

BAFM

British Association of Friends of Museums
Journal

Issue 135 / Autumn – Winter 2025

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52nd BAFM Conference in Bristol

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Federation of Friends of Museums
Conference Naples

Reports from our local groups

A visit to Buckingham Palace



*Marc Allum, guest speaker at the Gala Dinner
BAFM Conference*

Dear fellow Friends,

It is a great pleasure to welcome Lord Reay, of Reay in the County of Caithness, as the new president of the British Association of Friends of Museums. Lord Reay was a colleague of our late president, Lord Cormack and is equally devoted to supporting the cultural life of the United Kingdom. In addition to his parliamentary duties and work in corporate finance Lord Reay is the chief of Clan Mackay, which is most comforting: if he can exert some control over ever independent minded highlanders he should do most well with BAFM. We all look forward to working with him in the coming years to ensure the continued existence of BAFM and helping us to flourish.



Sunday 12 October is the annual European Day of Friends of Museums. In the week leading up to the 12th we encourage all members of BAFM to hold an event celebrating your work and your museum. If you hold an event, do let us know, as BAFM and the World Federation of Friends of Museums are working towards an UNESCO World Day of Friends of Museums and the more participation we have within Europe the greater will be our ability to champion our work throughout the world. A short description of your event with an image or two would be most gratefully received.

At this year's World Federation of Friends of Museums conference in Naples I was sitting next to a young Friend from Canada who is also a museum curator (so often museum curators and their social circles make the best Friends). I had met her last year at our conference in Luxembourg and we were discussing the great contrasts between the two cities, how both have such wonderful museums and vibrant cultural lives.

She said that she loved attending WFFM conferences as she was among her tribe. Not being quite attuned to modern speech I asked her what she meant by the word tribe. She said that amongst her age group and friends she was seen as

something of an oddity devoting so much of her professional and private life to museums and Friends of museums. She was always having to explain just what she did and why she found it so fulfilling, often to slightly bewildering reactions. Yet here, amongst the likeminded and equally enthused, she had no need to justify herself. I thought; just right. It really is wonderful to be amongst Friends, our tribe.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our AGM and conference in Bristol at the beginning of October. You will find a warm welcome in this dynamic city and will be with your 'tribe'.

Most sincerely,

Daniel Calley

Chairman

Editor's note

Several groups may be aware that my previous e-mail address was hacked three weeks ago. If you receive any e-mail purporting to come from me since then using the old e-mail address as noted on the BAFM website or on the back of the previous Journal, please ignore them. I have removed all traces of the old account from my current laptop and set up a new account for people to contact me. The case has been referred to Action Fraud and is ongoing. I'm sure many of us are well used to obvious scam e-mails which we receive in our junk folder but in this case a 'parallel' e-mail account was set up with an almost identical address as my account. I stress the word 'almost'; please be very careful opening any e-mail you receive and make sure the address is correct. This incident has affected the production of this edition of the Journal; I apologise for any inconvenience.

Dave Adgar

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The famous Clifton Suspension Bridge



With inset Marc Allum, guest speaker at the Gala Dinner BAFM Conference



Membership of BAFM



Friends Group

Under 100 Members	£60
101 – 500 Members	£100
501– 1,000 Members	£130
1,000+ Members	£200
Individuals	£30
Corporate/Institutional	£100
Individual Membership	£30
Individual Membership (Under 25)	£15

For more information about Membership and our group insurance scheme, please contact our Administrator *Jayne Selwood* at jayneselwood@hotmail.co.uk tel 01179777435

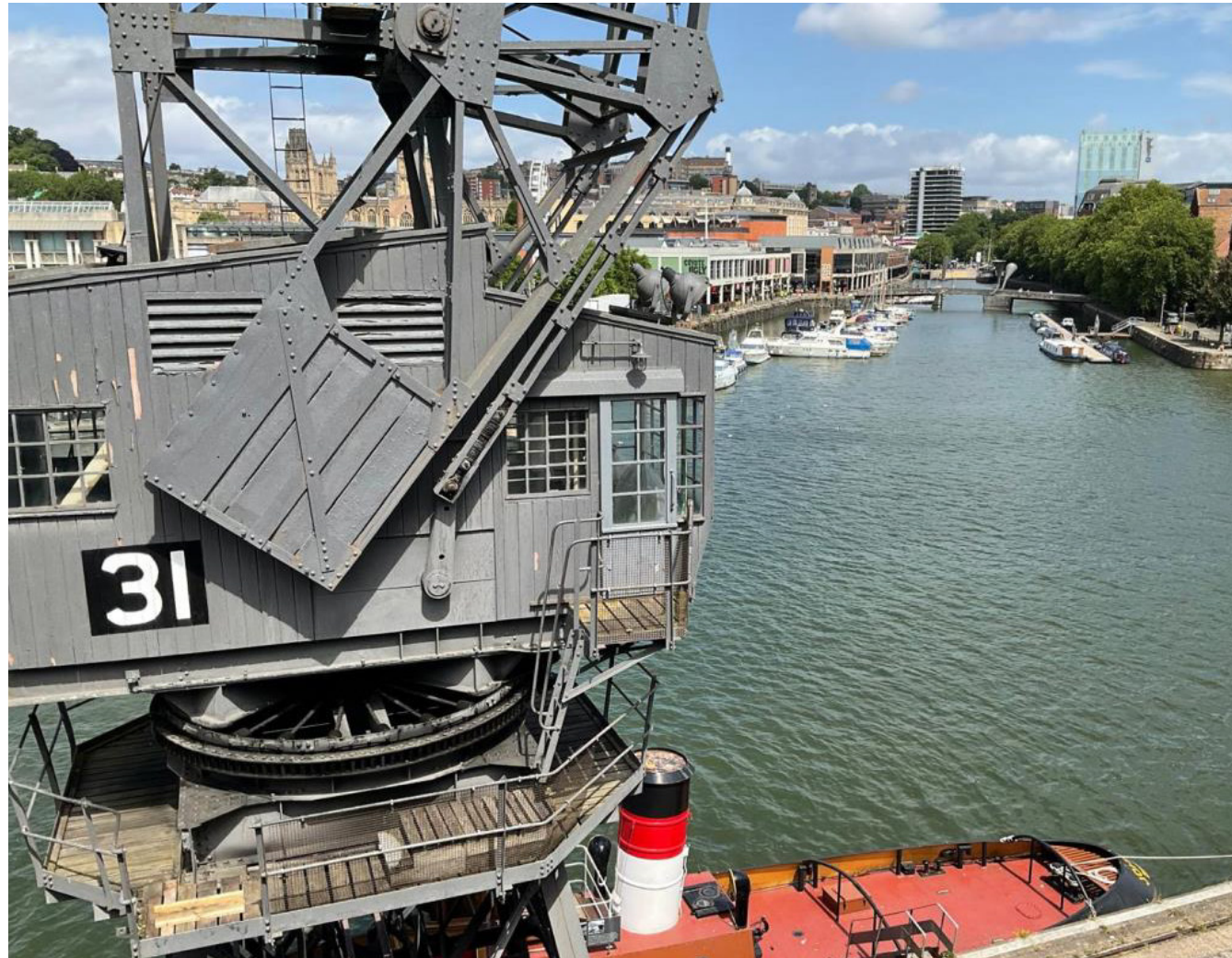
BAFM Annual Conference 2025 in Bristol – Saturday 4 October

The Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives look forward to welcoming you to this year's BAFM Annual Conference.

