

THE
WIL
SON

FRIENDS OF
CHELTENHAM ART
GALLERY & MUSEUM

FRIENDS' NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020



Bookable Events

- Programme of Events January to July 3
- Details of Trips, Talks and Events 4-13

News

- Letter from the Chair 14-15
- News from the Wilson 15-18
- Update from The Cheltenham Trust 19
- Pump Room Revival 19
- New Members 20

What's On

- Forthcoming Events 21-22
- Current and Future Exhibitions and Events at The Wilson 23-25
- Holst Birthplace Events 25
- Exhibition Review - Ernest Gimson: Observation, Imagination and Making 26-27

Other Museums to Visit

- Gilbert White's House & the Oates Collection 28-30

Reviews

- Winterbourne House and The Barber Institute 31
- Leonardo da Vinci 32
- Winchester and Sandham Memorial Chapel 33
- Ernest Gimson and the Impact of the Cotswolds 34-36
- Ruskin and Venice 36-37

Contacts

- Committee and Volunteers Who's Who 38
- Contact Details 39

Programme of Events January to July

Date	Type	Title	Page
Monday 27 January	Talk	Music of the Arts and Crafts Movement	5
Monday 10 February	Talk	Omar Ramsden: Arts and Crafts Silversmith, his Life and Work	6
Wednesday 19 February	Visit	Private tour of Cheltenham College	7
Wednesday 18 March	Trip	Young Rembrandt at the Ashmolean	8
Monday 20 April	Talk	Arthur Cameron: a "reformed Cockney in Arcadia"?	9
Friday 24 April	Trip	Shrewsbury Museum and Town	10
Friday 22 May	Trip	Hereford Cathedral and the Mappa Mundi	11
Wednesday 10 June	Trip	Compton Verney & Kiftsgate Gardens	12
Thursday 16 July	Trip	Highnam Court and The Holy Innocents Church	13

Pick-up points for trips

It has been brought to our attention that our coaches may no longer use the Racecourse as a pick-up point. This is because we cannot park cars where we used to now there is a formal arrangement with Stagecoach and the park and ride scheme.

Consequently, pickup-points in future are likely to be Sixways in Charlton Kings (side of road depending on direction of travel) and the Royal Well Coach Station. In addition, Westall Green may be used where appropriate for quick set-down or pickup on westbound trips.

Trips and Visits: a strategy in the making – some general thoughts

When the group of people who organise talks and events for Friends last met, we talked about what we should be aiming to achieve with the various suggestions for visits. This is especially important given the diverse range of expectations, interests, availability and mobility amongst our Friends' membership.

Our thoughts are that we should be aiming for a range of shorter and longer, closer and further afield trips to venues which either are difficult to access unless in a group or where visiting with the Friends can offer added value, for example with a private talk or guide. The need for a coach obviously increases the cost of a trip so we should try to include some visits where a coach is not required. We should also be especially looking for opportunities to visit places with links to The Wilson's collections.



Shrewsbury (see p10)

We recognised that most trips are daytime and therefore difficult for people still in regular employment. Also, that we can't meet all interests and needs but that we should try to make our trips accessible to as wide a range of members as possible, including those of us who may be experiencing mobility challenges! Consequently, required walking should be kept to a minimum although optional further exploring may be part of the trip. We should also give as much information about the walking as possible so that members can make

informed choices about how much they wish to undertake or indeed whether to join a trip where considerable walking may be involved.

We would appreciate your feedback on these ideas.

Sue Pearce



Traherne Memorial window (detail) in Hereford Cathedral (see p11)

Music of the Arts and Crafts Movement

Coffee Morning Talk 176

Monday 27 January

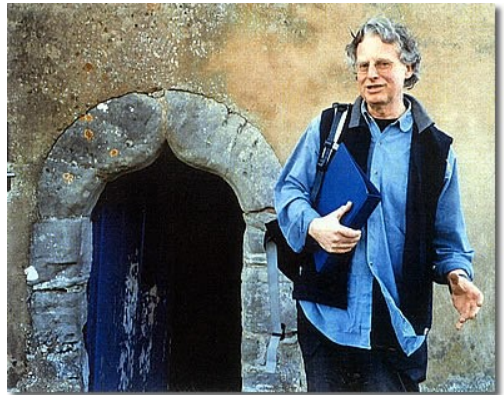


Ashbee and Gimson and the others - their fabulous furniture, artefacts and architecture - these are well known and much admired. But what of the music? How did composers respond to the philosophies of Ruskin and Morris?

Gustav Holst, for one, had Arts and Crafts ideals in his DNA; but there were plenty of others, not just in Britain but across the world. This talk seeks to demonstrate how their music doesn't just illustrate Arts and Crafts thinking, but actually expresses it in the way that it sounds.

Our speaker, **Tim Porter** started off as a musician, but has always studied history as well, and his two fields have always cross-fertilized.

For many years he worked as a composer in touring theatre, but now pursues a career as an itinerant lecturer, speaking at museums, residential colleges, music clubs and history societies. He lectures regularly at the Ashmolean and is a member of the Arts Society register.



Venue: The Wilson

Time: Coffee from 10:30.

Speaker: 11:00-12:00.

Cost: £10.

To book: Please book online via our website or by using the form at the centre of this newsletter.

Omar Ramsden: Arts and Crafts Silversmith, his Life and Work

Coffee Morning Talk 177

Monday 10 February



Omar Ramsden, Arts and Crafts silversmith, achieved renown in his lifetime, and his reputation for excellence in design and craftsmanship remains high. Occasionally an example of his work comes to a television antiques show today, evoking particular interest and a premium valuation because of his name. There are several examples of his work in The Wilson.

In spite of the many admirers and collectors of his work, until recently very little was known about the lives of either Omar or his friend and colleague of over thirty years, Alwyn Carr. They had met at the School of Art in their home city of Sheffield, moved to London and set up in business together in very modest circumstances. The partnership became successful and lasted for twenty years; it ended in 1919, on Carr's return from World War 1, and Omar's friendship with the Downs Butcher family.

On unexpectedly discovering a family connection to Ramsden, our speaker Helen Ashton began to look deeper into his history. There was almost no published information about his life and much of the little there was proved to be inaccurate. Beginning with information from family members, her interest developed into a fascinating obsession and three years of research, culminating in her book, *In Search of Ramsden and Carr*, published in 2018.

Venue: The Wilson

Time: Coffee from 10:30.

Speaker: 11:00-12:00.

Cost: £10.

To book: Please book online via our website or by using the form at the centre of this newsletter.

Private tour of Cheltenham College

Wednesday 19 February
Group Leader: Sue Pearce

The Friends are very fortunate that Rachael Merrison, Records and Heritage Manager of Cheltenham College, has arranged a private tour of Cheltenham College site focusing particularly on the art, architecture and history of the buildings.

Our morning will begin with a talk at 10:00 by Nick Nelson, Head of History of Art, in the famous chapel. Many of you will know him from his fascinating coffee morning talks for us. He has also written a new booklet about the chapel. He will talk for about an hour followed by a 30-minute tour around Thirlestaine House and the wider College site led by Rachael.



We hope to be able to provide some simple refreshments at the end of the morning but that is still to be confirmed.

Places are limited so please book as soon as possible.

The site is mostly flat but there will be a few steps and the ground can be uneven in places. If you have any special requirements, including disabled access, please let us know.

