, historic and contemporary works are shown together. This illustrates trends in art over the last 250 years including works by JWM Turner, LS Lowry, John Nash, Victor Passmore and David Hockney.

The second exhibition is dedicated to female Royal Academicians in the Abbot Hall Art Gallery collection, and celebrates a century since the Representation of the People Act 1918, which allowed women to vote for the first time in Britain. Highlighting gender discrimination in the art world, it includes works by Mary Fedden, Angelica Kauffman, Paula Rego, Sheila Fell and Alison Wilding.

Please send all submissions for the next issue of the Journal and all submissions for the newsletter competition to:

Alex Walker
22 carlton Rd,
Bolton BL1 5HU

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home phone - 01204 491360
Mobile – 07507888271
Jane Grant

The Women’s Library (TWL) has a fairly tumultuous past but, mercifully, a more settled present. It traces its origins back to 1926 when the London Society for Women’s Service (LSWS) (formerly the London Society for Women’s Suffrage) acquired its first premises and its first librarian, Vera Douie, and began to collect books and documents. Several more moves followed, some dictated by German bombardment. After the war, LSWS, now re-named the Fawcett Society (after the constitutional suffragist Millicent Fawcett), moved into a new centre in Wilfred Street, Victoria, in London.

By 1976 the Fawcett Society was finding it impossible to manage both the Society and the growing Library (whose archives were being inappropriately held in a shed in the garden with ‘consequent rodent damage’) and extensive efforts were made to find a suitable new home. From the beginning the Library has collected artefacts as well as books – starting with beautiful banners from the suffrage movement and continuing with the extensive ephemera of the 1970s women’s movement. Thus it has effectively been a Museum as well as a Library all its life, which naturally complicated the search for suitable premises.

The London School of Economics (LSE) was one bidder for the Library at this stage, but in the end the City of London Polytechnic was chosen, which promised to house the whole collection together and whose supportive librarian, Rita Pankhurst, was daughter-in-law of the suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst. In 1977 The Fawcett Library, as it was still called, moved intact into its own space in the Polytechnic’s building in Old Castle Street, Aldgate - albeit to a basement prone to flooding.

The organisation that is now called The Friends of The Women’s Library had its origins during the upheavals of World War II, but its continuous history dates from this move to Aldgate in the 1970s. Ever since, the Friends have contributed to fundraising, publicising the Library through lectures and visits to institutions of related interest, and offering general support and advice as appropriate.

The basement did indeed duly flood, most disastrously in 1994. This necessitated an extended closure and allowed time to consider the library’s long-term future. In 1992 the Polytechnic had been re-instituted as London Guildhall University (LGU). In 1998, a grant from the Friends, which attracted matched funding from the Corporation of London, as well as funding from LGU, enabled the employment of Christine Wise as Development Librarian.

Christine was responsible for putting together an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, ‘to create a New National Library of Women based on the internationally renowned collection of the Fawcett Library’, and a major appeal was launched. The successful bid to the Heritage Lottery fund brought in £4.2 million which, together with other bids, allowed the purchase of the Old Wash House (built in 1846 and opened by Prince Albert) nearby in Old Castle Street. Behind the Victorian facade a beautiful purpose-built library was constructed, to the design of the architects Wright and Wright, housing an exhibition hall, seminar room, activities room and Friends’ room on the ground floor, with archive storage, Reading Room and staff offices on the upper floors. Antonia Byatt was appointed Director and The Women’s Library (TWL), as it was now officially called, was formally opened in 2002.

TWL thrived in the new building. In 2008 it was recognised by HEFCE as a National Research Library for the Social Sciences, and in 2011 awarded ‘UNESCO Memory of the World’ status. Its outreach and community work flourished - and so did the exhibitions it mounted. London Guildhall University increased the number of Library staff and obtained additional funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, allowing the Library to be increasingly used by visitors from all over Britain and overseas. However, it was not as secure as it appeared.

London Guildhall morphed into London Metropolitan University, which did not see the relevance of the Library to its own priorities and was suffering a financial crisis of its own. LMU announced that it would cease to fund the Library’s running costs of £500,000 a year, and once more bids were invited to re-house TWL. This time LSE was successful, and in spring 2013 the collections began their move to LSE’s Library in Portugal Street, to be opened to the public in 2014. This was not without controversy and
Certainly sadness. The Library had a passionate following who were angry and upset to see it lose its dedicated building and semi-autonomous status. There were sit-ins and a sleep-in and demonstrations in the street, but to no avail, and the move went ahead.

The entrance to the Women’s Library Reading Room at the London School of Economics, March 2014 (courtesy of The Women’s Library, LSE)

Despite regrets, the move to LSE has worked out extremely well. A large dedicated reading room was created on the fourth floor, with accommodation for TWL’s open-shelf access collections on the third floor. LSE converted an area by the entrance to its main Library into a dedicated exhibition space, and has mounted relevant exhibitions, such as one in 2016 on the 1866 petition to the House of Commons for women’s enfranchisement, together with the history of the Fawcett Society. LSE Library also took on the three members of staff who wanted to move along with TWL and created new curatorial posts for them.

The Friends were consulted over the process of the bidding and the ultimate move. They managed to ensure that certain requirements were fulfilled: general public access to the Library; its maintenance as a distinct collection; and a continuing policy of acquisitions of all categories of material. Relations between the Friends and LSE Library staff are excellent, with the Director and Curators, the Head of Academic Services and the Education Officer attending the Friends’ AGM and many Executive Committee meetings and supporting and enjoying the programme of afternoon talks through which the Friends illustrate different aspects of TWL’s holdings. The Friends are able to financially support many of LSE Library’s defined needs, such as for digitisation of print material, and for events and student activities celebrating and exploring women’s history. They are also conscious that they should not take this relationship for granted but need to follow Dr Johnson’s dictum to ‘keep it in good repair.’

CENTENARY OF WOMEN’S RIGHT TO VOTE CELEBRATED IN THE IRONBRIDGE GORGE

37 life-sized silhouettes of women have been installed on The Green at Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, one of the 10 Ironbridge Gorge Museums, marking the centenary of women’s right to vote and the continued inequality that existed for a further 10 years. Whilst there has been much talk about women being given the right to vote 100 years ago, less attention has been given to the fact that the vote was not given to all women.

February 6th 2018 marked 100 years since the passing of the Representation of the People Act 1918, which allowed women to vote in parliamentary elections. The Act was passed after hundreds of thousands of women joined the workforce to support the war effort during the WW1, and followed more than 50 years of campaigning by suffragists and suffragettes.

37 life-sized silhouettes of women have been installed on The Green at Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, one of the 10 Ironbridge Gorge Museums, marking the centenary of women’s right to vote and the continued inequality that existed for a further 10 years. Whilst there has been much talk about women being given the right to vote 100 years ago, less attention has been given to the fact that the vote was not given to all women.

Also excluded were the majority of the women who had worked throughout the war, who had taken on men’s roles, who had worked in dangerous munitions factories, and had kept the country running. The silhouettes represent the 37 women who gained the right to vote in 1918, out of approximately 160 who were working in the ceramic and iron industries across The Gorge. The name and profession of each woman is written on the back of the silhouettes. These include Ada Burns, Tile Polisher; Martha Bryan, China Painter; May Taylor, Gold Burnisher; Harriet Jones, Tobacco Pipe Packer and Mary Thompson, Pipe Maker.

The exhibition is housed outdoors on The Green at Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron. It is free to view and will close at the end of the summer. An online exhibition accompanies the installation and is available on www.ironbridge.org.uk
YOUNG PEOPLE AS FRIENDS—INSPIRING A LIFELONG LOVE OF MUSEUMS

BAfM South East (Southern Counties) Regional Conference – September 12th 2017

The BAFM South East regional conference held in Maidstone Museum focused on the young. Trevor Sturgess, a trustee of Maidstone Museums’ Foundation, led the debate and reports on a successful event with powerful messages for Museums and their Friends.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a Museum in want of young people faces an uncertain future. In these times of financial vulnerability, museums – and Friends need to demonstrate they are doing all they can to engage the young and inspire them a lifelong love of treasures that one day may need their advocacy and protection.

We need them to return time and time again, and nurture a similar love in their own children and grandchildren. Maidstone Museum and Maidstone Museums’ Foundation (MMF), which manages the Friends scheme, are working hard to address that challenge. With BAFM regional co-ordinator Mike Evans an MMF trustee, it was timely to focus on youth engagement at this year’s South East (Southern Counties) regional conference. Mike gathered a stellar line-up of speakers, including Jasmine Farram, BAFM Youth Ambassador, Janette Lloyd, assistant head of Invicta Grammar School, three student ambassadors, and Roz Meredith, the Museum’s learning and events officer.

To many young people, museums appear remote and dusty places, far from the cool image they crave in today’s image-conscious world. Yet find the right things to engage them and they will come. For example, thousands of children and family members turned up at Maidstone Museum’s Dino Day. For many grown-ups, it was either their first visit or the first time they had been since childhood. So how do we do it consistently, attracting young people of all ages?