As appropriate for such a colourful and diverse city our theme is *Who do we represent? Diversity and inclusion in Friends groups and in the heritage we support*. Our speakers are drawn from a wide range of heritage backgrounds, and all have hands-on experience of re-thinking the approach to our theme.

The event will take place at M Shed, our dockside

museum focused on the history of the city, opened in 2011. The building is in the heart of Bristol and was originally created in 1950 as a transit shed to support the flow of cargo in and out of what were then thriving commercial docks. Our working exhibits outside the museum include five cranes along with three historic working boats and an operational steam railway.



The view from the terrace at M Shed, our conference venue © Sue Thurlow

The first session of the day will be *Displaying contentious history: what can we learn from Colston's Statue?* It will be delivered by Linda Coode, Head of Collections for Bristol Museums and Shawn Sobers, Professor of Cultural Interdisciplinary Practice at the University of the West of

England, who worked together, alongside many others from our communities, to develop M Shed's Protest Display which was shortlisted for a Museums + Heritage 2025 Award in the Permanent Exhibition of the Year category.



Linda Coode, Head of Collections for Bristol Museums © Linda Coode

Linda has wide-ranging experience in the museums sector, with roles including delivery of the Aerospace Bristol Museum and taking the National Trust Tyntesfield from project to operation. As a Museums Development Officer working in South Gloucestershire, she supported many smaller local, mostly volunteer-run, museums. Linda's first

task on arriving back in Bristol – she was a social history curator here in her early career – was to put the Colston statue on permanent display in M Shed. She will be talking about this and the way in which Bristol museums have moved forward from the statue by continuing to embed community engagement in developing content.



Shawn Sobers, Professor of Cultural Interdisciplinary Practice at the University of the West of England © Bristol Ideas

Shawn's work includes projects on legacies of slavery in Bristol, Bath and Nottinghamshire, and African presence in Georgian and Victorian Britain, often seen through the lens of hidden histories, unheard stories, everyday life and material culture. He has directed and produced documentaries for BBC, ITV, and Channel 4.

In our second session Alison Bevan, former director of the Royal West of England Academy of Art (RWA), will speak about Embedded Inclusion: how the Royal West of England Academy transformed its core community. Alison has spent her entire career working in or with museums and art galleries including 10 years at the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea before becoming Director of Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance.

From 2013 to 2024, Alison was Director of the RWA, Bristol's first public art gallery and Britain's only regional Royal Academy of Art. She is Chair of Bristol Museums Oversight Board and was Chair of the South Western Federation of Museums and Galleries from 2009 to 2012.

After coffee we will hear from Claire Byfield, whose chosen topic is Forever Friends – engaging supporters at all ages. As Head of Supporter Engagement at the British Museum Claire leads a team responsible for events,

communications, and digital content for more than 80,000 Members, Young Friends, Patrons, Donors, and Corporate Partners. She oversees a busy programme of over 150 events a year, including everything from intimate curator talks to large-scale Members' evenings. She also manages member communications across print, digital, and onsite touchpoints—from magazines and podcasts to welcome packs and supporter web content. Previously Claire worked at Bletchley Park, where she ran events and public programmes, creating partnerships with organisations like the BBC and Google. She began her career with the National Trust at the Ashridge Estate, focusing on visitor experience and community events. She's passionate about creating meaningful connections between audiences and cultural spaces and is especially interested in how museums



Claire Byfield, Head of Supporter Engagement at the British Museum © Claire Byfield



Alison Bevan, former director of the Royal West of England Academy of Art © Vince Bevan

can use storytelling, events, and digital content to build lasting relationships with their supporters.

We'll have an extended lunch break (sandwich-style buffet included) to give delegates an opportunity to see what M Shed museum is all about, inside and out. On the quayside in front of the building the annual Docks Heritage Weekend event (free) will be in full swing including demonstrations of 1950s cargo handling by crane.

After lunch we'll hear from Kate Newnham, Senior Curator Visual Arts, Bristol Museums, about the different ways in which she and her team have worked together on forging

links with Chinese communities. Each February Bristol Museum and Art Gallery hosts the biggest Lunar New Year celebration in the southwest of England, an annual highlight in its calendar over the last 20 years. Kate and colleagues are at the heart of the celebration, working closely with local people and Chinese students at the city's universities, and planning and delivering a vibrant array of activities related to Chinese culture. Those collaborative links aren't limited to the annual event, or to the Chinese community - the Museum's ongoing role in cultural exchange brings people from different backgrounds together to experience and understand diverse cultural traditions.



Kate Newnham, Senior Curator Visual Arts, Bristol Museums
© Kate Newnham

Kate's talk will be followed by a panel discussion, giving everyone a chance to ask questions of the speakers.

After a short tea break there will be a presentation from Southampton Museums, hosts for BAFM's 2026 Conference, followed by the AGM and the close of proceedings.

Our drinks reception and dinner will be at the Bristol Hotel, just a 5-minute stroll from M Shed. Our after-dinner speaker will be Marc Allum, all-round antiques expert known to many of us from BBC Antiques Roadshow where he has

been a miscellaneous specialist since 1998. Marc has his own unique style with interests ranging from pre-history to modern design and is a self-confessed collectaholic. He has a passion and reputation for divining the unusual; 'a desire to connect with history through the interpretation and pursuit of objects and their origins'.