COST PER PERSON: £10.00.

09:45: Meet at the entrance to the chapel.

To book: Please book online via our website or by using the form at the centre of this newsletter.

Young Rembrandt at the Ashmolean

Wednesday 18 March

Group Leaders: Adrian Barlow & Martha Alleguen

This major exhibition in Oxford will be the first in the UK to explore the early years of the career of the most famous of all Dutch artists, Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669).



Beginning with his earliest known paintings, prints and drawings, made in his native Leiden in the mid-1620s, and ending the moment he rockets to stardom in Amsterdam in the mid 1630s, this exhibition will chart an astonishing transformation.

On display will be the largest collection of works devoted to the young Rembrandt to date, including 34 paintings by Rembrandt, 10 by his most important contemporaries, and a further 90 drawings and prints from international and private collections. It will also feature the newly discovered *Let the Little Children Come to Me* (1627-8), on display for the first time in public.

This tour includes a special pre-exhibition lecture for the Friends in the Headley Lecture Theatre with coffee, tea and pastries provided. Entrance to the Rembrandt exhibition and Ashmolean collections is also included.

Lunch may be taken at the Ashmolean or in the town at your leisure.

COST PER PERSON: £40.00 for non-Art Fund members; **£35.00** for Art Fund members (please bring your membership card).

Pick up points: Royal Well Coach Station 08:15, Six Ways (by St Edward's School) 08:30. Our coach will return to Cheltenham at approximately 16:30.

To book: Please book online via our website or by using the form at the centre of this newsletter.

Arthur Cameron: a “reformed Cockney in Arcadia”?

Coffee Morning Talk 178

Monday 20 April



*Copper repousse charger made by Arthur Cameron for the Guild of Handicraft, 1892.
The Cheltenham Trust / Cheltenham Borough Council*

Arthur Cameron was one of the liveliest craftsmen working for C R Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft in London's East End and was briefly expelled for bad language by his fellow Guildsmen. Although he started with the Guild as an office boy, he became a talented craft metalworker – the museum has a fine charger designed and made by him – and thrived following the Guild's move to Chipping Campden. His story however doesn't end there. Disaster struck following the collapse of the Guild, providing a reality check for the ambitions of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Mary Greensted is a trustee of the Guild of Handicraft Trust and has been working on the archives at Court Barn in Chipping Campden as part of the museum's HLF-funded Refresh project taking place early in 2020.

Venue: The Wilson

Time: Coffee from 10:30.

Speaker: 11:00-12:00.

Cost: £10.

To book: Please book online via our website or by using the form at the centre of this newsletter.

Shrewsbury Museum and Town

Friday 24 April

Group leaders: Adrian Barlow & Martha Alleguen

Like Durham, the town of Shrewsbury sits on a hill surrounded by a loop of river, the Severn. For the visitor there is a great deal to see and enjoy within a relatively small space. It is certainly one of the finest towns along the Welsh Marches, with a castle whose foundations predate the Domesday Book. The two main bridges over the Severn, the Welsh and the English, make clear its strategic border-town importance, while its claim to call itself "England's finest Tudor town" is not unreasonable given the quantity and quality of both public and private half-timbered buildings. Besides which, any town that can boast of having educated three such pupils as Sir Philip Sidney, Charles Darwin and Wilfred Owen deserves our respect.

Our visit will contain two elements: a guided tour of the Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery and a tour of the medieval and Tudor town centre. Formerly housed in the old castle buildings at one time used by Shrewsbury School, the Museum relocated in 2014 to the old Music Hall (1840) of the town. Here it tells the story of Shrewsbury from Roman times to the Medieval, Tudor, Stuart and later periods through a linked sequence of galleries. There is also a gallery focusing on the wider county of Shropshire.

The tour of the old town centre of Shrewsbury will be led by a Blue Badge guide and will include the Castle, the Market Square and visits to two of the town's finest churches: the impressive Saxon and medieval church of St Mary, which contains some exceptional stained glass, and the 18th century church of St Chad. This is one of the finest and rarest examples of a circular church with its original galleries and pews still intact. There will also be an opportunity to see the riverside gardens of The Quarry.

Each tour will be offered twice, once in the morning and again in the afternoon. The group size, both at the Museum and for the town tour, will be limited to a maximum of twenty people. A buffet lunch, served in a room reserved for us at the Museum, will be included in the cost of the outing. The day inevitably includes a fair amount of gentle walking, and some of the streets of the town are hilly; however, the buildings to be visited are all fully accessible.

COST PER PERSON: £40.00 to include all costs – coach fare, admission and tour of the Museum, guided tour of the town centre and lunch at the Museum.

Pick-up points: Six Ways (outside Co-op) 08:00, Royal Well Coach Station 08:10, Westall Green (opposite Texaco garage) 08:25. The coach will leave Shrewsbury by 15:45 (return journey time approx. two and a quarter hours).

To book: please book online via our website or by using the form at the centre of this newsletter.

Hereford Cathedral and the Mappa Mundi

Friday 22 May

Group Leaders: Adrian Barlow (FoTW) and Robin Ingram (FoGC)

This will be a joint outing shared between the Friends of The Wilson and the Friends of Gloucester Cathedral, the first of what we hope may become a number of future collaborations.

Hereford Cathedral is always linked, because of the Three Choirs Festival, with Gloucester and Worcester, but is perhaps the most reticent of the three cathedrals, having neither the great tower of Gloucester nor the lovely riverside setting of Worcester. All the same it is a fine building with a great deal to see and enjoy, not least the unique *Mappa Mundi*. This dates from c. 1300 and is the largest medieval map still known to exist.

During our visit there will be three one-hour tours. First, a tour conducted by one of the Guides will focus on the history and architecture of the Cathedral and its surrounding buildings – a journey from Norman to late twentieth century style. Second, a tour of the stained glass, led by Adrian Barlow, will explore some of the Cathedral's fine medieval, Victorian and 21st century windows; these include the largest stained glass window in Britain by the studio of Charles Eamer Kempe and, at the opposite extreme, two beautiful intimate windows by Tom Denny, celebrating the life of the 17th century Hereford mystic, Thomas Traherne. The third tour will take us to visit both the *Mappa Mundi* and the Cathedral's Chained Library, one of the finest anywhere in Britain. This tour will be led jointly by the librarians of Hereford and Gloucester Cathedrals, Dr Rosemary Firman and Rebecca Phillips.

Those taking part in this outing will be placed in three groups, each taking the three tours in rotation, with breaks in between. The Cathedral Café in the Bishop's Cloister offers coffee, light lunches and teas, but there will be time during the lunch break for members to explore the Cathedral Close and, if they wish, to visit one of the well-recommended cafés close by. Maps and directions will be provided.

COST PER PERSON: £30.00 to include the coach fare, and the tours of the Cathedral, *Mappa Mundi* and Chained Library. Refreshments and lunch are not included – members may make their own arrangements.

Pick-up points: Charlton Kings: Six Ways (outside Co-op) 08:50, Cheltenham: Royal Well Coach Station 09:00, Westall Green (opposite Texaco garage) 09:10, Gloucester: Westgate Car Park 09:30. The coach will leave Hereford at 16:00 (return journey time approx. one and three-quarter hours).

To book: please book online via our website or by using the form at the centre of this Newsletter. Booking for this joint outing will open on Monday 13 January.