“Make young people proud to be a Friend”

Jasmine Farram, 25, is a Museum enthusiast – and any young person hearing her cannot fail to be inspired. She advocated social media apps and mentoring by older people. “Pass on your knowledge,” she urged delegates. Reporting the results of a BAFM survey, she urged museums and Friends’ organisations to host exciting and unusual activities. “Make it easy to join,” she said, adding that marketing should be designed with a young audience in mind. Membership should offer “something they can control and be proud of, to encourage them to shout about it.”

Jasmine reflected on the Young Friends Congress of the World Federation of Friends of Museums in Italy she attended in May. She observed an apparent contrast between the attitude of young overseas Friends and a typical British youngster. “Particularly in Italy, they are so passionate about their cultural heritage and want to look after that heritage and share it, whereas perhaps here, a lot of people don’t regard it as their museum and don’t think it’s for them. They think they would never walk in because they were not academic at school. We all know that’s not the case and museums are for all. But as a nation, we’re not very good at saying that.”

Ways in which Maidstone Museum and MMF work with Schools

Delegates were told about the various strands to Maidstone’s engagement with schools such as the Arts Council England Museums and Schools Project; learning and event strategy; the Cur8 scheme involving young people in practical work and listening to their ideas; MMF engagement with one school as a potential role model for others; and the appointment of three volunteer student museum ambassadors.

The Museum’s small Learning and Events team, led by Roz Meredith, does excellent work with mainly primary schools. Thousands of pupils from across Kent and beyond have visited the museum, and staff have given talks, illustrated by exhibits, in school.

MMF looked at how it might engage with more secondary schools. We began with Invicta, a high-achieving grammar in Maidstone. We received a positive response from head teacher Julie Derrick and assistant head Janette Lloyd. As a design teacher, Mrs Lloyd values Maidstone Museum’s fine collections of fashions and artefacts associated with classical civilisations, including the remarkable Egyptian mummy Ta-Kush, centrepiece of the new Ancient Lives Gallery. Cur8 members contributed to the design and interactive video presentation.

Invicta teacher Moira Bennett has become an MMF trustee with special responsibility for education links. The school choir and orchestra perform at an annual Christmas Music@theMuseum concert that MMF hosts.

The school distributes an MMF membership pack with literature to parents of prospective Year 7 pupils, resulting in many new Family Friends.

Museum designs inspire unique scarves for sale

Mrs Lloyd spoke of the value of our relationship, saying students “use the Museum for inspiration. As a design teacher I have purposely built the Museum into my curriculum. My students come to the Museum to research.” This has led to the creation of scarves based on designs inspired by items in the Museum collection. They are going on sale at a Museum pop-up shop.

On Wednesday afternoons, students are freed from timetable constraints to select a topic. “Many choose the Museum where they can handle objects, inspired by interacting with these artefacts and understanding so much more about our own history.”

Museum Student Ambassadors

MFF’s promoted the recruitment of three Museum Student Ambassadors. Candidates had to explain why they wanted the role. The job description included promoting the museum in school and partner schools and on social media, helping on the MMF stand at summer fetes, attending occasional board meetings and writing about their experiences. The successful applicants gain valuable skills in public speaking and creative writing, demonstrating wider commitment, interest in history and place, promotion of museums – all useful additions to a CV.
MMF sees the Invicta relationship as a pilot that could be followed at other schools, with our ambassadors – Beth, Charlotte and Kiu Yan – playing a crucial role in spreading the message.

**Love of museums began with a Teddy Bears Picnic**

Our three ambassadors confidently spoke to delegates about their Museum journey.

Charlotte said: “I began with my experiences as a child, when I attended the Teddy Bears’ Picnic at five and went on a school trip to the museum as a primary school student. I followed this with my experiences of Cur8 from year 7, in which Kiu Yan and I have helped with the process of creating a new Ancient Lives gallery and have recently begun brainstorming for a Young Roots project.”

**“It’s not something they see as boring”**

A question and answer session rounded up a stimulating conference.

There is no doubt that Maidstone Museum and MMF benefit from the fresh perspectives of talented young people. Of course, there is more to do, and resources are limited. But in competition with video games, smartphones, the internet and a host of other activities, we must do all we can to spread the word that the museum experience should be valued, offering a rare combination of fun, information, education and enrichment.

Mrs Lloyd summed up the crucial conference message: “It’s a case of ensuring the young people understand how useful the museum can be to them, and not just something they see as boring.”

Other conference speakers included Lyn Palmer, public programming manager, who welcomed delegates to Maidstone Museum, and explained the background to the new Ancient Lives Gallery. Jo Low, museum development officer with South East Museums Development Programme (SEMDP), spoke about the programme and the ways in which it can help and progress the work of local friends’ groups.

**YOUNG DELEGATES TO BAFM REGIONAL CONFERENCE AT MAIDSTONE MUSEUM**

Charlotte Pettett and Kiu Yan Class 9A and Members of Cur8

It was a crisp morning on Tuesday 12th September as Kiu Yan, Beth and I entered Maidstone Museum in preparation for our presentation at the BAFM regional conference being held there. We greeted some familiar faces – Mark Baker of the Maidstone Museum Friends (MMF); Roz Meredith of Cur8, the Museum’s youth group; and others from the Museum – and had a cup of tea, before settling in to send over our presentation and then listen to Lyn’s welcome to the Museum. The audience listened attentively to the next speaker, Trevor Sturgess from the MMF, who gave an interesting presentation. He discussed working with schools and young people to generate interest in museums and how MMF could help them to engage in subjects like Classical Civilisations and History. The new Ancient Civilisations Gallery was also discussed: it was currently under construction and a digital version of the gallery was shown, much to the intrigue of the gathered audience. The volumes of careful planning that had gone into it was clear: from the colour-coded sections (orange for Ancient Egyptian, blue for Ancient Greek; yellow for the interactive stories) to the timeline at the entrance which compared the stages of different civilisations.

Kiu Yan, Beth and I were then introduced to Museum and department representatives from around the South East and began the presentation that we had prepared. Our talk was centered around how young people such as ourselves can work with the Museum (the Museum already has a youth group called Cur8 which Kiu Yan and I belong to), what we get out of being ambassadors and our previous experiences with the Museum – recent and not so recent. The presentation was delivered with the aim of informing the representatives what we as ambassadors have done so far, would like to achieve, and how we are planning to carry these things out. This spanned topics from going into assemblies and carrying out surveys to participating in events such as the Bearsted and Boughton Monchelsea Fairs. During these events we raised awareness about the Maidstone Museum Foundation and sold artwork by Geoff Hall to raise money; at the Bearsted Fair there was a even a platypus exhibit! At Boughton Monchelsea fair there was similar set up but this time there was brass rubbing available which went down well with children (sadly the platypus exhibit was absent!)

I described my first experiences of the Museum as a small child and my experiences as part of Cur8 from year 7. Kiu Yan and Beth continued by talking about why they too became ambassadors; the experiences we have gained from it and Invicta’s partnership with the Museum through the Carol Concert (which has been an annual fixture for three years running).

Once we had finished, we sat back down to watch a senior teacher Mrs. Lloyd make her presentation on how Invicta is working and planning to work with Maidstone Museum through enterprising and creative endeavours, such as selling scarves made by textile students. The Museum provided students with valuable opportunities to get inspiration from the galleries and to have a place to hold photo shoots for their products, as well as a pop-up shop. This was followed up by some questions and conversations from the representatives.

After that, we watched Roz’s presentation on school engagement with the Museum from a younger age and the initiatives her team have coined, such as loan boxes full of artefacts to help teachers in lessons. She also explained the ‘Wheels of Time’ initiative — in which an impressive 25 museums took part — that encouraged children and their families to visit various museums to collect different badges. During the conference it was commented on that a child with early experiences of the museum would be more likely to be engaged with it in later stages of their lives. Throughout the meeting there was a clear emphasis on getting younger people involved with the museum. Another part of Roz’s presentation was elaborating on Cur8’s upcoming Young Roots project. As delegates heeded to the Café for lunch, Kiu Yan, Beth, and I walked back to school with Mrs. Lloyd, discussing all the interesting things we had heard during the course of the morning. We would like to thank Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. Lloyd for taking us to the conference, which was very interesting and a great experience.
FRIENDS OF ROMAN ALDBOROUGH: LEARNING TOGETHER

David Roberts

Strolling through Aldborough, a picturesque village between Harrogate and York, you will see little evidence of its hidden past. However, if you walk up the hill past the village green, you will arrive at the small Museum, almost hidden from view. Inside you will discover that the current village stands on the site of Isurium Brigantum, one of the most important towns in Roman Britain and see some of the remains and fascinating artefacts that have been discovered there.