Outside the formal conference there will be plenty of heritage-related activities on offer. On arrival on Friday M Shed – where registration will take place – will be open to explore and I'll be taking small groups of delegates behind the scenes to hear the stories of some of the 3,000 objects



Marc Allum, our after-dinner speaker on Saturday evening, filming for BBC Antiques Roadshow at Bristol Aerospace Museum
© Marc Allum

held there. On Sunday we will run a special heritage coach trip to see Brunel's famous Clifton Suspension Bridge. Elsewhere in the city there are many other heritage attractions to visit, such as Brunel's SS Great Britain, or our wonderful Museum & Art Gallery in its magnificent Edwardian building. There is too much to see and do in Bristol for me to list it here – if you plan to stay beyond the conference weekend I suggest you have a look at the Visit Bristol website. You might also like to take a trip to the UNESCO World Heritage city of Bath, easily reached by train on a 15-minute journey or by a very frequent bus service.

Getting to Bristol is easy from all parts of the UK with direct trains from across the country, our airport nearby with a frequent bus service into the centre, and the M4 and M5 making it very accessible by car. Public transport – including ferries - is excellent for getting around the city, and many of the attractions are within easy walking distance.

We look forward to meeting you in Bristol in October, and if you have any questions about the conference or the city, please email me: sue.thurlow@outlook.com

The BAFM Newsletter of the Year Award

As I have said many times, one of the joys of running a Newsletter of the Year Award is receiving examples of the communications our member groups send out on a regular basis.

Each year, it becomes more difficult to choose a winner for the award, and this is reflected in those groups whose newsletter has been shortlisted. Before announcing the shortlist (and winners) I'd just like to mention a double sided A4 newsletter I received a few weeks ago. Issued by The Friends of the Framework Knitters Museum in Nottinghamshire, I found it a fascinating read. As well as outlining a varied and interesting programme of events, it included an update on finances and a short piece on their work with local schoolchildren. On the outside of the envelope, it said 'Not to be included in the Newsletter of the Year'. Like many of our members, the Framework Knitters Museum are unduly modest about their achievements! Please consider entering the award next year!

This year, BAFM shortlisted four groups for special mention. Joint runners up were The Friends of Southampton's Museums, Archives and Gallery and the Friends of Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery. Southampton Friends issue a quarterly newsletter of very good quality A4 paper and is full of quite outstanding images of artworks in the collection of

the gallery. With over 3000 members, the newsletter sees a wide distribution. With a much smaller membership of 104, The Friends of Blackburn is again quarterly and consists of folded A3 paper to produce an A4 production. Naturally, it is filled with articles about upcoming and previous events and news about the museum and its development. I was pleased to see a mention of BAFM; please try to let your members know that your group is a member of the national organisation which supports groups like your own. Both groups will receive a certificate of achievement which will be signed by Daniel Calley, the Chair of BAFM.

Having had joint 'runners up' the judges were unable to choose between the two groups which were adjudged to be joint winners. The Friends of the London Transport Museum produce an excellent magazine published quarterly with over fifty pages of (to quote the cover)

News, views, reviews and features about London's fascinating transport story and the London Transport Museum

The magazine was highly commended in last year's competition, and I was

pleased to see the piece on the award which was included in Winter 2024/25 edition of the magazine.

The second winner this year were The Friends of Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives. The quarterly newsletter is well presented, with contributions by both staff and volunteers. The Friends have a keen wish to promote and international perspective and this is reflected in the contents of their newsletters. This makes sense as the group have chosen the topic of inclusion and diversity as the theme for the BAFM Annual Conference, to be held in Bristol from the 3rd to 5th October this year.

Both the winners will be presented with a certificate of achievement at the conference and each group has been allocated with a free place at the conference for one of their members to attend.

Illustration opposite; The front cover of the Friends of the London Transport Museum Magazine



Let's Meet the New Regional Coordinator for Scotland – Dr Richard J Irvine

Richard is Arbroath born and bred. He studied for a HND in Biological Sciences before going on to complete his honours degree in Biotechnology at Dundee Institute of Technology.



Research followed and he was awarded a PhD on the topic of compost and composting from Abertay University in 2002 when he also became a Chartered Biologist. For several years, Richard

combined academic research and commercial consultancy being based at the Abertay Centre for the Environment in Dundee. His clients included the Scottish Government, SEPA, numerous Scottish local authorities and many

private companies as well as community groups. During this time, he also taught part-time on courses varying from environmental to forensic sciences. Richard says he will always be proud to have helped many everyday businesses to be that little more sustainable and efficient.

Following redundancy from full-time employment due to funding cuts, Richard initially undertook some private consultancy but has mainly worked as a part-time lecturer, principally at Fife College; initially teaching HNC Wastes Management, before developing and delivering the HNC Sustainable Resources Management (SRM) for over a decade to students from across the UK. Since the pandemic this has been delivered completely online, meaning Richard has needed to embrace new teaching skills and approaches. Richard is a fully GTCS registered teacher in further education. He remarks, "Teaching the SRM programme has been an honour; being part of a student's learning journey, enabling them to achieve their dreams, is hugely rewarding". Since 2023, Richard has been an external verifier for the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) covering the wastes and environment subject groups. From autumn 2025, he accepts a new challenge as he takes on the online delivery of HNC Facilities Management at Fife College, after the sad closure of the SRM programme.

Richard openly admits that the last few years have been financially very challenging and for the last two years he has needed to take on a carer role too for his mum who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease, but conversely, these times have been some of the richest, most varied and busiest he has ever experienced. He remarks, "I couldn't just sit around and decay, I wanted to stimulate my brain and serve my community".

Therefore, firstly he joined Radio North Angus (RNA), a volunteer run commercial radio station broadcasting on FM, digital and online, initially as a presenter and now he serves as a director too. Richard presents two highly successful and well regarded shows each week: "The Vintage Wednesday Breakfast Programme" (7.30 to 10am) and "The 602 Jazz Club" on Fridays between 6 and 7.30pm.

"I've always loved vintage music i.e. the music of the 1920s to 1950s covering genres like, British and American dance bands, big bands and swing, jump blues, classic jazz etc. I suppose it's all about my long-held fascination with history, heritage and feeling connected to the past. Broadcasting has expanded my musical knowledge massively, but it also allows me to share this passion with others, not just listeners, but also musicians around

"We have a really strong committee who work well together, and this means we get things done."

the world, helping to keep the music alive for future generations and telling its stories to new audiences".

The second major thing Richard did was to become a volunteer guide at the Verdant Works Museum in Dundee, which tells the story of Dundee's jute industry. He quickly saw the value of becoming a costumed guide and interpreter, regularly transforming into Mr Forrester the Edwardian works manager. Over the years he has met thousands of visitors from all over the world, as well as schoolchildren on educational visits and several VIPs. He is now seen as an expert on the Dundee textile industry and is writing a history of the Verdant Works. During the pandemic, Richard was in sole charge of the museum's social media output and also presented several online talks and made a series of documentary videos. After doing some talks to the Friends of Dundee Heritage Trust, he was invited to join the group. Richard was quickly co-opted as a committee member.