Compton Verney and Kiftsgate Gardens: A feast for the senses

Wednesday 10 June

Group Leaders: Adrian Barlow & Martha Alleguen

Today we will see two sumptuous exhibitions at Compton Verney, the classical manor house, now an accredited major national gallery, set in beautiful parkland designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. After a welcome introduction with refreshments, you will be free to explore the exhibitions:

Cranach: Artist and Innovator: featuring some of the most beguiling paintings by the important Renaissance German artist, Lucas Cranach the Elder. Works on display are on loan from the National Gallery, the Royal Collection and Waddesdon Manor. The exhibition will also showcase modern and contemporary works inspired by Cranach, including Pablo Picasso, to demonstrate his significant and enduring cultural influence.

Fabric: Touch and Identity: playful and provocative, this exhibition explores how clothes and textiles conceal, reveal and seduce through the lenses of art, design, fashion, film and dance. It features works by Vivienne Westwood, Dorothea Tanning and Reiko Sudo.

Lunch may be taken at the 'Compton Kitchen' or bring a picnic if the weather is fine (there are picnic tables in the grounds).

In the early afternoon, we set off to nearby **Kiftsgate Court Gardens** - a garden for all seasons - created 100 years ago by Heather Muir, inspired by her friend Lawrence Johnston of Hidcote Manor. Additions and enhancements have been made by Muir's daughter and granddaughter, the present owner, Anne Chambers.

*(Some of the **paths are steep, uneven** and can become **slippery** when wet or very dry. Sensible shoes are **strongly** recommended.)* There are also a tea-room, toilets and plant shop on site.

COST PER PERSON: £46.00 for non-Art Fund members; **£42.00** for Art Fund members (please bring your membership card). Price includes all entrances, & coffee/tea & biscuits on arrival.

Pick up points: Royal Well Coach Station 08:45, Six Ways (by St Edward's School) 09:00. Our coach will return to Cheltenham at approximately 17:00.

To book: Please book online via our website or by using the form at the centre of this newsletter.

Visit to Highnam Court & The Holy Innocents Church, Gloucester

Thursday 16 July
Group Leader: Sue Reeves

We are very fortunate to have been given the opportunity of a talk on Highnam Court together with a tour of the Music, Dining and Gold Rooms on the ground floor. A sandwich lunch including homemade cakes and tea/coffee will be served in the Orangery, after which we will have at least an hour to explore the wonderful gardens and enjoy the roses at our own pace. (Please note that there are gravelled paths so disabled access is limited.)

At 15:00 we will be driven round to The Holy Innocents Church for a private 45-minute guided tour. The craftsmanship throughout the church is exceptional, including stunning windows and wall paintings. Our coach will then depart about 16:00.

Highnam Court was built in 1658 after the original house was seriously damaged in the Civil War. The Highnam Estate was bought in 1838 by Thomas Gambier Parry, who was an accomplished artist, musician and art collector, and by 1874 the gardens rivalled any in the UK. When the process of restoration by current owner Roger Head started in 1994 the gardens were completely overgrown but they have been totally and lovingly restored to their former glory, with many new additions being made to complement and enhance the original design.



The Holy Innocents Church, Highnam is a Grade I Listed Building; one of the most significant Victorian churches in the country. It was commissioned by Thomas Gambier Parry and consecrated in 1851. The architecture is gothic revival style, and the church is decorated throughout with frescoes painted by Parry. His son Hubert inherited the estate and is best remembered for his musical setting for Blake's poem *Jerusalem* and much other memorable church music.

COST PER PERSON: £30.00.

Pick-up points: Sixways (outside Co-op) 11:00, Royal Well Coach Station 11:10, Westall Green 11:20.

Please book online via our website or by using the form at the centre of this newsletter.

Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,



After the dank dark days of the last couple of months, it is good to be able to look ahead to a bright new year, and I hope very much that the forthcoming Friends' events – outings, talks and receptions, all described in the pages of this Newsletter – will appeal to you. Sincere thanks to everyone who has supported our events during 2019. Through doing so, you have increased the Friends' ability to support the activities of The Wilson at a time when there is a real 'buzz' about the Museum: I hope you were impressed by the greatly enhanced Christmas display in the shop, and that you will have noticed, too, how the café is much busier than a year ago. If you've not already done so, I hope you will try one of the *First Thursday* evenings which are proving a great success in attracting new and younger visitors to The Wilson.

The main exhibition of the winter, marking the centenary of the death of one of the leading figures of the Arts and Crafts movement, is *Ernest Gimson: Observation, Imagination and Making*. This is a particularly significant exhibition, curated in-house and affording the opportunity to showcase The Wilson's important archive of Gimson drawings, letters and other documents, alongside a remarkable collection of Gimson furniture and artefacts. An innovative feature is that throughout the run of the exhibition there will be a succession of Artists in Residence based in Gallery 3. Their work in fields as diverse as calligraphy, furniture and textiles exemplifies how the same qualities of observation, imagination and making that inspired the Arts and Crafts movement a century ago are just as fundamental today.

The Trustees have decided that so important an event deserves our thanks and recognition. On **Monday 24 February**, the last evening of the show, we shall be hosting a Friends' Reception and Private View at which we can thank all those who have been responsible for curating, presenting and promoting this landmark exhibition. I am delighted to say that Brewin Dolphin have offered to sponsor this event, which I hope you will want to support. A special invitation to this Reception will be sent to all members. Please keep the date free!

Two further dates for your diary. First, the annual New Members' Coffee Morning will be held on **Wednesday 25 March**, to which all those who have joined the Friends in the past twelve months are warmly invited. This is an informal event offering the chance to learn about the work of The Friends, about how you can become more involved in what we do for, and with, The Wilson, and to have two introductory tours of the collections.

Second, the Annual General Meeting of the Friends will take place at The Wilson on **Monday 8 June** and will be followed by a Reception and Private View of the major Summer exhibition of the Cheltenham Group of Artists, to be held this year in the Friends' Gallery.

With all good wishes for the New Year.



Douglas Ogle

As we go to press, we have been saddened to learn that Douglas Ogle died on 3 December 2019, after a short illness. Current and former members will recall Douglas fondly as one of the very earliest members of the Friends of Cheltenham Museum and Art Gallery, as a great supporter of everything the Friends stood for, and - together with his wife Jenny - as the organiser of many memorable and eye-opening outings and overseas tours. A full tribute to him will appear in the May Newsletter.

News from The Wilson Friends' Support of the Accreditation Process

Background

The Accreditation Scheme is the UK industry standard for museums and galleries. It helps everyone involved with a museum to do the right things, helping people to access and engage with collections, and protect them for future generations. The Accreditation Scheme does this by making sure museums manage their collections properly, engage with visitors, and are governed appropriately by encouraging all museums and galleries to meet an agreed standard.

The Wilson submitted its Arts Council England Accreditation return on Friday 11 October. A huge amount of staff, trustee and volunteer time has gone into getting our house in order and we were pleased with the progress since we started preparing for the application a year ago. We were able to submit the return with documentation in place and systems and records in order.