Andrew Lawson, who owned Aldborough Manor during the 19th century, encouraged antiquarian excavations in his grounds leading to a considerable collection of Roman artefacts, and in 1863, his son Andrew Sherlock Lawson opened what is thought to be one of the earliest museums started by a private collector in the grounds of the manor. In 1948 Lady Lawson-Tancred transferred the museum and its contents together with part of the manor grounds to the guardianship of the nation with the result that the current museum building, erected in 1964, is now administered by English Heritage.

You will find it open at weekends from Easter until the end of October.

One local who was determined to find out more about Aldborough’s hidden past was Rose Ferraby: “My granddad told me the story of the lost amphitheatre and I got more and more interested.” The spell cast over her by the village, where no deep digging is allowed without planning permission and all building projects, down to conservatories, have to have an archaeologist on watch, took her from a Harrogate comprehensive to Cambridge and then the British School of Archaeology in Rome. “The whole of Aldborough – and as much land again around it – is a scheduled monument,” she said. “Work over the years has pointed more and more towards the conclusion that it was somewhere very important in this part of the Roman Empire. Mosaics have been discovered with inscriptions in Greek, a sure sign of cultured inhabitants.”

In 2009 Rose began The Aldborough Roman Town Project and together with Martin Millett, Laurence Professor of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge University, she was determined to learn more about the remains of Isurium Brigantum and what it could reveal about Roman Britain. Over the past eight years they have explored the history of archaeology on the site, pulling together records of discoveries and excavations from the antiquarians right through to the last decade. They have used a wide range of survey techniques to map the buildings, roads and ditches as well as pulling together previous work in the area. A pattern of planning has been uncovered with major hillside terracing and grand houses with sophisticated design and decoration. The site of the missing amphitheatre has also been uncovered.

“Its discovery leaves little doubt that Isurium Brigantum was the civil capital of the Britons known as Brigantes, effectively the population between Derbyshire and Hadrian’s Wall,” says Martin Millett.

Rose, who is currently working on the monograph, believes, “York is much better-known for Roman remains, in part because it has remained a great city, but the evidence suggests that it was the military base. Civil power and society, and the most important place for Roman Britons in the northern province, was likely to have been here.”

Despite there having been a museum on the site for over 150 years, many locals and visitors to the area remain unaware of its importance. With this in mind, the Friends of Roman Aldborough was formed in 2012, with Sir Andrew Lawson-Tancred as its Chairman, to support the Museum and the Aldborough Roman Town Project and to increase knowledge and understanding of this site of national importance.
Currently with 100 members and having just become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, the group is aiming to raise sufficient funds to purchase and install twelve Interpretation Panels on the site over the course of this year. Rose and Martin are supplying both text and images and FORA is seeking funding from grants, businesses and individuals as well as using money raised through their programme of talks and visits for members. Proceeds from raffles and refreshments at talks are included and last year helped pay for the installation of handrails throughout the site. Speakers in the past have included Andrew Wallace-Hadrill from the Herculaneum Conservation Project and Andrew Birley, Director of Excavations at the Vindolanda Trust. The 2018 Programme includes ten talks, four visits and an Open Day. Further details are available at www.romanaldborough.co.uk

FORA members share their increased knowledge from these talks and visits by leading tours around the site on the first Sunday of each month, at Open Days and for local visiting groups. In August, Rose organised a Celebration of Stone at the museum site. Together with stone sculptor Dr David Paton, she gave demonstrations in stone masonry and showed how stone might have been quarried and worked on site to create the walls, buildings and defences of the site but also updated the tour guide notes with this information.

In the same way, FORA volunteers have just updated the notes to accompany the English Heritage Handling Collection. Being able to hold an original chunk of mosaic or roofing tile complete with dog’s footprint is one of the high points for visitors and especially for children who come on a school visit. FORA is now working closely with English Heritage to encourage teachers to bring pupils to the site where they can have a child friendly tour of the site or get involved in mosaic making or in activities involving the museum artefacts.

Martin and Rose are currently planning further work to be done in Aldborough over the next few years and the members of Friends of Roman Aldborough are very much looking forward to working alongside both them and English Heritage as they discover more about its hidden past. Further details about Aldborough Roman Site are available at: www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/aldborough-roman-site

‘MINECRAFT’ EVENT TO RECONSTRUCT THE ROMAN FORT IN ‘VIRTUAL’ FORM AT SEGEDUNUM MUSEUM, TYNE AND WEAR

Ken Hutchinson, Chairman of Friends of Segedunum

As Chairman of Friends of Segedunum Roman Fort, Bathhouse and Museum I am always looking out for original ideas to attract new and regular visits to our outstanding Museum (I am obviously a little biased). During the spring half term this year I called in to the Museum to get my lunch in our excellent café (more bias) to be surprised to see our generous car park almost full and was further taken aback at the number of people who were milling about in our incredible shop (even more bias). I asked our very friendly and knowledgeable reception staff (biased but true) if we were having a visit from royalty or a reality show star. They advised me that it was all down to the ‘Minecraft’ event that was taking place and had been completely sold out soon after going on sale. I watched amazed as a crocodile of young children led by their parents and grandparents marched past us from one part of the museum to another to continue their participation in this new phenomenon. I was amazed by the number of teenagers present, and not only present, but enthusiastically dragging their relations to the next session.

I had to find out more about Minecraft and consulted my sons, both now in their 30s but experts in technology. They advised me that it was ‘a computer game of Lego for kids where they can build virtual buildings and settlements.’ The feedback to staff was very positive and the children of all ages seemed to enjoy the experience and asked when they could come back for more. Parents and guardians were equally enthusiastic, and many were seen looking around the museum and using the café.

As Chair of Friends of Alnwick Castle and Castle Museum, I am always being amazed by how popular this event is with all ages. We have two schools that always seem to be at the top of the list for the Minecraft events, and for 2018 we are planning a weekend of activities at the museum which will culminate in a Minecraft ‘Building Challenge’ event. The entry fee for the ‘Challenge’ will be £2.50 per child and there will be prizes for the best creations. For further details please contact the museum on 01665 725484.

I asked the museum service how the sessions were developed and how successful they had been. They had started work in 2016 with a digital innovation lab based in Manchester to provide a series of creative technology workshops for children and adults at five venues: The Great North Museum: Hancock, The Shipley Art Gallery, Stephenson Railway Museum, Discovery Museum and Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum. At Arbeia they developed a programme called ‘Timecraft’. This gave children aged 7–14 the opportunity to become digital archaeologists and architects and reconstruct their own versions of the Roman fort in the popular block building game Minecraft. There then followed a 30 minute tour led by experts from the Tyne & Wear Archives & Museum (TWAM) learning team which provided an in depth look at the famous full sized reconstructions on site of the West Gate, Barracks and Commanding Officers House. Participants then went back into the museum buildings and were asked to imagine what life was like in Roman times. These then worked in pairs to design their own version of the fort on paper. The group next explored a partially pre-built reconstruction of the site in Minecraft and work together to bring their paper designs to life in the game.

Timecraft at Arbeia had been incredibly successful; all 60 places were sold out within a few days. It was decided to programme different versions - Timecraft: A Greek in Egypt and Timecraft: Reconstructing the Roman Fort. Aimed at Key Stage 2 children, these programmes were presented at South Shields Art Gallery and Museum and public workshops at Segedunum Roman Fort. All were a great success and in particular at Segedunum where at two public workshops held on separate days over half term, all 256 spaces were sold out. At Segedunum participants were given a tour of the Museum and worked collaboratively in pairs to reconstruct the fort in Minecraft.

I would congratulate all the staff involved in arranging this type of event that is targeted at an age group not often seen actively wanting to come to museums. The good news is that plans are afoot for more Timecraft at Segedunum next year.
A medical doctor, now retired, is quietly absorbed in his study at ‘Hurstbourne’, Alexander Road, Reading, revising a socio-historical memoir of St Mary Bourne in Hampshire, the country district where for 35 years he spent his professional life. Although only a recent resident, his reputation in the town is such that clanging bells are silenced when the local trams pass nearby; this, in response to the writer’s request that he might work on undisturbed. The year is 1879, and our author, Dr. Joseph Stevens, has just recently begun a second career as antiquarian that will lead to his appointment as Honorary Curator of Reading Museum in 1884, a year from the Museum’s first opening.

Dr. Stevens moved to Reading after committed practice as apothecary, surgeon, and Area Medical Officer, for St Mary Bourne, a parish in Hampshire that included the Earl of Portsmouth’s Estate with its many domestic and agricultural workers. His medical practice was grounded in practical pharmacology and emerging public health and welfare improvements; and his training and qualifications gained by hard graft and some good fortune, a bequest from an uncle having part-funded his medical studies.