"We have a really strong committee who work well together, and this means we get things done."

The Friends of Dundee Heritage Trust have a varied programme of activities throughout the year, including thanks to Richard, a popular and successful series of vintage jazz concerts featuring artists from around the world. He has also organised walking tours around Dundee.

After becoming a volunteer at the Verdant Works, he was proposed for membership of the Weaver Incorporation of Dundee, one of the famous Nine Incorporated Trades of

the city. Since then, Richard has not only become a member but has for the last two years had the honour of being Deacon of the Weaver Incorporation; a community organisation founded in 1512.

Richard has sung with the Arbroath Male Voice Choir for twenty years and has held various offices within the group.

The Regional Coordinator for Scotland covers a large geographic area and a diverse range of member centres. Richard is planning to hold a series of Zoom meetings initially so the friends' groups can get together and

exchange ideas, but later to perhaps host talks etc. The organisation is here to serve its members, but it can only do that effectively if we listen to our membership. Richard has attended the BAFM conferences in Dundee, Doncaster and Wisbech.

"I was the only Scottish member represented at last autumn's annual conference and AGM in Wisbech

- it would be great if we could get more Scottish representation at these annual events. The 2025 BAFM Annual Conference and AGM is being held in Bristol between 3 and 5 October."

Richard is looking forward to working with the Friends groups across Scotland, but also to contributing to the work of BAFM nationally.



Richard with the 'Spicy Li'l Devils' (see his article also included in this copy of the Journal)

Lunch with the Mayor

On Thursday 6th February, representatives from the Friends of Oakwell Hall & Country Park committee attended a light lunch in the Mayor's Parlour at Huddersfield Town Hall, by invitation of the Mayor of Kirklees, Councillor Nosheen Dad.

This was the first time we had received such an honour and it was a pleasant surprise to us to find out it was exclusively for us! It was largely in recognition of our success in receiving the award of Friends Group of the Year 2024 by BAFM, but also an

acknowledgement of nearly 40 years of our work at Oakwell.

Although obviously busy in her role as the Mayor, we were genuinely impressed by how much she was aware of us and how much she valued the work of the voluntary

sector in Kirklees in general, as well as some of the issues and challenges involved in running and sustaining a successful voluntary group.

We have genuinely been blown away by all the recognition we have received from

both officers and members of Kirklees Council for the BAFM award. Despite the challenges we have faced and continue to face in managing a successful group like the Friends, we are here because we want to support Oakwell Hall and make a difference,

especially for the people who visit and enjoy this special place. That's why we do it. But it is still wonderful to receive recognition for this work and the 6th February was a day to remember for all of us who attended.

Eric Brown – Vice Chair



Left; Chair of the Friends, Roger Knights, receiving a certificate of thanks from the mayor of Kirklees, Councillor Nosheen Dad. Right; From left to right; Vice Chair Eric Brown, Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor Lesley Hudson, the Mayor of Kirklees Councillor Nosheen Dad, Chair of the Friends Roger Knights, committee member Angela Smith and Deputy Mayor Councillor Elizabeth Smaje.

The Tulip Pyramid: For the Love of a Tulip

The Friends of Carshalton Water Tower were absolutely delighted when Christopher Woodward, the Director of the Garden Museum at Lambeth, London, asked if he may visit their early 18th century Water Tower and their listed landscape garden, with its Hermitage.

The Friends enjoyed his visit very much and Christopher very generously invited both Julia Gertz, the Friends' Secretary, and Jean Knight, the Chair, to his lecture at the Garden Museum, in which he used the Water Tower as one of his examples, and to have supper later with him in the Garden Museum restaurant.

Christopher also gave the Friends a very generous donation. Where ever possible, if a donation is given without specifying how it should be spent, the Friends use the gift to purchase something which will be of interest to their visitors and give more historical background about their site.

The Water Tower has a beautiful and unique early 18th century bathroom, in which there is a plunge bath. The walls are lined with Delft tiles. Some of these tiles are decorated with flower vases, in blue, white and manganese. These act as frames for fields of white tiles. The Friends decided to pick up on the flower vase decorative tiles as a theme for use of the gift. But how to do this.

After considerable thought it was decided to have a copy of a late 17th century Dutch tulip pyramid, made to place in the Bathroom. It would be a noticeable addition and introduce the visitor to tulip mania which had raged in the early to mid 17th century when vast sums of money were gained and lost on the trade of a single tulip



bulb. It would also introduce their visitors to the passion for blue and white decoration on china and earthenware, which Mary, on her return to England, had brought with her from Holland when she, and her Dutch husband William of Orange, took the throne in 1689.

Many forms of tulip vases were produced in Holland to display and celebrate this most treasured commodity as single blooms. The tulip pyramid, often marketed in pairs, made its appearance towards the end of the 17th century not only as a stacking flower holder but as a decorative container in which bulbs could be grown. Its style is thought to have been inspired by Chinese pagodas seen by merchants on the Silk routes, the early Portuguese seamen and later those of the Dutch East India Company trading in the east and far east.

Porcelain imported from China decorated with blue and white patterns had also been brought into Europe via the Silk routes in the early 16th century. It was King Manuel 1 of Portugal who gave it as a gift to other European Courts that initiated its popularity. However, by the 17th century

it had become an extremely popular form of decoration because the inventive Dutch had not only created the tulip pyramid but also mass produced earthenware ceramics with blue and white glazes and Chinese motifs to imitate the extremely expensive imported Chinese porcelain ceramics. Chinoiserie, as a style, was born. The skill of creating hard porcelain in Europe was not achieved until 1708 when Ehenfried Walther von Tschienhouse's team produced it in the Dresden and Meissen factories in Germany.

In the Bathroom of the Water Tower Chinoiserie can be seen not only in the object of the new tulip pyramid but also on the early 18th century decorative flower vase tiles on the walls. Two of the five different flower vase designs are inspired by Chinese export designs. The Friends celebrate Queen Mary II's passion for blue and white ceramics, the Dutch love of the tulip, the gift given by Christopher Woodward, and hope that their visitors will find the Tulip Pyramid of interest.

Visit the Friends' website, www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk.