We would therefore like to ask the Friends for their help with a 'test run' of our Accreditation assessment visit early in the new year. This would involve independent trips to the museum to assess the visitor experience, particularly around questions of:

- Welcome
- General cleanliness/ presentation
- Interaction with staff and volunteers
- Knowledge of staff and volunteers about the collection
- What was on offer to do and engage you during your time
- Have you left knowing more about Cheltenham, our collections or the subject of our current exhibition?
- How was your overall experience (poor) 1-5 (excellent)?

We would like Friends to attend independently in week commencing 13 January, fill out a questionnaire around the above issues and then attend a debrief coffee morning on Friday 17 January, 10:00 – 11:00.

Documentation Assistants

Eleanor and Matthew, our documentation assistants, are doing sterling work, and are worth their weight in something rather more valuable than silver!

Since last July they have inventoried four bays of one of our off-site stores, known to us as Pod 1; large areas of the archaeological small finds collections in the Roller Racking at The Wilson; and are making their way round the permanent displays. They have overhauled the Entry and Exit documentation, required for accreditation; and are in the process of analysing some of our stranger records from the 1960s – we very much hope curators in 60 years' time won't refer to our documentation work in quite the same way! But safe to say Eleanor and Matthew are keeping our curators on their toes and finding all the little weaknesses in documentation paperwork.

To give you some more detail: inventorying is a requirement of the Arts Council accreditation scheme that we are currently highlighting in our work plans. It involves listing the unique number of an object (or even if it has a number at all!), naming the object, giving a single line brief description, noting any condition concerns, and stating where it is to be located. Eleanor and Matthew are also photographing each object that is in the off-site stores, as they are less easy to get to, and it is more efficient to bring images up on the computer than to go up to the store to actually examine the object! So far, they have listed 10,124 objects. These range from flints, framed needlework, spears, medieval tiles, and social history items.

Their work has brought other things to light, just proving how vital and valuable inventory work is – it is the Cinderella of museum work and should really be viewed as the Princess or Queen! Going through the galleries, handling each object, has shown up items that are damaged, or faded, and more worryingly suffering with pest infestation. So, an immediate programme of wrapping, freezing and cleaning is being implemented. The two natural history cases have been completely overhauled and the Wilson cases will be subjected to the same full treatment in the next few weeks. The fur suit is currently having time in the deep freeze in Birmingham Museum, an irony as it of course met these conditions

during its original usage. We are taking the opportunity to get a full condition report on the suit, and also to have the fur analysed to prove once and for all, which animals it is made of. Handling objects and looking at them in detail gives the opportunity for valuable research and photography... and future ideas! We would for example like to consider having a replica suit made but that is definitely for the future!



Whilst handling each of the archaeological metal small finds, we have also been able to check the silica gel indicator packs. These gel beads absorb moisture, and a sachet is placed in each box of finds by the archaeological units before they deposit their finds in the Museum. The sachets need regular checking to see what colour they are. If they have turned green they are fully charged with moisture and need changing. (You may have noticed tiny sachets of silica gel in shoeboxes when you purchase new footwear. The ones we use are the same but larger versions.) Matthew and Eleanor have now checked and changed all the gel packets, some 160 items.

Another part of the inventory job is to note the wider condition of objects and to

consider rationalisation. We are working closely with the Borough Council to think through the future of some of our items; do we for example really need 12 hames, 15 pitchfork heads, 16 bill hooks without handles and so on? These types of objects were mainly donated in the 1930s before the current professional guidelines on collecting. We would not accept agricultural material now, unless it had some cogent local story that fitted directly into our Collections Development Policy. If say, we were offered a sickle that Mary Agnes Wilson used at The Crippetts and we could prove that, we would consider collecting it. The specimens we have have no provenance apart from the original donor's name and are in very poor condition. So, Matthew and Eleanor are noting all these sorts of items too, and we will in time work through them with the Borough Council using the Arts Council framework for rationalisation and decide the best way forward.

Additionally, the documentation assistants are able to assist the curators in inputting vital data onto the AdLib museum database; so as the objects in the gallery are photographed, measured and examined, these details are going onto the database to help add to our knowledge of the items. Then, if sufficient is on the record, the records are being made live on the website. Visit <https://www.cheltenhammuseum.org.uk/collections/> to discover more on our collections!

We are grateful to The Friends of The Wilson for their funding support for these posts, the scanner and the two laptops. These are in use every day to do the work. Matthew and Eleanor pack the laptops in their rucksacks when they go off site to work and take them too to the stores to work on. They are essential to the work of the two positions and we are most grateful to the Friends for all their help and support. We hope from this report you can see how important the equipment is to the work. And how important the work is to the museum.

Sarah Cook, Corporate Manager The Wilson

The Wilson Shop

The shop is going from strength to strength with several new and bespoke ranges introduced in the lead up to Christmas and in support of the Ernest Gimson exhibition. At the time of writing in November the shop has comfortably exceeded the monthly income target. Friends of The Wilson were invited to a special VIP Christmas shopping event on 5 December. As a reminder, the Friends receive a 10% discount on most lines in the shop.

Sarah Cook, Corporate Manager The Wilson

Update from The Cheltenham Trust – Trustee Recruitment

During January 2020, The Cheltenham Trust will be seeking to recruit exceptional people who share the Cheltenham Trust's values and goals, to help us grow and prosper and make a great contribution to culture, the arts and sports in Cheltenham and Gloucestershire.

We are seeking to appoint new Trustees, observers and co-optees from diverse backgrounds with an interest and insight into the opportunities and challenges of our organisation. As a Trustee you will play a key role in helping the Trust to deliver its five-year strategic vision.

Key Dates for recruitment are:

- Launch recruitment advert – w/c 6 January 2020
- Closing Date – 31 January 2020
- Interview Dates – 12/13 February 2020.

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee, please contact fiona.marwick@cheltenhamtrust.org.uk, who will send you a recruitment pack.

Fiona Marwick, Clerk to the Board of The Cheltenham Trust

Pump Room Revival

Friends may be interested in a new group called Pump Room Revival. Formerly a sub-committee of Friends of Pittville, this is now an independent organisation whose goal is to breathe new life into Pittville Pump Room. They aim to celebrate the unique heritage of this Grade I listed building, to keep it open as a public space available to all, and to improve the quality of the welcome and facilities provided to visitors. The group has produced two mystery shopping reports on the visitor experience at the Pump Room which can be seen on their website, www.pumproomrevival.com, along with a short video. If you support their aims and would like to receive regular updates, please email pumproomrevival@outlook.com.



New Members

We welcome the following members who have recently joined the Friends:

Janet Barnes

Sarah Edmonds

Anne Field

Debbie and Duncan Forbes

Kathy Gilden

Polly Jones

Jean Lightband

Jean Middleton

Geoff Moss and Elizabeth Floyer-Moss

Marie Papworth

Diana Pollock

Connie Price

Antonia Vassilouthis

Brian and Patricia Wollaston

Rod Woodward-Court



Cranach, Lucas the Elder – Venus and Cupid © Compton Verney: see page 12

Forthcoming Events

Cheltenham

Our own Friends' events are in **blue**, The Wilson's events in **red** and The Holst Birthplace Museum's events in **green**. Please consult the respective websites for more details and The Wilson's Family/Kids events.