During his time at St Mary Bourne, Dr. Stevens frequently lectured on health topics of public interest; linking these talks to newly emerging legislation; in his way, he was a forerunner of contemporary life-long learning. A practical and persuasive bent was also evidenced in his successfully persuading Lord Portsmouth to give over a substantial acreage of land for use as allotments. With an emphasis on home-grown food, he was as much concerned with prevention as with cure. Dr. Stevens remained, throughout his lifetime, a man of pragmatic action and philanthropy, a person of some considerable influence, who made a difference to the lives of those amongst whom he lived and worked. His reporting, as Medical Officer, of the spread of disease by polluted water and poor hygiene, informed support for key public health legislation, such as the 1866 Sanitary Act, hastened by the last national cholera epidemic. And reflecting these commitments, a year after taking up residency in Reading, he returned to St. Mary Bourne to be presented with a silver casket ‘in recognition of the lengthened and kindly manner in which he had worked among the poor of the parish’.

Outside his medical practice, Dr Stevens epitomised the most earnest of Victorian scientific enquirers in his fascination with local history, geology, botany, and archaeology; and in the careful detailing of finds and collections. Whilst enjoying these pursuits as an amateur, his commitment was always that of a professional, as demonstrated by his local council membership of the British Archaeological Association. When the London and South Western Railway line was cut between St Mary Bourne village and the Hurstbourne Estate, he was appointed surgeon over part of the line, which afforded opportunities for archaeological research leading to valuable chalk fossil finds. While he was living in Hampshire many distinctive archaeological finds were recorded, in particular Neolithic implements, later donated to Reading Museum. On arrival in Reading, Dr Joseph Stevens built on and extended his practical and scholarly interests, thus bringing to the town and his new task, a long-standing commitment to social history and the value of archaeological and geological research and collections. He later discovered Palaeolithic implements in the Reading drift gravels; and excavated sites at Gas Works Lane and Cemetery Junction in Reading. All the finds, including medieval pottery, were again gifted to Reading Museum; and throughout these researches he was a prolific author of related publications.

In approach to curation, our first honorary curator again proved to have great foresight, “anticipating many aspects of modern museum practice”. In particular, he is remembered as having taken a lead in the repatriation of objects and in archaeological conservation. A past curator of natural history at Reading museum, Dr. David Norton, cites, by way of illustration, two characteristic examples of practice, noting that: “at the sale at auction by the vicar of St. Mary Bourne of its church’s 17th century chained bible stand, Stevens bought it for Reading museum, but later, when its significance was appreciated, presented it back again to the same church”; and, “Stevens’s refusal of a chipped off stone fragment from Stonehenge and argument that acceptance would encourage further destruction”, urging “that a committee be formed to protect the monument.” Likewise, Dr. Stevens can be viewed
as “a pioneer in seeing museums not as cabinets of curiosities but as places of education and particularly of their localities”, this being well-illustrated in a letter written to a Dr. Hurry, keen to expand involvement in the developing civic collection:

“I am glad to read your letter and thank you for it. I have heard from a friend in London that too frequent demonstrations do not benefit museums in the long run. We might say what matter if they benefit the people. But it may be replied that a demonstration at a case might lead superficial people to believe that all has been said that can be said, and thus make them careless in looking for themselves... I have sent a list of some objects, which will form subjects for half an hour, say not oftener than once a month. If you thought proper to read the list at one of your meetings someone present might wish to demonstrate. But, as you now know well, do let me ask you to have none but such as have a practical knowledge of the subject, otherwise the collection, which is now fairly immured, is made to appear more so than it really is, which of course would not tend to strengthen the character of the museum in the estimation of visitors.”

Here, in a singular and wise voice, Dr. Stevens expresses due regard for the developing museum collection and its reputation, whilst also emphasising the quality of learning experience that might best be promoted and encouraged. By 1891 Dr Stevens had spent twelve good years actively promoting Reading Museum; and we now find him, mid-day on 20th August, seated on a stage in the Small Town Hall, about to be formally presented with his own marble bust, the sculptor, Mr. William Charles May, also present on the platform. Made of the ‘finest Carrara marble’, the bust had been commissioned in his honour, paid for by public subscription, and was intended to be placed in the entrance to the museum. Tributes paid on this occasion include acknowledgement of important negotiations with the 3rd Duke of Wellington, of Stratfield Saye, over the loan of the Duke of Wellington’s bust; and on the cultural benefit brought to our lives by the figure dignified in this sculpted memorial.

**OF FURTHER INTEREST:**

- Isherwood, John (2015) Hampshire Papers (Series 2), Dr. Joseph Stevens of St. Mary Bourne: Public and private health in north-west Hampshire c. 1835 - 1900: Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society. This fascinating publication, charting Dr Steven’s medical career and contribution to public health awareness and protection, is usually available for purchase from the museum shop.

- Stevens, Joseph,(1888) A Parochial History of St. Mary Bourne, with an account of Hurstbourne Priors, Hants: copy lodged in Reading Central Library Local Studies Collection

- http://www.stmarybournerevisited.co.uk/p. 4 for a short article on Dr. Stevens at St. Mary Bourne

- Reading Museum objects online, linked to Dr. Joseph Stevens:- REDMG: 1974.288.1 black & white photo of the doctor; REDMG: 1948.141.1 illustration & text from ‘Municipal Punishments in the Middle Ages (1882), written by Dr. Stevens; REDMG: 1978.31.1 illustration from 1882 pub., above; REDMG: 1978.8.1 Illustration , with notes, of a Gypsy encampment, taken from Dr. Joseph Steven’s Diary Book, 1883 to 1898

- The Times Obituary for Mr. (Dr.) Joseph Stevens: “Obituary.” Times (London, England) 8 April 1899:13 The Times Digital Archive

Thanks are due to Stuart Kennedy, previously Assistant Curator, Collections and Learning, Reading Museum, for background information; and The Berkshire Record Office, for granting permission to reproduce images.
JUDGES’ COMMENTS: MIDDLE SIZED GROUPS:

Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives Newsletter (First Prize)

The cover of Bristol’s entry was a real “wow factor” - a high impact image accompanied with the great line, “This edition packed with...”. which, just like the National Army Museum’s cover and strap line, invites the reader in. This cover design is a departure from the previous style, and in the Judges’ view is a bold and exciting improvement. Inside we are not disappointed – lovely clear design, clear font, crisp, colourful images. This entry also included outstanding mention of BAfM. One Judge felt there were too many loose page inserts for events, others liked this feature since it reduces costs of including the events information in the magazine itself and also makes it easy to have tear-off booking slips. (It must be labour intensive for the packers/distributors though!) This newsletter is always heavy on reports of Friends’ trips, but for the audience of Friends who go on these trips, and as a promotional tool to encourage more Friends to join, or book on future trips it is well suited. It also ensures there are plenty of contributors as a different Friend reports on each trip. As one Judge summarised: “I try not to give anyone full marks, but I couldn’t do otherwise on this one. Sixteen A4 pages with 11 of them reports of Friends activities, good use of interesting illustrations, including a dramatic front cover. The Committee organises four or five trips per month... Wow, what an exciting group to belong to! No wonder they gained 24 new members this year.”

Friends of the Royal Marines Museum Newsletter (Honourable Mention)

All Judges enjoyed this newsletter and said they would have rated it much higher had it been longer. Compared with the winning entry by Bristol it did not seem sufficiently rich in content to warrant a prize, but this is a very promising entry, and looks professional - with more “meat on the bones” this could become a future winner. One Judge also reacted positively to the unusual trifold style (rather than being “book form”).

JUDGES’ COMMENTS: SMALL GROUPS:

Friends of St Cecilia’s Hall and Museum, “Soundboard” (First Prize)

This is quite the most enthusiastic, optimistic entry we have ever received, and a refreshing one as a result. For example, take these words and phrases taken just from the opening 2 sentences of the newsletter: “upbeat... optimism... good humour... relief and delight”. And that set the tone for the enthusiastic content to come! A very nice accompanying letter, beautiful cover image and crisp internal design all added to this very positive impression.

The design is perhaps a little conservative and scholarly, but for its audience and content, this seems appropriate. It is also exceptionally well-written, and although the articles are quite lengthy, they largely avoid being ‘impenetrable’ or excessively academic. Judges commented that although this...
is quite a “niche” interest, the articles were interesting for the non-musical too. And content was brought up to date by an article on streaming.

It was also lovely to see articles by a range of people explaining how bursaries they had received from the Friends had enabled their research or career to advance. This approach had multiple benefits: it ensured variety of content and authorship, ensured quite a young authorship, and added to the outstandingly optimistic and enthusiastic tone. This newsletter reads as if this group is going from strength to strength and filling a role that is beneficial to many. The positive outlook must also go a long way to attracting new members – which is one criterion for our competition.

Friends of the Intelligence Corps Museum, “Sub Rosa” (Runner Up)

A past winner, some Judges felt this year’s entry from Gressenhall Friends was not quite up to this group’s previous gold star standards though still a very attractive document with beautiful, eye catching covers. In fact, its appearance was described as “brilliant - very professional, consistently well laid out”. It was also judged to be very informative and easy to see how to join, with an excellent colour-coded front cover and dates and events.