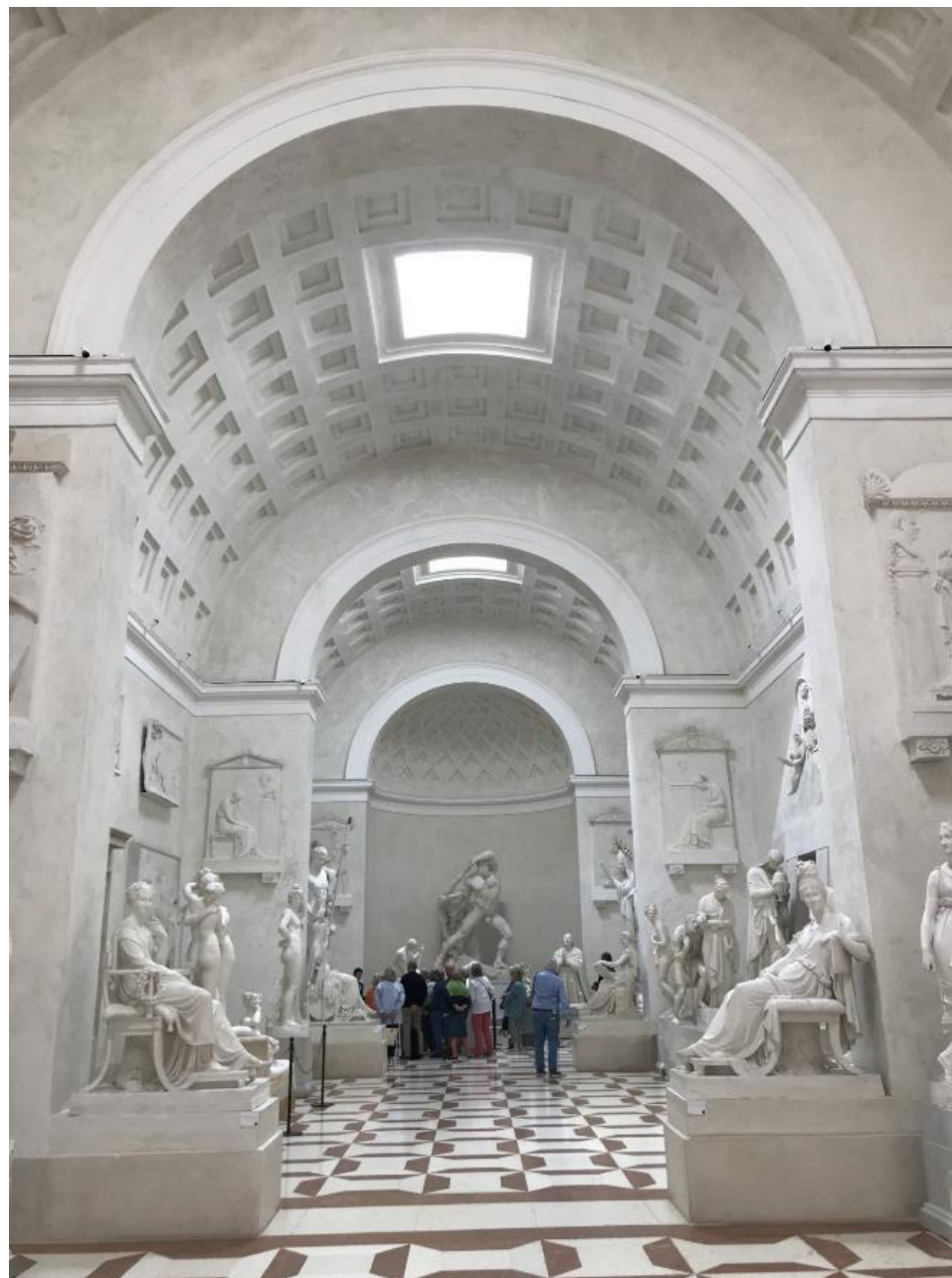


Travel with BAFM. Vicenza and the Veneto

In May BAFM journeyed to Vicenza and Veneto. The trip included several visits to the great villas of the Veneto, including Palladio's masterpiece the Villa La Rotonda.

At each villa we were welcomed by the owners, and it was interesting to see how they all, in different ways, look after these properties of international importance. Like our own Friends groups and museums, they all face similar, and yet quite individual challenges. Besides the many Palladian buildings, most notably the Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza is a city full of many fine museums, churches and public spaces. We missed our opportunity to spend a day in Venice, the Italian rail workers haven chosen that day to strike. It did, however allow us an extra day in Vicenza and a chance to further absorb the city's treasures. The new Ala Roi at the Chiericati Museum was a particular find. On our last full day, we journeyed to Possagno in the foothills of the Dolomites. Here we visited the Canova Museum and the Tempio Canoviano, his burial place. At the museum the fantastic Gypsotheca, full of Canova's statues, is one of the most stunning rooms in the world and very much worth the delightful journey.

To heighten the pleasure of the day we had luncheon at the Villa Cipriani in the village of Asolo, considered perhaps the most beautiful hill village in Italy. As usual with BAFM trips, many of the places we visited and the people we were hosted by came through introductions from various Friends groups throughout Europe.



Gypsotheca at the Canova Museum, Possagno

Spring 2026 Trip – Verona and Lake Garda

Having so enjoyed our visit to Vicenza and Veneto, next year we will be moving slightly to the west to explore the western Veneto. It will be an opportunity to visit some more of the great Palladian villas and the medieval cities of Verona and Mantua. It will also be an opportunity to visit Lake Garda and see some of the region's beautiful gardens. More details of this trip will be available by the end of the year.



The end of luncheon at the Villa Cipriani



Being hosted at the Villa La Rotonda by the owner Count Nicolo Valmarana

Upcoming Trip – Bristol and Bath

30 September – 3 October

At the end of September, we will visit Bristol and Bath in the run up to our conference in Bristol. Our tour begins on Tuesday 30 September with an afternoon walking tour of the centre of Bristol, including the magnificent Queen Square. We will finish at M Shed, the Story of Bristol Museum with a welcome by Sue Thurlow, chair of the Friends of Bristol Museums, Art Galleries and Archives. In the evening, we will have a welcome dinner.



Queen Square Bath

On Wednesday 1 October we will take a short train journey, leaving from Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Bristol Train Station to the honey-coloured city of Bath. Here we will have a private walking tour of some of the city's highlights, including the Royal Crescent, The Circus, the Bath Assembly Rooms, Bath Abbey, Pulteney Bridge and the Roman Baths. Our tour will be followed by lunch and then an afternoon free to explore some of the other treats of Bath, such as afternoon tea in the Pump Rooms and a visit to the Holburne Museum with its collections of fine

and decorative arts. On Thursday 2 October we head to the south Cotswolds. Our first stop is the early 20th century Rodmarton Manor, home of John and the Hon Sarah Biddulph, and considered one of the finest examples of Arts and Crafts design in existence. It was designed for the Biddulph family by leading architects of the time, Sidney Barnsley and Norman Jewson and is filled with hand crafted furniture which was designed for the house. Here we will be welcomed by the family with morning coffee and a tour of the house. Afterwards, we will see

equally important gardens, including its fine topiary, terrace, winter and sunken gardens. We will then travel to nearby Chavenage House, which in contrast to Rodmarton Manor, was begun in 1383, and yet has many similarities despite the separation of several centuries. It is a delightful case of compare and contrast with these two very fine houses. Here our hosts, for luncheon and a private tour, will be

Caroline Lowsley-Williams and her sister Joanna. These are two ladies you will long remember, along with their fabulous home. Chavenage is a popular filming location and has featured in Poldark, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Lark Rise to Candleford and currently Jilly Cooper's Rivals (you never know, they may be bouncing about when we are there).