1st Thurs each month 18:00-21:00
First Thursdays

2nd Thurs each month 10:00-12:00
Be Creative

Until 25 February
Ernest Gimson: Observation, Imagination and Making (see p26)

Until 29 March
Treasures from the Archives
Open Archive

16 January 13:00
Ernest Gimson Exhibition Object
Talk: Embroidery, Plaster and Metalwork

27 January
Coffee Morning Talk 176: Arts and Crafts and Music (see p5)
Tim Porter
The Wilson

10 February
Coffee Morning Talk 177: Omar Ramsden
(see p6)
Helen Ashton
The Wilson

13 February 13:00
Ernest Gimson Exhibition Object
Talk: Architecture

19 February
Cheltenham College Visit
(see p7)

24 February
Friends' Reception and Private View of Ernest Gimson exhibition
(see p14)
The Wilson

14 March to 17 June tbc
Colourfield (working title)

18 March
Young Rembrandt at the Ashmolean
(see p8)

21 March
Indian music and dance (see p25)
Southam Village Hall

20 April
Coffee Morning Talk 178: Arthur Cameron (see p9)
Mary Greensted
The Wilson

24 April
Shrewsbury Museum and Town
(see p10)

24 April 19:30
Cheltenham: A Secret A-Z
(see p25)
St Luke's Hall

15 May
Octavo Concert (see p25)
Chapel Arts

Forthcoming Events continued

22 May
Hereford Cathedral and the
Mappa Mundi with FOGC
(see p11)

6 June to 20 September
Cheltenham Group of Artists
centenary exhibition (title
pending)

8 June
AGM & Reception and Private
View of the Cheltenham Group of
Artists centenary exhibition
The Wilson 18:30

10 June
Compton Verney & Kiftsgate
Gardens (see p12)

16 July
Highnam Court and Holy
Innocents Church (see p13)

Frameworks Partners

The Holburne Museum, Bath:
www.holburne.org

Until 9 February
Instagram or be Damned

24 January to 25 May
Grayson Perry The Pre-Therapy
Years

Victoria Art Gallery, Bath:
www.victoriagal.org.uk

Until 2 February
Peter Brown: Bath Is It

Until 9 February
Sally Muir: The Dog Show

15 February to 26 May
Toulouse-Lautrec and the Masters of
Montmartre

Bristol Museum & Art Gallery:
www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery/

Until 19 April
Do you believe in magic?

Until 4 October
Being Human: An exhibition of modern
sculpture

16 May to 27 September
Pre-Raphaelites

Swindon Museum & Art Gallery:
www.swindonmuseumandartgallery.org.uk

Until 7 March
Time for Tea!

14 January to 24 March
St Mary's Church: A Creative Celebration

21 January to 7 March
Glynn Uzzell, 1930 – 2014: A Retrospective
Exhibition

21 January to 30 May
Pop and Prosperity: 1960s British Art from
the Swindon Collection

24 March to 5 September
A Celebration of Colour: Modern and
Contemporary Ceramics

Current and Future Exhibitions and Events at The Wilson

Exhibitions

Ernest Gimson: Observation, Imagination and Making. 23 November until 25 February.

This exhibition celebrates the life and work of Ernest Gimson, a key Arts and Crafts Movement designer in the centenary year of his death, 1919. Gimson lived and worked in Sapperton, a village not far from Cheltenham, for most of his life. This curated in-house exhibition explores Gimson's creative process as a designer, focusing in turn on his architecture, furniture, textiles, metalwork and plaster. The Wilson holds Gimson's extensive archive of sketchbooks, designs, photographs and letters and the exhibition will explore the



journey of Gimson's ideas from sketch to finished product with items from our collection and with rarely seen private loans.

Please see page 26 for a review of the exhibition.

This exhibition is accompanied by a series of talks.

Ernest Gimson Talks

All talks start at 13:00 and will be in the exhibition with the objects. Each talk lasts about forty-five minutes, with a chance to chat. Come and join exhibition curator Kirsty Hartsiotis for an in depth look at Ernest Gimson.

Tickets: £5 per person, £3 concessions, Under 5's free.

Embroidery, Plaster and Metalwork. Thursday 16 January.

Ernest Gimson Exhibition Talk: Architecture. Thursday 13 February.

Open Archive Display

Treasures from the Archives. Until 29 March.

A fresh selection of Wilson water colours will be on display as well a selection of books from the Emery Walker library.

WHAT'S ON

Object Talks

The object talks continue to take place on the second Wednesday of the month at 13:00 with the objects in the galleries. Each talk lasts about half an hour, and then there will be a chance to ask questions. Please keep an eye on the website and social media for more details.

Afternoon Teas at The Wilson

The Wilson will be offering delicious afternoon teas in February. They will be available for £22 for two people. Tickets will be on sale soon.

Future Exhibitions

Colourfield (working title) 14 March – 7 June tbc.



Liz West is a Manchester-based artist (born 1985) who graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 2007. West's broad body of work encompasses wall-based artwork, sculpture and site-specific installations. She creates vivid environments that mix luminous colour and radiant light. West is interested in exploring how sensory phenomena can invoke psychological and physical responses that tap into our own deeply entrenched relationships to colours. www.liz-west.com

Cheltenham Group of Artists centenary exhibition (title pending) 6 June – 20 September.

2020 marks one hundred years since the start of the Cheltenham Group of Artists. The group was founded with the aim to bring together local professional artists. Their work was shown at The Wilson (formerly Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum) at an annual exhibition. A significant number of works were acquired for the Art Gallery and Museum's collections. These include works by Gerald Gardiner, Alfred Thornton and Irene Pownoll-Williams. The group is still very much active today and represents 30 professional artists.

The Cheltenham Group of Artists and The Wilson are working in partnership to create an exhibition to celebrate the centenary of the group. In this exciting exhibition works by current members will be shown alongside those from the collection. This provides a unique opportunity to see how the group has changed over the decades. Stories of the many artists based in and around Cheltenham, who were at the heart of this active group for the past 100 years, will be revealed.

In addition to the Friends Gallery exhibition, we will be highlighting members' works already on show and bringing out treasures from the stores to display in the collection galleries. A mini guide will be available providing more information and pinpointing where these works are on display.

Sarah Cook, Corporate Manager The Wilson

Holst Birthplace Events

Saturday 21 March: The Nethra Academy of Performing Arts will be presenting a programme of Indian music and dance at Southam Village Hall. There will be a short introduction about Holst's Indian-influenced music and his interest in Hindu culture.

Friday 24 April, 19:30: Eminent local author and historian David Elder will give a talk at St Luke's Hall entitled *Cheltenham: A Secret A-Z*.

Friday 15 May: Concert by renowned local 8-voice chamber choir Octavo at Chapel Arts.

Saturday 19 September: The Oriel Singers will be performing at the Holst Birthday Concert at St Andrew's Church, Montpellier.

Friday 30 October: Talk by distinguished local historian and academic Dr Steven Blake: *Pittville After Pitt, 1842-90*, at Pittville School.

Note: Times and ticket prices for some events have yet to be confirmed. Please see the Holst Birthplace Museum website (holstmuseum.org.uk) for updates.

Exhibition Review - Ernest Gimson: Observation, Imagination and Making

It is ironic that some of Gimson's beautiful creations were for fireplaces and Daniel Herdman – Cheltenham Art Gallery's curator from 1921 to 1951 – saved a multitude of Gimson's drawings from being burnt in 1940. In many ways, we have Herdman to thank for this wonderful and revealing exhibition.