Friends of Gressenhall (Honorable Mention)

A past winner, some Judges felt this year’s entry from Gressenhall Friends was not quite up to this group’s previous gold star standards though still a very attractive document with beautiful, eye catching covers. In fact, its appearance was described as “brilliant - very professional, consistently well laid out”. It was also judged to be very informative and easy to see how to join, with an excellent colour-coded front cover and dates and events. However, though, this was one Judge’s summary: “This is a very fine production which has probably resulted in it reading more like a “year book” than a newsletter…. although there is information on how to join, this seemed low key. Emphasis is given to requesting renewals from existing members. The overall impression is of an organisation which is “comfortable” with where it is, and deservedly so – it is in a good place, but for me, this edition seems to have lost some of its past vigour and excitement.”

And finally… The One that got away!

This year we had an entry from the 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association. Unfortunately, they had to be excluded from the prizes because they were not BAfM Members – and this is a Members’ competition. However, just look at what the Judges had to say: “Brilliantly done!” “Loved having so many personal stories make up such a big part of the newsletter”. “Very interesting and extremely lively”: “This is definitely an extra-ordinary document… 36 pages celebrating a recent reunion, with detailed reports, personal war time experiences and memories, all in full colour and great presentational style, a very exciting and emotional read.” The yellow blocks containing “What they said” comments by veterans and visitors were very effective and a strong design point; they make this newsletter extremely inclusive and friendly. The use of illustrations was exemplary and imaginative. Not only were illustrations plentiful, varied and well laid out, the content of the photos was full of warmth, friendliness and added to the enthusiasm and emotion of this issue. There was also extremely clear information on how to join, including how US Friends can join. The visiting US Servicemen and their families, must have not just enjoyed the reunion, but really appreciated this warm and enthusiastic newsletter. The 95th Bomb Group are strongly urged to enter again – should they choose to become Members! They would be a great and valued addition to this competition and all the Judges were disappointed not to be able to award them a prize. Thirty-six pages is no mean feat – and this was thirty six pages of celebration, memorialising, and delight.
REOPENING OF THE SOMERSET RURAL LIFE MUSEUM

The Somerset Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury, run by the South West Heritage Trust, has reopened following a £2.4 million redevelopment project lasting three years. Somerset’s rich rural and social history continues to be the central theme of the updated and refurbished galleries situated in the restored and remodelled Victorian farm buildings. Across the farmyard, enormous timber doors give access to the beautiful 16th-century Abbey barn used by the monks of Glastonbury Abbey until the Reformation and thereafter used as a farm building until 1972.

Visitors who remember S.R.L.M. as it was before 1977 and its temporary closure in 2014 will find much that is familiar in the farm buildings as all changes have been planned to retain and enhance their essential character. For example, we now enter by the sturdy Victorian front door, a significant change suggested by our architect Robert Battersby of Architecton in Bristol, instead of via a functional extension created as a reception area in the 1970s. A large and diverse collection of artefacts, many of which have not been displayed before, are to be found in the cowsheds which were converted when the Museum first opened. Contemporary lighting, flooring and environmental controls update our experience but the restored stone walls act as a fitting, contextual backdrop to the exhibits. A most popular space has always been the Victorian farmhouse kitchen. It retains its cooking range, dressers, settle, farmhouse table and larder but its exterior authenticity has been improved by the restoration of a stone wall and the addition of an outdoor privy, pump and laundry artefacts.

Throughout the galleries, audio visual media complement the displays, some making use of interesting methods of projection onto walls, doors, floors and objects. Photographs and archive film extracts bring us face to face with Somerset people and their activities over the last century and extracts from recordings in the nationally renowned collection created by Ann Heeley, (a former regional and national secretary of BAFM), connect us with many men and women whose memories would otherwise have been lost. Life in Somerset communities in the 21st century is illustrated in the photographs of Pauline Rook who has documented both change and continuity in our rural environments.

The Glastonbury Abbey Barn is a Grade 1 listed building given to the people of Somerset by Mrs Frances Mapstone, widow of Abbey Farm’s last farmer, Harold Robert, (Bob), Mapstone. Changes to this building were designed to remove any unnecessary fittings which interfered with the splendid medieval architecture. Artefacts within the barn have been reduced to one restored farm wagon. The barn is lit primarily by natural light and the threshing floor has been reinstated. Visitors’ eyes are drawn upwards to the magnificent timber cruck roof which was completely restored and tiled with stone in 1977. This building forms a stunning centrepiece to the Museum courtyard which has been invigorated by the new location of the café with outdoor seating and views towards Glastonbury Tor.

The entire development was funded primarily by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Viridor Credits Environmental Company, Somerset County Council and the Garfield Weston Foundation. Somerset Building Preservation Trust and Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society provided expert advice and support throughout the project.

Regeneration has also included the conversion of a wagon shed into a glass fronted Community Learning Space, the creation of the light and spacious temporary exhibition Mapstone Gallery and of course, the provision of shop, café and loo. Events, demonstrations and educational activities will ensure that our local Museum is a lively and inspirational destination for both locals and tourists to Glastonbury. The Friends of S.R.L.M look forward to playing our part in the future success of this very special community resource and visitor centre.

As Friends of S.R.L.M. we have supported the redevelopment project with practical help, ideas and funds. It was felt that we must continue with core activities during the closure period and to this end we have produced newsletters thrice yearly, have attended Heritage Open Days and country shows, have provided a team to undertake the ambitious project of digitising and cataloguing the South West HeritageTrust’s Rural Life Photographic Collection and have held book sales and teas in member’s homes. In years gone by we ran both shop and tearoom and accumulated significant funds which allowed us to make important donations towards specific projects. In total, grants awarded by the Friends, amounted to £42,000. Our final gift was to contrbute towards the commissioning of a 10ft. panoramic view of the Somerset landscape created by artist James Lynch who uses the traditional egg tempura method. As we begin our museum tour, the painting gives us immediate appreciation of the natural surroundings in which Somerset people have lived and worked throughout time.

For more information visit www.bafm.org.uk
Simon Court, Friends of the Hatton Gallery

The Hatton Gallery, Newcastle, was founded in 1925. The building was part of Armstrong College, founded in 1871 (then part of Durham University). From the outset the Hatton was physically close to the Art School, initially the King Edward VII School of Art and then Armstrong College and the School of Architecture. Since 1963 the School of Fine Art has been part of Newcastle University. The Hatton was named in honor of Professor Richard George Hatton, who came to the art school in 1890 to teach modeling, enameling, painting, silversmithing, drawing and design — serving until his death in 1926.

Hatton’s successors concentrated on developing the School. However, Professor Robin Darwin during his brief tenure (1946-48), brought a new focus to the exhibition programme, which his successor, Lawrence Gowing followed through the 1950s. Gowing also focused on developing a permanent collection for the Department — aiming to give students access to examples of European Art from the 14th-17th centuries he made full use of his art world connections to acquire significant works, which he added to the Charlton bequest (1919) of Victorian watercolours, drawings and prints. The Contemporary Art Society also donated a large body of British contemporary art between 1950s and 1980s, and Hatton himself had, in the early years, donated miniatures from his own collection. The permanent collection today features artwork from the early Renaissance to the late 20th century, including works by Francis Bacon, Richard Hamilton, Victor Pasmore, Kenneth Rowntree and Eduardo Paolozzi.

In 1965 the opportunity to obtain the Elterwater Merzbarn by Kurt Schwitter arose, having been donated by the estate of Harry Pierce. The almost forgotten Merzbarn had been left for many years until Richard Hamilton, then working in the Art School, arranged for the surviving art work to be removed for safe keeping to the University of Newcastle’s Hatton Gallery. This proved to be a major feat of engineering as it was moved intact and attached to the barn wall on which Schwitter had worked. It was incorporated into the fabric of the building and is now on permanent display as a centre piece for the Gallery.

When in 1997 the University authorities voted to close the Gallery, there was a well-orchestrated public campaign against closure, Dame Catherine Cookson donated £250,000, ensuring the survival of the Gallery and its collection which has remained within the University. Over the ensuing years the Gallery became less fit for purpose, impinging on visitor experience and placing the collection at risk. In 2015 The Hatton Redevelopment Project was devised as a partnership project between Newcastle University and Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums. This involved conserving the historic and architectural elements of the Grade II listed building while creating a modern exhibition space with improved lighting and more efficient environmental controls.

Prior to the work being undertaken, Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: “Based in an architecturally impressive listed Edwardian building, the Hatton Gallery is now set to be transformed into a vibrant public space…. Once completed, people will be able to learn about and enjoy the Hatton’s varied and nationally important collections and take part in the numerous activities and training opportunities that are on offer.”

The completed project was made possible by generous funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Newcastle University, Arts Council England, J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, Ridley Family Charity, Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust, John Ellerman Foundation, Shears Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Sir James Knott Trust, Headley Trust and the Friends of the Hatton Gallery.