The Clifton Suspension Bridge

On Friday 3 October we have the treat of being collected from our hotel in a 1960 Bristol MW Royal Blue coach which will sally forth in style to the Bristol Museum and Gallery. We will be welcomed by the Friends of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and then enjoy its wonderfully diverse collections, including the famous Bristol delftware and blue glass displays. Our vintage coach will then proceed to Bristol's iconic Clifton Suspension Bridge. From here we will walk down to Clifton Mall, the green centre of this Regency and early Victorian neighbourhood full of architectural gems, and which remains one of Britain's most desirable addresses. For further information about this trip, please contact Daniel Calley at djcalley@talk21.com.

The Sirens' Call to Friends: A Young Friend's Recollection of the WFFM Conference

As Ulysses journeyed on his odyssey to his homeland of Ithaca, he was entranced by the beauty of the Bay of Naples and the Sirens who dwelt there.

Trusting his instinct, driven by natural curiosity, he wanted to see for himself the wonders of worlds beyond imagination. Yet he trusted even more in the help of his friends, without whom he could never have experienced them. Such is the importance of Friends of Museums, that we may see and experience the past for ourselves, while respecting the past on its own terms and bringing it the gift of new life. For the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM), that new life will come through the Council of Young Friends, who I was privileged to represent on behalf of the United Kingdom in Naples from 15th-18th May 2025. I was the only British representative on the Young Council (notwithstanding the BAFM President, Daniel Calley, who attended the WFFM General Council and Assembly). I am proud to have served my country at this conference.

The Young Council energised the WFFM General Council with a renewed passion for museums. Indeed, it was expressed by the Classics (as our elders were affectionately termed!) that we are all Friends, regardless of our age, united by our shared passion for museums. Embracing members on their own terms, as individuals with their own life circumstances, was deemed by the General Assembly as more important than an arbitrary

definition of age for determining who could qualify as a Young Friend. Nevertheless, increasing the visibility and connectivity of the Young Friends across borders was vital to enabling the energy to continue, and was the major topic of discussion at the Naples conference. My own impression is that the WFFM Naples conference represents a bright new future for Young Friends, together with their Classic companions, to work towards revitalising our museums across the world. With mutual understanding, trust and vision, people of all ages can change their museums for the better, an insight which I believe can greatly benefit the British Association of Friends of Museums.

My odyssey began in Café Gambrinus, having arrived into a rainy Naples that was hosting the Giro d'Italia bicycle race, for a quick macchiato before attending the first conference day. In the famous café where Jean-Paul Sartre mused on whether the real Naples exists, I was determined to find out for myself over the course of my time there. In the Biblioteca Nazionale de Napoli, situated in a magnificent room of the Palazzo Reale where late-15th century incunabula by Italian philosophers and theologians were stored, the WFFM conference began. Introductions were made by city and museum authorities of Naples, the WFFM President, Italo Scaietta, reported to the WFFM General Council

on what had been achieved during his term in office, and reports by WFFM federations and associations were made by such countries as France, Germany and Argentina. Following these reports, the were given a tour of the Biblioteca, with students busily reading beneath stunning frescoes in what was a ballroom used by the Bourbon Kings of the Two Sicilies. We then had delicious cocktails and canapes in the cocktail bar of Teatro San Carlo, where I made lasting acquaintances among the French, German, Italian and Canadian Young Friends. We carried our energy into the night with a trip to Pizzeria Pavia, just off the Piazza del Plebiscito, where I experienced my first taste of real Neapolitan pizza margherita. It would turn out to be the first of a veritable connoisseur trip through the pizzerias of Naples throughout this conference for me, in the city that gave birth to this famous piece of Italian cuisine.



Archivio de Stato de Napoli

The second day of the WFFM conference was held in the Archivio de Stato de Napoli, housed in a former Benedictine monastery with a remarkable cloister decorated with a 16th-century fresco cycle of the life of St. Benedict of Nursia. The Young Friends met in the "Catasti" meeting room, a veritable treasure trove of 18th-century administrative documents for the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, where we discussed how to build an international network of Young Friends. We shared some of our challenges, including the German federation where

members-only events represented a financial burden upon young people who could have participated, or how physical connection in person is difficult across international boundaries. We brainstormed ideas for how to increase our connectivity and visibility as Young Friends, which included a step-by-step published guide on how to form a Young Friends group (pioneered by the French association), a spray-painting event involving a street artist (used to great effect in Hamburg Museum), and a Technik-meets-Art event (introduced at Mannheim Museum). Afterwards,



Charlotte Cuny, WFFM Communications Manager, gave us a presentation on how we could make our ideas more concrete, demonstrating how the new WFFM website works and the tools we could use. Following the conference, we visited the splendid Baroque Church of Santa Chiara, with its cloister of enchanting 18th-century majolica tiles

intertwined with orange trees. We then went for an unforgettable excursion to Pompeii, the famous Roman town buried in ash following the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. It really felt like walking in the footsteps of the Romans, and glimpsing the new excavations of a private villa in the centre of Pompeii was breathtaking to behold.



Pompeii



Pompeii

The third day of the WFFM conference took place in Pio Monte della Misericordia, a fantastic 17th-century Baroque chapel established by a charitable confraternity of Neapolitan nobles to administer works of mercy to the needy of their city. Here, the Young Council met in the “Morra” meeting room, a room of the museum filled with paintings by the famous Neapolitan painter Francesco de Mura (1696-1782). The Young Friends dedicated themselves to voting on one of three concrete ideas for bringing the Young Friends network to life: an interactive online map, hosted on the WFFM website, displaying contact information, location and research interests of Young Friends associations worldwide; a step-by-step published guide on how to set up a Young Friends association; and a mentorship programme for new Young Friends associations. The vote for an interactive online map was

unanimously approved by the Young Council. I was one of three delegates selected to give a 30-minute presentation to the WFFM General Council, who were impressed by the energy, commitment and ability of the Young Council to rise to the occasion. Following the conclusion of conference proceedings, we went on a historical guided tour of Naples, seeing the famous Caravaggio painting “The Seven Works of Mercy” (c.1607) inside the Pio Monte della Misericordia chapel, and then the delightful Gothic church of San Lorenzo Maggiore. We then visited the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, an incredible repository of colossal Roman statues, Egyptian antiquities, Pompeian frescoes and so much more besides. Our day ended with a magnificent gala dinner inside the Circolo Nazionale dell’Unione, feasting upon pasta and pastries of every variety.