The Wilson's collection includes 2,500 of Gimson's documents (not all on display). The splendid, overarching theme of this exhibition is the pairing of finished artefacts with their design drawings. Although much of the furniture on display is on loan, all of the drawings on show – except for that of the Fairford War Memorial – are Cheltenham's. The importance of these documents cannot be overestimated. I know, as a volunteer with the Collections Team, that there is worldwide interest in the Gimson drawings!

The welcoming display includes an exquisite Letter Cabinet and associated drawings. Stop and admire the decorative peacock roundel. In curator Kirsty Hartsiotis's exhibition briefing for volunteers she advised that one or two of her colleagues thought it looked like a 'Clanger'! (You remember...those daft puppets, created by Oliver Postgate, that lived on the Moon!) As I stopped to admire and wonder at it, I thought it couldn't be anything other than a peacock, with its blue lapis-lazuli breast and iridescent mother of pearl tail feathers fan.

Continuing round the exhibition, there is an introductory film, knowledgeably and clearly narrated by Kirsty, shown on a super-sharp screen, which makes the old B&W images look so fresh and the bright, beautiful images of the Cotswolds leave the viewer in no doubt as to why Gimson settled there.

The displays are eminently accessible, with simple Perspex cases and timber framed documents. It is possible to examine closely the fine pieces of furniture. I found some of the labels uncomfortably low but perhaps a good height for children and wheelchair-users. (Note that large-print versions of the labels are available to walk round with.) I do hope children visit the exhibition – it so inspirationally explores and explains the link between designing **and** making! Youngsters so inspired may take encouragement from Gimson's self-confidence as he taught himself plasterwork: "Any time that isn't spare has been employed at plasterwork. I get on capially and I shall soon be able to do the whole bag of tricks. Friezes I think nothing of and ribbed ceilings are child's play"!

There are two further delightful areas of display, both inspired by Gimson's work: print designer Katy Welsh's products in the cafeteria mezzanine and on sale in The Wilson shop. On the top floor, *In The Making* by the Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen: a fine variety of creations with demonstrations on certain days; plus Joe Magee's film of young people making a painted plaster frieze inspired by Nature. The frieze is on display.



Finally, if I may return to fireplaces, my favourite exhibit – one of the smallest pieces – is Gimson's Toasting Fork. He solved the problem of 'toasted fingers' by incorporating a hand guard which, being cleverly hinged, sits flat against the wall when the fork is replaced on its hearth-side hook. The fork was made by Norman Bucknell in 1985 from a design dating to the first decade of the 20th century. Its elemental polished steel is beautifully finished with subtle chased decorations and the ingenious hand guard has a pretty circle of punched hearts.

Robert Rimell

OTHER MUSEUMS TO VISIT

Gilbert White's House and the Oates Collection Selborne Hampshire

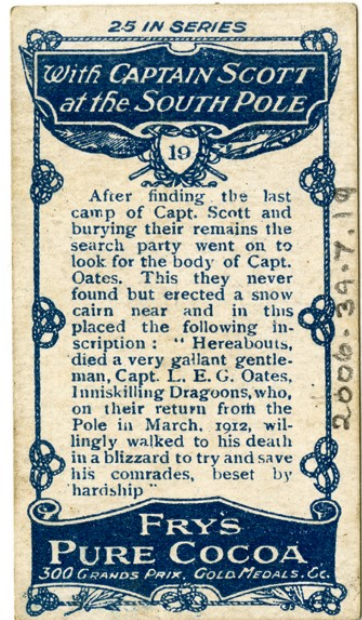


This museum was a 'two for the price of one' when I last visited, as it presents the stories of the eminent 18th century naturalist Gilbert White and the Antarctic explorer Lawrence Oates. Now another gallery has been added to show the life of another Oates, Frank, who investigated areas of Africa and the Americas in the 19th century. The contrasting but complementary stories remind me of my time working at the Cotswold Countryside Collection at Northleach where we grappled with telling the farming history of the Cotswolds in an 18th century prison! But somehow it works here in Selborne, as each character in their own way was an explorer.



OTHER MUSEUMS TO VISIT

The property itself is lovely, originally a 'two up two down', but added to over the centuries to the substantial property we have today. Gilbert White lived in the house; it was his home, and he set about landscaping the grounds, and they are a delight. A trusty team of volunteers known as the Wakes Weeders assist the gardener to keep the planting schemes as near as practical to the scheme Gilbert White himself outlined in his *Garden Kalendar*. So, there are traditional varieties of vegetables and herbs, long flower beds, and a meadow for wild flowers. And all around are the hills and woodlands of south Hampshire to walk in, or just admire from the grounds of the house, maybe over a picnic or tea at the café. There is a lot to take in, with the three different stories, so a cuppa is a welcome break!



My greatest interest is obviously in the Lawrence Oates section and, since 2011, the museum has managed to attract sizeable grants to redisplay their Antarctic material; a job well done with the help of the designers, Iimagemakers. They have more recently upgraded the exhibition on Frank Oates as well as redoing some of the general areas, including the café. The Oates material is displayed in a white gallery, using some of the excellent photographs by Ponting showing Lawrence Oates with the ponies who were his responsibility and other now poignant images of the small team of 5 explorers at the South Pole. The collection has some wonderful artefacts too: a sledge and skis, snowshoes, food containers, and letters and other archival material from the last part of the expedition. There is a figure of Oates dressed in expedition attire, the

OTHER MUSEUMS TO VISIT

more practical clothing seen in many of the photographs, unlike the fur suit we display. And, of course, you cannot help but think of Oates the man, and his well known sacrifice, walking out of the tent on his birthday to try and give Scott, Wilson and Bowers a chance of reaching the hut. In vain as we know, but as Wilson wrote to Oates' mother: "I have never seen or heard of such courage as your son has shown. He died like a man and a soldier, without a word of regret or complaint".



2020 is the 300th anniversary of Gilbert White's birth, so there will be a huge celebration with associated events at the museum, so it will be especially worth your while visiting this 'three for the price of one' museum.

<https://gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk>

Gilbert White's House

The Wakes, High Street, Selborne, Hampshire GU34 3JH

Ann-Rachael Harwood

Trip to Winterbourne House and Garden and The Barber Institute of Fine Arts

A full coach set off on the 6 September at 9:00, from the 2nd pick up at the Racecourse, for the University of Birmingham Campus at Edgbaston. This is where Winterbourne House and The Barber Institute are situated. We arrived at Winterbourne House at 10:20 with an overcast sky, which did not dampen our spirits as there was a very nice café for those who felt they needed refreshment before exploring the house and gardens.

The house was built in 1904 by John and Margaret Nettlefold in the Arts and Crafts style, as a family home for their five children. William Morris was a leading figure in The Arts and Craft world and encouraged people to "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful". The house and gardens had several private owners before it passed to University ownership in 1944.

The stunning seven-acre garden was designed by Margaret Nettlefold who based it on the work of renowned landscape gardener Gertrude Jekyll.

The tour of the house and garden was informal with everyone exploring in their own time and in their own way, which worked extremely well. We were asked to be at the Barber Institute reception area by 2:15 which was a short walk from Winterbourne House.

Winterbourne House has been restored in wonderful Arts and Crafts style. There are very few items of furniture on display that were from the Nettlefold's time nor is it clear how individual rooms were decorated or furnished. Instead the rooms have been furnished to show how an upper middle-class family might have lived in the early 20th century. There were so many highlights to view – from the unusual feature of the wavy roof line to make the house look older than it is, to the many and beautiful areas of the gardens such as the Walled and Sunken gardens.