Today the collection and archive are in active use by staff and students at Newcastle University. There is a new dedicated multi-purpose learning space where students, schools, community groups and researchers can make art and engage with collections and archives. The picture store has been rebuilt and enlarged to ensure the Hatton’s extensive collection is preserved for future generations. Its quality and significance is evidenced by frequent loans to other national and international institutions. As part of Newcastle University’s Fine Art department, the Hatton Gallery has been at the forefront of British contemporary art for decades. During the 1950s and 60s its teaching staff included pop-art pioneer Richard Hamilton and leading British abstract artist Victor Pasmore. Hatton Redevelopment project has returned The Hatton to the heart of cultural life in the North East.
WELCOME TO NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE!
TO THE 45TH BAFM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE OCTOBER 13-14, 2018

It’s typical of the modesty of this vibrant northern city, that the ‘new castle’ of its name is over 900 years old! The Romans were among the first to appreciate the site’s advantages, and throughout the centuries since the city has survived good times and bad with unimpaired energy and cheerfulness. For those who think its glory days of shipbuilding, railways and engineering are gone, Newcastle always comes as a surprise – an energetic, upbeat place offering history, culture, education, enterprise and business savvy, laced with a strong dose of humour and fun. It will be the privilege of the Friends of the Laing Art Gallery to introduce you to our wonderful home in the north when we host the 45th AGM and Conference of the British Association of Friends of Museums.

The Friends of the Laing are a 1,000-strong group founded to support the activities of Newcastle’s Laing Art Gallery. The gallery, housed in a Grade II listed building of 1904, in the centre of the city, was initially financed by Alexander Laing, a successful Newcastle bottle manufacturer and wine and spirits merchant. Today it houses works by Reynolds, Holman-Hunt, Burne-Jones, and Gouguin, along with 20th century artists such as Ben Nicholson, Victor Pasmore, David Bomberg and Gillian Ayres. It has an extensive collection of 18th and 19th century watercolours, including work by J. M. W. Turner. Its large decorative collection features Beilby enamelled glass, Sowerby glass, Newcastle silver, Maling ceramics and North East pottery as well as Japanese prints. The Friends group (generally known as FLAG) was founded 50 years ago and its first Chairman, Leonard Jacobson, was a close friend of L.S. Lowry, who was a regular visitor to the area and painted scenes from Newcastle north to Berwick-upon-Tweed. The Friends provide financial support for the gallery and its exhibitions, provide volunteers to help staff the exhibitions, welcome the public, provide information and organise a varied programme of lectures, social events, visits and tours throughout the year.

The 2018 conference will take place in the Gallery itself and has as its theme ‘The Value of Friends’ Organisations in a Changing Social and Economic Climate’. Following a welcome from Dame Rosemary Butler, President of BAFM, and Alexandra Walker, Acting Chair, Julie Milne, Chief Curator of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, will welcome delegates to the gallery. Keynote speakers in the morning session will be Lizzie Glitheroe-West, Chief Executive of the Heritage Alliance, Richard Evans, Chair of the Association of Independent Museums and Director of Beamish Museum, and Julie Milne with Pat Devenport, Chairman of the Friends of the Laing Art Gallery. A buffet lunch will be provided and a lunchtime tour of the Laing. The BAFM AGM will take place in the first part of the afternoon, followed by case studies presented by Ian Bean, Director of Friends of Beamish Open Air Museum, Sandra Moorhouse, Chairman of the Friends of Bowes Museum, Dr Hugh Turner, Chair of the Friends of HMS Trincomalee, and Jasmine Farram, BAFM Youth Ambassador, with a panel discussion thereafter. The afternoon will conclude with presentations, including one on the conference venue for 2019.

Attendees, partners and guests will then repair to Newcastle’s Assembly Rooms, a short walk from the gallery, for the evening reception, where we will be entertained, in true northern fashion, by the Bearpark and Esh Colliery Brass Band. A Conference Dinner will follow in the splendid Chandelier Suite of the Assembly Rooms, and will be addressed by the former Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor Jackie Slesenger. We strongly urge you to join us for this, for it will be a unique opportunity for you to meet the Laing and other local Friends and to exchange news and views informally with Friends from throughout the UK. One of the two hotels at which rooms have been reserved is right next door to the Assembly Rooms and the other is less than five minutes away.

We also hope you will join us for one of 4 tours we have arranged for the Sunday morning. You may choose from:
A guided tour of the Discovery Museum (also a five minute walk from the hotels), which has an excellent permanent science and technology section, including the original ‘Turbinia’, the first steam-turbine powered ship in the world. A visit...
to the Great North Museum: Hancock, which is home, not to both a splendid natural history museum, and an exceptional archaeology collection combining the Egyptian, Greek and British collections. A tour of the Tyneside Cinema, a few minutes’ walk from the Laing and built by Dixon Scott, a local entrepreneur, in Art Deco style, it opened as a news cinema in 1937, was fully restored between 2006 and 2008 and continues to be a magnet for film buffs. A guided tour of the city’s public art works, starting from the Laing and taking in the fascinating array of sculptures and other art that embellish the city centre and quayside.

We do hope you will join us for what promises to be an enjoyable and productive weekend. In this issue of the BAfM Journal you will find two booking forms, one for the conference itself and the other for the reception, dinner and tours. Both contain full details of costs, including special rates at the Royal County and Indigo hotels, where we have made a group reservation. All hotel bookings must be made by delegates themselves, mentioning the FLAG/BAfM Conference. A third hotel, the Premier Inn, is immediately adjacent to the Laing Gallery. Please contact the hotel for rates and availability. Full information and booking forms are also on the BAfM website [www.bafm.co.uk, under ‘Events’]. Early booking is strongly advised, for the hotels in particular. For ‘Events’]

It was in 1977 that a public meeting was held in Bristol to ascertain interest in a friends’ organisation to support the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery and a soon-to-open industrial museum on the dockside. Because of Bristol’s history of a separation between the Museum and art collections (despite sharing a building) there was a Friends’ group for the Art Gallery but none for the substantial and important remaining collections. The result of that public meeting was a group called the Bristol Magpies, whose aim was to support all the collections and, in particular, to help set up the dockside railway with money and volunteers. This was the first venture into working industrial exhibits, which have since grown from trains to boats and cranes and now feature as important visitor attractions alongside the recently-created M Shed museum.

From modest beginnings the Bristol Magpies grew in numbers and ambition. It started with a small group (under the chairmanship of Elizabeth Mackenzie, now a Vice-President of BAfM) who put together a programme of events for members and produced a monthly newsletter. Then the organisation also became the mouthpiece for museum-goers, voicing opposition (sadly un成功fully) to the introduction of museum admission fees. Subsequently, when Bristol Museums Service expanded its remit in 2004 to include the city archives, Bristol Magpies embraced the Archives Service as well.

However, the name, Bristol Magpies was understood by the public to be any of the following: a bird-watching club, a museum club for children, a supporters club for Newcastle football team or a rugby club and this was a stumbling block to recruitment. So in 2007 we changed its name to Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives – rather a mouthful, but at least it is clear what we do.

Whilst the main focus has been granting funds for diverse requests – some in 2011, £400,000 in 40 years to enhance the Museums’ collections, to fund educational outreach, publications, conservation, digitisation, demonstrations and displays – Friends of BMGA has also lobbied against cuts in funding, against the demolition of the transit sheds now housing M Shed, participated in a city council Select Committee in 2009 examining the Museums Service, and provided much voluntary help.

Through the years communication with the members developed into a bi-monthly A5 publication then to an A4 black and white quarterly newsletter and is now a full-colour, award-winning glossy magazine edited by two of our members, a retired book editor and a book designer. This evolution has been facilitated by modern technology; members can email their contributions and digital pictures directly. Email is also used extensively in communication with committee members and for organising events – it is now a must-have for any active volunteer. Thanks to an energetic events group, the programme has developed over the last 15 years into a major fundraising element. Around 60 events a year are organised, ranging from visits to local sites of interest to day trips to museums, exhibitions and historic houses and to holidays in the UK and overseas. This full programme would not be feasible without the use of email and the world-wide web – it has made a big difference. Our monthly talks on topics of local interest have proved very popular, particularly since the introduction of tea and cake, which offers an occasion for members to socialise. This has brought out the inner Mary Berry in several of our members, who produce a wide selection of delicious cakes for our enjoyment. With a current membership of around 600, Friends of BMGA continues to provide valuable support to the Bristol Museums Service and hopes to do so for the next 40 years.
The Friends of the Laing have welcomed three major exhibitions to the gallery over the winter, by Paul Nash, David Bomberg and Sean Scully. As always the Friends have provided volunteers to be present in the galleries, to welcome visitors and provide information. The lecture programme has continued to flourish, with talks on ‘Paul Nash Landscapes’ (by Keeper of Art at the Laing, Sarah Richardson), on ‘A Journey Through the Imperial Wardrobe’ by David Rosier (including a beautiful display of embroidered fabrics), and on ‘Gertrude Bell – Queen of the Desert’ by Anthony Atkinson. Marion Anderson’s talk on ‘Several Shades of Grey’ may have raised eyebrows (and expectations!) but turned out to be a fascinating history of the Grey family of Northumberland. While perhaps best known popularly for Earl Grey tea (it was Lady Grey who added bergamot to tea to mask the lime taste of the local water at Howick Hall), the family is an extremely distinguished one, known for eminent politicians and soldiers.