The final day of the WFFM conference was held in the Royal Palace of Caserta, to the north of Naples. The 18th-19th century residence of the Bourbon Kings of the Two Sicilies was awe-inspiring to behold, especially as we walked through this rival for the Palace of Versailles following the formal conclusion of the conference. The WFFM General Assembly was convened in one of the Royal Apartments in the Royal Palace of Caserta where, among other matters, the President's Report of the WFFM conference proceedings was read, the Treasurer's Report

was submitted to the Assembly and Catherine Forster was awarded a special certificate acknowledging her lifetime contributions to the WFFM. It was also confirmed at the General Assembly that the 2026 WFFM conference would be held in Athens, marking the 50th anniversary of the WFFM. Following our tour of the Royal Palace of Caserta, we were treated to the finest specimens of Bufala mozzarella from the Campania region, complete with Parma ham, lasagne and rigatoni pasta.



Not all work!

mission to represent the best interests of British museums. I wish to thank David Adgar, BAFM Journal Editor, for recommending that I attend the Naples conference; Daniel Calley, for welcoming me to the conference as a valued contributor to its proceedings; Jayne Selwood, for reimbursing the necessary expenses to attend the Naples conference; all members of the Sistema Congressi, for administering all of my enquiries and ensuring a very smooth proceeding of the conference; the Trustees of BAFM, for enrolling me as a representative of the UK at this conference; and many others who made my conference attendance possible. The support of

so many Friends, at a national and international level, has been critical for me to be represent the Young Friends of BAFM and consequently to gain and share valuable experience on how Young Friends can support their museums throughout the world. I wish to continue the good work started in Naples, as a regular member of the Young Council, and I look forward to seeing how we can translate our energy into a means of making a real difference to museums across the world.

Christopher Tinmouth
Youth Ambassador

New BAFM Volunteers

The above article, written by Christopher Tinmouth introduces our new Youth Ambassador. Elsewhere in this edition of the Journal, Dr. Richard Irvine has submitted a biographical piece as he takes over as the Regional Co-ordinator for Scotland from Gillian Ferguson who has had to stand down due to ongoing health issues. On behalf of BAFM, I'd like to put on record my thanks for the dedication with which Gillian approached her role with the organisation!

We also welcome Janet Ross-Mills as BAFM's new Regional Co-ordinator for the North West of England.

BAFM has a number of vacancies for Regional Co-ordinators; if you would like to get more involved in the work of BAFM, please contact Jean Knight, our National Co-ordinator for more details.

Dave Adgar

Editor's Note

Contrasting Christopher's impression as a Youth Ambassador attending a WFFM Conference for the first time, I asked Dan Calley, our Chair to summarise his impressions of the event.

The 2025 World Federation of Friends of Museums General Assembly

The 2025 World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM) General Assembly and Council Meeting took place from Thursday 15 May through to Sunday 18 May 2025 in Naples, Italy. It was hosted by the Naples Friends of Museums and the Federation of Italian Friends of Museums. Delegates were welcomed by the president of WFFM Italo Scaitta with the keynote speech by Alberto Garlandini, President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Foundation and former President of ICOM on the subject the Future of Museums in Changing Communities. ICOM's has recently recognised the WFFM as an affiliated organisation in order to cooperate

more closely in the interests of museums. Five priorities were defined during the Council meetings: to increase the number of member federations and associations in Asia and Pacific, Europe, North and South America, while striving to forge new relationships around the Mediterranean and in Africa; to develop international partnerships with ICOM in the first instance, but also with UNESCO; deepen the exchange of experiences between Friends, particularly through digital means; increase their visibility by internationalizing the European Day of Friends of Museums; and finally, continue the restructuring of the World Federation.



Daniel Calley, Chairman of BAFM addressing 2025 General Assembly of the World Federation of Friends of Museums at the Royal Palace of Caserta, Naples

As always, there was a strong cultural element to the conference with sessions being held and visits to such venues as the National Library of Naples, the State Archives, Santa Chiara Basilica, the Pio Monte della Misericordia, Pompeii, the Circolo Nazionale Dell' Union di Napoli and the Royal Palace of Caserta. BAFM very much welcomes our members to participate in WFFM events and hopes that members will consider coming to next year's General Assembly which will be held in Athens, Greece.

Daniel Calley

*Book Review by Dave Adgar***'A Museum for Fordingbridge'**

Written by Wendy Cracknell for the Fordingbridge Museum Trust

I was pleased to receive a copy of this book for review when it was forwarded on to me by Peggy Jackson, the Chair. At just under forty pages, it gives an overview of the activities of the group since the collection began in 1966 when the passion of John Shering for local history inspired the formation of what would become the basis of the museum which exists today. The journey of

both the Friends and the Museums Trust (now merged) is a fascinating one, well researched and illustrated. It is a fitting way to celebrate the 25 years since the museum opened in its present location. Please contact me if you are interested in purchasing a hard copy or digital version.

ISBN 978-1-0682428-0-9

BAFM Represented at Buckingham Palace

As our members know, BAFM is fortunate in having Prince Richard Duke of Gloucester as our Royal Patron. This year, he extended a number of invitations to attend of the King's Garden Parties, held annually in the grounds of Buckingham Palace.

It was decided that I would represent BAFM at the event, together with my wife and so on 20th May, we made our way to London for the event. It was fascinating the way attendees could recognise others who were going to be at the palace; on a scorching hot day, the gentlemen in suits and the ladies in their finery stood out amongst the crowds which thronged the area around the Palace. Roger Knight and Lesley Hudson were nominated by BAFM to represent

one of our member groups, The Friends of Oakwell Hall and Park. The group were joint winners of the Friends of the Year Award, sponsored by The Marsh Charitable Trust in 2024. Additionally, both Roger and Lesley have dedicated decades to supporting the Friends Group and seemed fitting representatives of the many volunteers who help to ensure their local museums or sites of historic interest continue to operate.



Dave Adgar discussing our presentation to the Duke of Gloucester with one of the Gentleman Ushers and members of the Duke's Private Office.