At the Barber Institute we were split into two groups with very knowledgeable guides to explore what is like a mini National Gallery. It was founded in 1932 by Lady Barber in memory of her husband, Sir Henry Barber and features many of the greatest names in Western art. Our guides picked out some highlights of the gallery and gave us an insight into the lives of the painters as well as the pictures we viewed. It was a privilege to get so close to paintings by, for example, Degas, Van Gogh, Monet, Pissarro and Botticelli.

A very enjoyable and informative day and thanks to Martha and Adrian for guiding us through it.

Jane Watson

Nick Nelson on Leonardo da Vinci

Following a very pleasant social half-hour with tea, coffee and cakes in the company of other Friends, I had the great pleasure of listening to the excellent Nick Nelson talk about Leonardo Da Vinci.

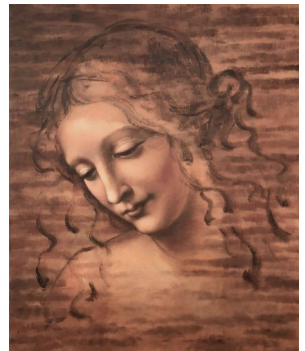


Leonardo was introduced as a peerless genius, not solely of the High Renaissance but of all time. Nick reminded us how ubiquitous Leonardo is in contemporary culture, from the Ninja Turtles to The Da Vinci Code of Dan Brown and went on to explain how this illegitimate son of a provincial notary became universally acknowledged as the archetypal Renaissance Man and arguably the most multitalented, innovative and creative person ever to have lived.

Leonardo had no formal schooling, but his fascination with the natural world provided him with a library and a laboratory and his eye for detail, pattern and underlying structure enabled him to tap its riches. His use of natural forms and mathematical patterns in his paintings and

drawings was seminal and critical to his success - his work abounds with ideas inspired by nature. The breadth of Leonardo's talent is astonishing, making significant contributions to painting, drawing, sculpture, engineering, architecture, anatomy, and physiology. He was also a skilled lyre player.

Leonardo's legacy sheds light on his personality; there are only fifteen finished paintings but 7000 pages of his notebooks survive and many more have been lost. He was notorious amongst his patrons for delivering his commissions late or never. He was impulsively driven with a relentless and free roving creative spark. With modern eyes, Leonardo would probably have been diagnosed as having ADHD.



It was by necessity a whirlwind tour of one man's life and legacy, but Nick left me in no doubt of Leonardo's qualifications for unrivalled eminence.

Nick was an extremely engaging speaker, talking with an obvious passion for his subject. The hour flew by and I would happily have listened to another hour or more.

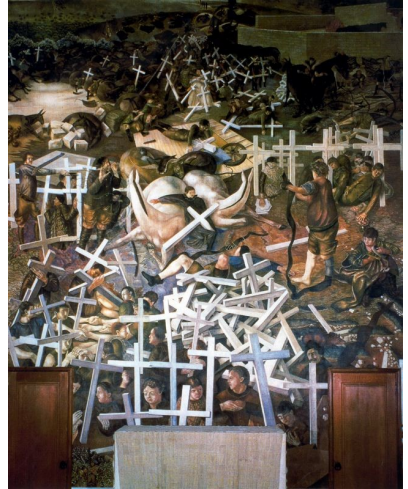
Richard Seymour

Winchester and Sandham Memorial Chapel

On 8 October, just over 20 Friends set off rather early in the morning for a fascinating trip to Winchester Cathedral and Sandham Memorial Chapel, which was organised by Martha Alleguen with her usual admirable efficiency and guided by our Chair, Adrian Barlow, with his boundless enthusiasm and knowledge.

After a welcome coffee and cake in the cathedral refectory, the party enjoyed a guided tour of the cathedral in two groups. Our guide, Josephine, clearly knew and loved the place and Peter and I, despite several visits over the years, learnt so much and saw so many new things in the building that it was like seeing it with new eyes. After the general tour we all reassembled in the Lady Chapel to hear Adrian talk about the three Kempe windows there and to hear his concern about the state of one of them which had several holes in it.

After lunch we moved on to Burghclere to visit the Sandham Memorial Chapel and to see the Stanley Spencer paintings which completely cover the walls. I did not find that the building had the feel of a chapel; there was nothing devotional about its atmosphere but the paintings were quite another matter. Spencer showed the



mundane aspects of war away from the front-line, drawing on his own experience as a medical orderly and concentrating on the day to day tasks involving tea urns, the laundry and, most bizarre of all, washing hospital lockers in baths. The great resurrection picture on the wall behind the altar had a genuine pathos but I will remember the tea urns and lockers. Thank you, Martha and Adrian, for a remarkable day.

Janet Thornton

Mary Greensted on Ernest Gimson and the Impact of the Cotswolds

This talk was part of the 2019 *Gimson 100 Celebrations* to mark the centenary of his death in 1919. Mary's new book on Gimson was published in October 2019.



Ernest William Gimson was born in 1864 in Leicester. Gimson's father Josiah, an engineer and iron foundry owner, founded the Secular Society in Leicester at Secular Hall which he paid for, to advance ideas about the individual and humanism, considered radical at that time. On his father's death in 1882, Gimson and his brother Sidney took over the Society. William Morris gave a talk there in 1884 and encouraged Gimson to pursue a career as an architect. Gimson moved to London in 1886, working for John Dando Sedding in his architecture practice where he met the two Barnsley brothers, Ernest and Sidney.

Gimson travelled to France and Italy, notably Ravenna and Siena Cathedral, studying furniture. His first chair design in Somerset (1890) was in beech, elm and yew and can still be seen in Secular Hall.

Gimson and Sidney Barnsley decided to leave London and set up in the Cotswolds. Both shared a love of architecture and the countryside and wanted to promote local crafts and labour. William Morris encouraged the move to the new location as being cheaper, with lovely countryside and easy access by rail. They rented Home Farm at Ewen near Cirencester in order to concentrate on Cotswold life: simplicity, 'back to basics' with the impact of nature and working with local materials and traditions.

In 1895 they moved again to Pinbury Park, Sapperton, an old farmhouse with medieval foundations situated on the Bathurst estate, on a repair lease. Here they were joined by Ernest Barnsley and his family from their house at Barnt Green, Birmingham. Gimson's cousin Lucy Morley also joined them to run the farmhouse and she and Sidney Barnsley were married in 1895.

All three men shared a workshop for furniture making, designing chairs and decorative plaster panel work, alongside architecture. A notable example was the White House, Leicester (1896-7). This was Gimson's first architectural project, which was unusual in its use of brick overlaid with limewash and decorative plaster panels on the outside. Inside, the wooden staircase had woodwork carved in the Cotswolds by Richard Harrison, who worked alongside Gimson. Land was given for building on in Sapperton by the 7th Earl of Bathurst where Gimson designed his house, The Leasowes, moving there in 1902 with his wife Emily, daughter of a Yorkshire vicar, whom he had married in 1900. The house

incorporated a workshop and a dovecot.