The Friends’ winter trips have been varied, among them a visit to Ushaw College, a former Roman Catholic seminary in Durham which began as a daughter house of the 16th century English College in Douai, long associated with Catholic recusancy. By contrast, a trip to Leyburn in North Yorkshire saw the Friends learning the intricacies of auctioneering at Tennants Auctioneers, while a visit to Fairfax House in York, which claims to be the finest Georgian house in England, gave a further opportunity to examine beautiful objects, this time in situ. A longer trip took the Friends north to Scotland, where they visited Stirling Castle, Alloa Tower and Falkland Palace, as well as Kirkcaldy Art Gallery, which houses a remarkable collection of paintings by the Scottish Colourist Samuel Peploe and was hosting an exhibition by the Glasgow Boys.

There is much to look forward to in the months ahead, with visits, a wine tasting and trips to London, the Welsh Borders and Liverpool. The Bomberg and Scully exhibitions continue (the latter in conjunction with our newly re-opened sister gallery, the Hatton at Newcastle University) and in June we welcome ‘The Enchanted Garden’, which promises to be a magical exhibition illustrating how artists from the Pre-Raphaelites and French impressionists to the Bloomsbury Group and 20th century abstraction have taken inspiration from the gardens around them.

The major event of the year for the Friends, however, is the hosting of the BAFM Annual Conference on October 13—see separate article. Plans are well advanced for this event and booking forms have been issued with BAFM membership renewal forms. Information and booking forms are also now available on the BAFM website [www.bafm.co.uk, under ‘Events’], and we look forward to welcoming Friends from all over the country to our lively, friendly city of Newcastle upon Tyne. An interesting roster of speakers will take part, there will be time for discussion and question and answer, and the society’s AGM will take place. In addition, there will be a Reception and a Conference Dinner in the evening, in the glorious surroundings of the Chandelier Suite of Newcastle’s Assembly Rooms, while on the Sunday morning a choice of four optional tours will introduce delegates and accompanying persons to some of the cultural jewels of this historic northern city. Reserve bookings have been made at two of the city’s hotels, in convenient locations and at reasonable prices. We do hope you will join us for what promises to be an exciting and enjoyable event. Enquiries to: Dr Andrea Telford, Treasurer, Friends of the Laing Art Gallery, New Bridge Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear NE1 8AG (email: aetwr.telford@btinternet.com).

Drs Andrea & William Telford
E. A. M. (Alex) Freeman

Mention the city of Salford and thoughts turn either to the dark factories depicted in Lowry paintings or to the modern shopping centre & television studios. Unbeknown to many there is, in the same area, a small oasis of calm and beauty which has existed for centuries and is at least equally deserving of attention. I am talking of Ordsall Hall, a grade 1 listed timber framed house, parts of which date back to the 14th century. Originally the house and associated lands covered around 150 acres but today all that remains are the hall and roughly two acres. The house was in continuous private occupation until 1875; from then until shortly after World War 2, it was used variously as a social club, clergymen’s training school, wartime radio control station and latterly as allotments. Every owner has left their mark on the hall (including graffiti) and, whilst this may upset the purists among us, others value such evidence of continued evolution. Since its purchase by Salford Council in 1959 the hall has undergone two major refurbishments, the most recent completed in 2011.

On Wednesday 27 July 2017, a small convoy of cars arrived at Ordsall having travelled in driving rain to enjoy a conducted tour. We hardy souls were Friends of Rossendale Museum and this was just one of several visits made to other museums in the region over recent years. Once inside, the warm welcome of the hosts, and tasty treats from the coffee bar soon made us forget the weather. Everyone enjoyed a fascinating and informative tour of the house. Items of interest included a ‘Cockfighting’ chair, a small section of wall painting dating back to 1320, vine carvings around the window which gave witness to the Roman Catholic faith of the original owners, evidence of land changes resulting in floors being 18 inches higher now than when the hall was built, and residual evidence of a small moat. The only original furniture was a bed dating from 1570, currently on loan from the Sehnouai family, but there were plenty of period pieces on loaned from the V &. Our guide was able to provide a comprehensive history of occupancy and various alterations/modifications of the building and interspersed her commentary with interesting anecdotes including one about ‘squatters’ in the reign of Edward III and the original meaning of such phrases as ‘sleep tight’, ‘burn the candle at both ends’, etc. After a delicious buffet in the modern dining room, the sun finally emerged, and some of our number took the opportunity to explore the garden, before moving on to visit the famous Lowry Art Gallery.

Monty Lowe, Museum Assistant

Ludlow’s Neo-classical Buttercross was designed by William Baker in 1743 as a civic building and has served many purposes: a blue-coat charity school, a men’s social club and town council offices. On August 12th 2016, the Buttercross Museum opened its doors to visitors following an extensive restoration programme to return the building’s purpose to a museum - a purpose it had previously served from 1955 until 1990.

Now, shortly after celebrating our first anniversary I and my colleague, Helen Jones have reflected upon that year and planned ahead well into 2018. We are fortunate to have some fantastic items within the permanent collection. These include a clerical robe (Chasuble) made from a dress once belonging to Catherine of Aragon. The richly decorated fabric has her Pomegranate emblem and richly embroidered angels with wings that appear directly from the interior roof of a vast East Anglican church! The Bitterley coin hoard is the largest post medieval coin hoard in Britain; found by a metal detectorist in 1994 and civil war in date. My personal favourite is the Diingham Pommel, an early 7th century Anglo-Saxon dagger pommel; tiny and with zoomorphic and Christian elements it is transitional in cultures with both pagan and Christian themes. This is likely the earliest example of metallic Christian art in Britain. Of Anglo-Saxon pommels of Garnet and gold, this is the most westerly one found; on the edges of the Mercian border.

With the support of the Town council, Friends, and the wider professional relationships nurtured with our Finds liaison officer (Portable Antiquities Scheme) and Curatorial support from Shropshire museum services, we have been able to introduce a programme of temporary exhibits, these have included 1980s computer gaming magazines published just metres from the museum, a celebration of 20 years of the Portable Antiquities Scheme and most recently a private collection of everyday Georgian ephemera. These quarterly exhibits maintain a local connection and are popular with visitors that may not otherwise engage with the museum. We have also developed a monthly public lecture series. These have covered topics such as local landscape Archaeology and archaeological investigations within Ludlow and its castle. Future speakers include a BAFTA award winning documentary film-maker and an ex-head of medieval antiquities at the British museum.

As the museum enters its second year at the Buttercross, its profile is rising. We realise that many people play a part in the success of the museum, from the support of the town clerk, councillors and Mayor of Ludlow to the wider staff within our Guildhall who assist with administration needs and help with conveying chairs and tables for our lecture evenings. We rely on an important use of social media, which promotes our activities, and the support of our local press, in particular our local BBC Radio Shropshire. I leave Ludlow this autumn to commence an MA in Museum Practices but Helen Jones continues as Museum Assistant and is in her second year of an MA in Social History with The O.U.
EXODUS: Masterworks by émigré artists from the Ben Uri Collection - 20 January – 24 June 2018

Ben Uri comes to Bushey

Bushey Museum and Art Gallery is delighted to announce a partnership exhibition with Ben Uri Gallery and Museum, London. From 20 January to 24 June 2018, more than 70 artworks by a range of artists including such famous names as Frank Auerbach, Leon Bakst, David Bomberg, Marc Chagall, Naum Gabo, Mark Gertler, R.B. Kitaj, Leon Kossoff, Jacob Kramer and Camille Pissarro, as well as a number of less well-known artists, will be on view as part of a loan exhibition from the Ben Uri Collection.

The Ben Uri Art Society emerged from the Jewish community in 1915 in London’s East End. Named in The Book of Exodus, Bezalel Ben Uri was an artist-craftsman of high renown, skilled in painting and working in valuable woods as well as precious metals and stones. He was responsible, with divine inspiration received through Moses, for designing and building the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant.

Reflecting its proud heritage, the Ben Uri began to form a collection of work by artists of British and European Jewish descent. Today, the works, lives and contribution of these artists are interpreted within the wider contexts of art history, politics and society. Ben Uri Gallery and Museum seeks to inform the largest possible audience from the widest range of communities about its migrant past, showing how migrant artists from all communities continually express feelings about removal from the homeland and resettlement in a new country.