After stringent security checks, attendees were welcomed by the music of military bands with the backdrop of Buckingham Palace to admire. The four representatives from BAFM had been selected to be presented to the Duke of Gloucester; a great honour but taxing in the heat. Luckily, the Gentlemen Ushers searched for chairs for us to relax whilst the other groups decided to stand!

After the presentation, we were encouraged to provide ourselves with light refreshments from the marquees on the left of the grounds, beautifully presented as one can imagine.

The pressed apple juice from the Sandringham Estate was particularly appreciated, given the heat!

A number of the other members of the Royal Family were in attendance and we were able to see Zara and Mike Tindall as well as the Duchess of Edinburgh quite close.

Undoubtedly the 'stars' of the event were The Prince and Princess of Wales, and they were surrounded by thousands of those attending who were keen to catch a glimpse of them. The Princess was wearing a yellow dress with matching hat so she could be spotted from a distance and as we began to exit the grounds of the Palace, it was moving to see the young people and disabled youngsters who were being presented to her, reflecting the passion she has shown for early years education.

It was a great honour to be selected to represent BAFM at this event and I think it reflects the appreciation of the work of the volunteers who directly volunteer for the organisation and those members of our member groups.

David Adgar FRSA



Roger and Lesley at the Palace

Latest Volunteering News

I am pleased to announce that BAFM, with the support of The Marsh Charitable Trust will be launching a new award for volunteering in 2026. To mirror The Friends of the Year Award sponsored by the Trust, an award for the individual volunteer associated with any of our member groups will be selected from nominees

submitted by any of our groups. The individual can have served for any number of years but must have made a positive contribution to the group. The award is made with a cheque for £250 to the winner. More details will be found on the BAFM website in the near future and in the next issue of the Journal.

Swing On a Summer's Evening

Friends groups are faced with the eternal issues of how we raise money for our museum and how do we get new faces into our venue. Dr Richard Irvine of the Friends of Dundee Heritage Trust describes one novel approach which has worked for his group in the east of Scotland.

The excitement in the atmosphere was palpable as the warm evening sun shone into the restored 1833 High Mill of the Verdant Works Museum. It was a full house – 100 people, some regular faces, many first timers, one group

even travelling from the northwest of England just to be here for the evening's event. So, what was all the excitement about?



The Spicy Li'l Devils ready for action!

Well, it was a fund-raising vintage jazz concert! In fact, the fourth such event that Richard has organized for the group, and more are planned.

The Spicy L'il Devils and Guests, an international all-star group consisting of Ali Affleck (vocals), Thimo Niesterok (cornet), Lorenzo Cortes (guitar), Thomas Racine (drums), Paul Harrison (piano) and Roy Percy (bass) entertain the audience with first class performances of swing and vintage jazz songs of the 1920's to early 1940's. The playerscoming from Germany, France, Columbia and the UK.

"This is hugely accessible music, anyone can make sense of it, strong melodies, story-telling lyrics, and the excitement of well-played "real" instruments without a computer or auto-tuning in sight"

As you will discover elsewhere in this issue, Richard is a well-respected presenter on Radio North Angus.

"I've been lucky enough to get to know a number of musicians across the world who specialise in what might be called vintage music, through my radio broadcasts. One such person is Ali Affleck an award-winning jazz vocalist and historian. She runs a very small community interest company called Speakeasy Sounds, an agency which facilitates collaborative jazz performances with the finest international musicians."

"We were both keen to bring more high-quality jazz to jazz starved Dundee. Ali is Dundee born although now Edinburgh based, and I know from my listenership that there was a potential audience if you could get the product and its promotion right. There was a synergy which was worth exploring. Friends Chairman, Alistair Scott, Ali and I had extensive discussions about what each side wanted from the concept of concerts – including most importantly a budget."

"So now, I let Ali do what she excels in, bringing musicians together, and I with the help of the rest of the Friends committee worry about the promotion, publicity and organising the venues."

Richard points out that working collaboratively with other like-minded community groups is a good way to spread the costs but also provides more opportunities to successfully promote and build an audience. The Friends of Dundee Heritage Trust have worked with the Weaver Incorporation of Dundee for example and in such cases split the profits between the two groups.

"Obviously we want to raise as much money as possible for our activities, but equally we want to raise awareness of the museum and get new people into the building (and perhaps eventually into the Friends group!) so splitting the profits, still works for our long-term goals."

Richard says don't try and cut corners – maintain a high quality of musicianship. It's the only way to develop and sustain an audience. Equally, treat the musicians as the professionals they are and pay them accordingly.

"Our audiences in Dundee have experienced outstanding performances by some of the world's best jazz players, but of equal importance is the positive feedback from the musicians, because that builds a good reputation as a hosting organisation, a venue and for me personally cements a professional friendship for the future. That's something that money cannot buy."

Perhaps there are easier ways to raise money for your organisation, but the route described here provides so much more pleasure (of course it's not without its stressful moments) and has the potential to facilitate broader and longer-term goals for your group. If you think its something you would like to consider, Richard is more than happy to discuss his experiences with you.

"This is hugely accessible music, anyone can make sense of it, strong melodies, story-telling lyrics, and the excitement of well-played "real" instruments without a computer or auto-tuning in sight"

World Federation of Friends of Museums International Friends of Museums Day

This event will run again in 2025, centred around the weekend of 11th and 12th October.



If your group are interested in participating, this is a chance to celebrate the work you do on behalf of your local museum or gallery. Groups from as far apart as France, Spain, Norway, Germany and Romania will be taking part again this year. If you are able to deliver an event which celebrates your work, please make sure to contact the editor so the news can be disseminated amongst our members.

Dave Adgar Journal editor

Nrwspeard@outlook.com

Editors Notes

BAfM is often contacted by prospective member groups about the process of setting up a new Friends' Group. Recently Dan Calley was in discussion with one such group, 'The Friends of Gallery Oldham'. He asked them to produce a major article about their first year of operation, explaining in detail each step they took to

become a fully-fledged, operational 'Friends of'. This step-by-step process will be published in full in the next issue of the Journal. In the meantime, if your group has had experience dealing with issues which may be applicable to other groups within BAFM please consider submitting an article for publication.



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Vacancies

Regional Co-Ordinators form the backbone of BAFM. We currently have vacancies in the following areas; the North East, West Midlands, London and Wales. If you would like more information about the roles available please contact *Jean Knight* our National Co-Ordinator on irvineknight@btinternet.com.

We still require a Treasurer for BAFM. If you are interested in this role, please contact *Dan Calley*, our Chair, on djcalley@talk21.com