Gimson designed the gravestone for his brother-in-law at Duntisbourne Rouse Church, Gloucestershire (1901) for which he used an oak leaf and 4-window design. All three men were now doing well and Gimson entered into partnership with Ernest Barnsley while Sidney made furniture. Peter van der Waals, a Dutch cabinet maker, was foreman in charge of a mix of older men and young local lads and a smithy was set up for metalwork. Gimson was commissioned to design ladder-back chairs and decorative steel fire tools for Old Place, Mochrum in Scotland (1904-5). At the 1904 Royal Society of Needlework exhibition in London a glove box designed in walnut by Gimson was on display.

Gimson and the Barnsleys had two workshops for woodwork at Daneway House, near Sapperton. One of these was for church work at Salle Church, Norfolk (1911-12) where the carved medieval pews were saved by him by joining up the old woodwork with the new to preserve the originals. He had designed the plaster ceilings at the Bradford Council Chamber in 1909 and candle sconces in metal incorporating a dog rose design. Embroidery was also completed by the

Barnsley family and an octagonal ebony wooden box he designed was completed with recycled mutton bone and shells for decoration.



Gimson's work was shown at various locations across the country: London, Manchester and Leicester and abroad, including the British Arts and Crafts Paris Exhibition at the Louvre in 1914. However, by 1917 Gimson had closed his workshop in the Cotswolds as his health deteriorated and he died in August 1919 at age 54.

The Memorial Library at Bedales (1919-21) was his final project which was completed after his death by Sidney Barnsley. Mary Greensted's accompanying slides of Gimson's work included pieces from The Wilson Museum's own collection and public and private collections. Furniture pieces can be seen at the New Walk Museum in Leicester, Rodmarton Manor and Owlpen Manor, Gloucestershire.

Ernest Gimson was influenced by Cotswold craft traditions, the countryside and nature, all of which were an inspiration to his life and work. He was a member of the Art Workers Guild and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

He was described by the art and architecture historian Nikolaus Pevsner in his book, *Pioneers of Modern Design* (1960) as “the greatest of the English architect-designers”.

Jane Medcalf

Adrian Barlow on Ruskin and Venice

John Ruskin was born 200 years ago this year and first visited Venice with his parents as a 16-year-old. He visited 3 more times in the 1840s, a period of political and military upheaval. Venice helped Ruskin to develop from art critic to art historian and then to social critic/philosopher. Ruskin was a great champion of the works of JMW Turner and went to Venice to see where Turner had painted. Ruskin’s *Modern Painters* is a 5-volume work published between 1843 and 1860.

Ruskin published *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* in 1849. The ‘Lamps’, representing the demands that good architecture should meet, are Sacrifice, Truth, Power, Beauty, Life, Memory and Obedience.



Venice, Moonrise: Joseph Mallord William Turner

Ruskin said that Venice taught him everything he knew about art and architecture. He went back time and again looking, measuring and drawing. He thought that only he was capable of truly appreciating it.

Ruskin believed that the finest period of Gothic architecture was the 12th-13th century. Adrian showed us many illustrations of buildings that Ruskin revered and abhorred. Gothic Venice, as he saw it, was built by craftsmen working honestly and with a moral purpose because Gothic architecture was Christian as opposed to the 'pagan' classical style. He believed that it had something to tell contemporary British society. He was very influential with English architects such as George Edmund Street and George Frederick Bodley and, in his time, more influential than William Morris. In EM Forster's *Howards End*, Leonard Bast, the impoverished bank clerk trying to 'improve' himself, seeks 'Culture' through Beethoven, pictures by Watts and Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* (1851-53).

In later life Ruskin sank into depression and lamented the decline of Venice. However, we are indebted to Ruskin for the conservation of the Byzantine Venetian basilica, St Mark's. And this led in turn to the founding of William Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

A memorial plaque at the Pensione Calcina, where Ruskin often lodged, reads:

John Ruskin
 Lived in this house, 1877
 High Priest of Art
 In our Stones and in our San Marco
 In almost every monument of Italy
 He sought at one and the same time
 The craftsman's soul and the soul of the people.
 Every marble, every bronze, every canvas
 Each of these things proclaimed to him
 That beauty is religion
 If the virtue of man inspire it
 And the people's reverence accept it.
 The Council of Venice, In Gratitude
 January 26, 1900

Martin Renshaw

Committee and Volunteers Who's Who

President	PJ Crook		
Chair	Adrian Barlow	01242 515192	chair@friendsofthewilson.org.uk
Secretary	John Beard	01242 514059	secretary@friendsofthewilson.org.uk
Treasurer	Liz Giles	01242 224773	treasurer@friendsofthewilson.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Martin Renshaw	01242 696692	membership@friendsofthewilson.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Martin Renshaw	01242 696692	editor@friendsofthewilson.org.uk
Cheltenham Trust Liaison	Jaki Davis	07747 795709	jaki.meekingsdavis@hotmail.com
Talks Organiser	Sue Pearce	01242 522467	sue.pearce@blueyonder.co.uk
Collections	David Addison	01242 238905	davidaddison10@btinternet.com
Volunteer Liaison	Robert Rimell	07858-007852	rimell@me.com
Mailing	Sue Reeves	01242 675497	sue.reeves39@uwclub.net
Events Bookings	Alison Pascoe	01242 519413	events@friendsofthewilson.org.uk
	and		
	Martha Alleguen	01242 526601	events@friendsofthewilson.org.uk

Deadline for next issue: 25 March for May 2020 edition. Please send articles, illustrations, letters, news and reports to the editor: editor@friendsofthewilson.org.uk. Articles may be edited and the editor's decision is final. Articles should be a maximum of 280 words, unless otherwise agreed with the editor, and accompanied by an image or images if possible.

Membership renewals: are due on **1 April**. If you joined on or after 1 October 2019, your membership runs to March 2021 so no payment is required this year (unless you are paying by standing order and your first payment has been set to 1 April 2020). Once again rates have been held at **£20** for Individual and **£35** for Joint memberships.

There are several payment options: online through our website (card or Paypal), by bank transfer, standing order, or cheque. Please send cheques to the Membership Secretary, Flat 3 Queensholme, Pittville Circus Road, Cheltenham, GL52 2QE, enclosing a SAE.

Newsletter Dates and Mailing Preferences: Newsletters are published in January, May and September each year. Wherever possible, we will include booking forms for events such as visits and talks inside your copy of the Newsletter. At other times we will contact you by email if we have your email address, as this keeps our costs (and administrative effort) to a minimum. If we do not have your email address already, please let us know. If we have your email address but you would prefer to receive information by post where possible and appropriate, please also let us know.

The Wilson, Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum
Clarence Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 3JT
phone: 01242 237431
email: ArtGallery@cheltenhamtrust.org.uk
www.thewilson.org.uk

Friends of The Wilson, Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum
Registered charity number 289514
www.friendsofthewilson.org.uk
email: queries@friendsofthewilson.org.uk
Newsletter Editor: editor@friendsofthewilson.org.uk

Cover photo: *The Resurrection of the Soldiers* by Sir Stanley Spencer, 1928/9 at Sandham Memorial Chapel (see page 33)



Chorley's

Gloucestershire's Fine Art Auctioneers



Free auction valuations

Expert knowledge of the art market

Live internet bidding

Spacious salerooms and free parking

Valuations for insurance and probate



Prinknash Abbey Park, Gloucestershire GL48EU

01452 344499 enquiries@chorleys.com

www.chorleys.com