The collection now holds more than 1,300 works in various media by over 400 artists, and Ben Uri now has status as a gallery of international importance. Since 2000 the remit has widened to include work by émigré artists from a greater range of cultural, religious and geographical backgrounds under the strapline “Ben Uri: Art, Identity and Migration”. Ben Uri now aims to be “the art museum for everyone” with no ethnic, religious or other barriers to engagement. Today the phrase “émigré artist” may have a different meaning, because so many of us choose to live in another land for work or study, but the same challenges of assimilation, of “settling into a foreign land” remain. The work of migrant artists is as important today as it was a century ago. London is a vibrant city of different nationalities and many newcomers still settle in the East End, the place of Ben Uri’s first home in 1915.

Bushey is an Accredited Museum and has received the national Visit England Rose and Hidden Gem Awards, with inspectors calling it “the finest museum for its size in the South of England.” We are passionate about making our Museum relevant and exciting for the whole local community. This is why we have secured from Ben Uri this exhibition which we feel will engage people living in Bushey and around, with all their cultural, historical and religious diversity.

Contact details: Bushey Museum and Art Gallery, Rudolph Road, Bushey, Herts WD23 3HW

www.busheymuseum.orgbusmt@busheymuseum.org

And Now for Something Completely Different...

NEW VICTORIAN PRINTING EXPERIENCE DAYS FOR ADULTS AT BLISTS HILL VICTORIAN TOWN – SATURDAY 17TH NOVEMBER

If you have ever admired the skills of the Victorian printers, here is your chance to learn a few techniques at the new Victorian Printers Experience Days for adults, the next of which will be held on Saturday, 17th November. The days are a fascinating introduction into this historic trade and make a great gift. During the day you will be welcomed by the Victorian Printer in the Town’s Print Shop where you will have the opportunity to produce a wonderful Victorian poster using your own design. You will be able to try your hand at typesetting (don’t forget you have to do this upside down) and then print the poster on one of the historic presses from the museum’s collection such as the Atlas Press or the mighty Columbian Press.

The printing industry has given us many sayings and expressions such as; ‘upper and lower case’, ‘coin a phrase’ ‘mind your Ps and Qs’ and ‘put to bed’ and you will find out their derivation throughout the day. You will also be able to enjoy a behind the scenes tour of the Print Shop and the museum’s remarkable print related collections.

Your finished item can take pride of place on your wall at home, as you will take your print away with you. All materials will be provided and you even get a tasty lunch in the Town’s Club Room.

The Victorian Printing Experience Days begin at 10am and finish by 3.30pm. Places at £50 per person must be pre-booked by calling 01952 435900.
FRIENDS OF IPSWICH MUSEUM FUND REMARKABLE EXHIBITION, CARDINAL THOMAS WOLSEY AND THE WOLSEY ANGELS

Gary Butler, Secretary, Friends of Ipswich Museums

Thomas Wolsey was born in Ipswich in March 1473, probably the son of a local butcher. He was educated at Ipswich School and Magdalen College, Oxford. Ordained priest in March 1498, he rose quickly through the ranks to enter the service of King Henry VII in 1507. Wolsey not only remained in royal service on the accession of King Henry VIII but continued to rise in power and influence. His appointment in 1515 as a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church made him the most important cleric in England. This was in addition to his position as Lord Chancellor, the most controlling figure of state after the King.

In 1524 Wolsey commissioned four bronze angels from the Florentine sculptor Benedetto da Rovezzano to be the corner pieces of a magnificent Renaissance style tomb which would on his death reflect his great wealth, statesmanship and clerical position. When Wolsey disappointed King Henry by being unable to persuade the Pope to grant an annulment of Henry’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon, his fall from grace was rather swifter than his rise. Henry appropriated all Wolsey’s possessions, including the angels. Never used, they eventually came into the care of Elizabeth I. They were probably sold to raise funds during the English Civil War (1642 – 1651). Certainly they were lost and their existence forgotten for 300 years.

In the 1970’s, Wellingborough Golf Club took over Harrowden Hall, a country house in Northamptonshire, blissfully unaware of the significance of the four statues that adorned the gateposts. In 1988 two of the statues were stolen. The golf club wisely then took the two remaining angels into the hall for safety. The stolen pair resurfaced at auction in 1994; the unwitting Sothebys cataloguing them as “in Italian Renaissance style”, they made £12,000.

Somehow they came into the possession of a Parisian art dealer and when Italian scholar Francesco Caglioti realized their significance, the hunt for the other two angels began in earnest, resulting in their discovery at Harrowden Hall in 2008. The V&A engaged in a major fundraising campaign and due to generous donations from national funding bodies, the Friends of the V&A and private individuals, was able to purchase all four angels in 2015. Designed for internal use, the statues had seriously suffered from their long exposure to the elements. Somewhere along the way they had also lost their wings. Apart from the damage due to corrosion and bird lime, the stolen pair had been covered by multiple coats of coloured wax, possibly shoe polish. The V&A embarked on a painstaking project to clean and restore the statues for exhibition without totally removing the scars of their long journey to the comfort of the museum. The statues are now structurally stable. Coated in protective wax they can proudly face their onlookers.

Enter the Friends of the Ipswich Museums (FoIM): in early 2017, Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service (CIMS), which manages the museums in both towns, approached FoIM with the prospect of the Wolsey Angels being exhibited in the beautiful Tudor house, Christchurch Mansion. FoIM had no hesitation in supporting the exhibition and becoming its major funder. The four angels formed a magnificent centre piece to a truly impressive exhibition, which was a credit to curator Philip Wise, and the CIMS staff.

Other notable items in the exhibition included a portrait of Cardinal Wolsey, in all his grandeur, on loan from the National Portrait Gallery. Wolsey never forgot the town of his birth and wished to turn Ipswich into a seat of learning equal to any other in the land. He began building a college in Ipswich in 1528 which was to rival Eton College - the charter for this college granted by the King is also on display. Sadly for Ipswich, the unfinished college was demolished after Wolsey’s death in 1530.

The Friends of the Ipswich Museums are proud of our part in bringing this amazing exhibition to our town. Thomas Wolsey: Ipswich’s Greatest Son was in the Wolsey Gallery, Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich until 11th March 2018.

A DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR THE FRIENDS OF LUTON MUSEUMS

D. Hampson

Part of the Celebration of The Friends of Luton Museums Christmas Party 2017 in the newly refurbished Wardown House Museum and Gallery was the presentation of a cheque for £10,000 by Bob Barker Chairman of the Friends, towards the restoration of the entrance to Wardown House, “The Porte Cochere”. Elise Naish, the museum’s Head of Heritage and Collections, accepted the cheque on behalf of Luton Cultural Services Trust.

Elise had a surprise of her own. To commemorate over thirty years of support the Friends have given Luton’s museums with volunteers, cash donations and fund raising, she presented a very happy and surprised Bob Barker with an engraved silver salver, the inscription reads, “Presented to the Friends of Luton Museums by Luton Culture, in recognition of their continued support and fund raising. 12th December 2017”. The salver is on display in the trophy cabinet in the billiard room at Wardown House.

UPDATE FROM DR. HARIS LIVAS-DAWES, YORKSHIRE REGIONAL COORDINATOR

I often open letters from my Yorkshire museums with trepidation as often they are about a closing of a museum or of the Friends, the latter due to lack of new blood. But the latest letter contained some wonderful news. Instead of closing a museum, Doncaster Council is building a new one. It will be an iconic 21st century building next to the existing museum building which will still be used. This will put the four existing cultural buildings in Doncaster into a dynamic central hub. The new building will have modern and flexible space spread over 3 or 4 floors. The space will help support the local and creative economy by providing opportunities for young people, entrepreneurs, businesses and residents to develop new skills. The space will also be used for exhibitions which have been locked away from public view for years, but will be used in the new build to celebrate Doncaster’s proud history and cultural heritage. All praise should be given to a Council with such forward-looking ideas and plans.

As I’ve seen in my several visits, the existing cultural offerings are already impressive. This new building will certainly raise the bar.
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TECHNOLOGY ADVISOR
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LEGAL EXPERT
Position Vacant

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NEW MEMBERS TO WELCOME

Ms Hannah Tilley
Faversham Town Council

Ms Kate Warnock-Smith
Mrs Caroline Bradshaw
Friends of Eton College Collections

Mr Robert Gordon
Henfield Museum
The Friends of Henfield Museum

ABA MEMBERSHIP

• Institutional: Minimum donation of £30
• Individual: – £25
• Group: – under 100 members – £50
• 101-500 – £75
• 501-1,000 – £100
• 1001 upwards – £150

COVER PHOTO
37 lifesize silhouettes at Ironbridge mark 100 years of women’s suffrage.
Photo: Iron Bridge Gorge Museums Trust.

Ms Hannah Tilley was a key figure in the push for women’s suffrage. Her leadership and dedication helped to bring about a significant change in the law.

Dedicated to helping friends and volunteers

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