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The Higgins
BEDFORD

WHAT'S ON

October 2021 to March 2022



High Street, Bedford, about 1919 by J Valentine & Co., Dundee



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

ABOUT THE HIGGINS BEDFORD

We are a Bedford Borough Council cultural service that showcases wonderful and varied collections of fine and decorative arts and changing exhibitions drawn from the nationally significant collection of British watercolours, drawings and prints. Displays of archaeology, social history and ethnography demonstrate how Bedfordshire has developed over time. These collections inspire a programme of temporary exhibitions, active learning and events.

In our permanent collection spaces you can:

- tour the 1840s house built by the Higgins family next to their brewery. Uncover family stories and Cecil Higgins' collection of internationally important glass and ceramics
- explore the biggest collection of painted furniture created by William Burges, the leading Gothic Revival architect and designer of the 1800s
- admire the decorative artwork and techniques of the most influential designers from over four centuries including fine glassware, textiles, enamels and metalwork
- study the Edward Bawden archive, the collection of one of the most influential artists of his generation. Discover the work of this versatile artist in changing exhibitions
- uncover the geology of Bedfordshire and discover how people from the Stone Age to Medieval times lived in and shaped the landscape we see today
- follow the development of the local area through agriculture, engineering and the brickworks, airships at Cardington, the Second World War and technological advances
- enjoy changing displays about local people who have influenced the story of Bedfordshire
- take a glimpse into the world of The Collectors and cases of natural history, ethnographic and archaeological items from near and far.

VISIT US



We have several measures in place to help ensure that visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience, in line with Government and public health guidance.

Please do not visit if you have symptoms of COVID-19.

To find out more about the latest guidance, booking information, temporary exhibitions and events, please visit www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk or telephone 01234 718618.

EXHIBITIONS



Images courtesy of Airship Dreams: Escaping Gravity lead artist Mike Stubbs and project Creative Team

Airship Dreams: Escaping Gravity

Continues Until 28 November 2021

Sir William Harpur Gallery – Free Entry

Continues Until 20 March 2022

Connections Gallery – Free Entry

Bedford Creative Arts, The Higgins Bedford, the Airship Heritage Trust and artist Mike Stubbs, have joined forces to launch this two-fold exhibition which celebrates Bedford's airship heritage. It brings together innovative digital contemporary art and exciting new community sourced displays, presenting the pioneering vision of airship development over the decades.

In Sir William Harpur Gallery, Mike Stubbs' contemporary new media installation invites the viewer on a spectacular journey - weaving material generated in Unreal games software, immersive audio composition, choir, archive film, and interactive sculptural elements.

Alongside it in the Connections Gallery, and curated in partnership with the local community, visitors will discover community treasures, oral histories, artefacts, screened digital materials, animation, graphic design and young people's responses to the themes.

Find out more at www.airshipdreams.com

Going to Town: 200 Years of Bedford's Art

Continues Until 20 March 2022

Wixamtree Gallery – Free Entry

Discover the beauty of Bedford and the surrounding area in this exhibition celebrating artists' views of the town and the River Great Ouse. Some forty watercolours, oils and prints from the past two centuries will be on display, including works by JMW Turner, Dora Carrington, Thomas Fisher and Stanley Orchard. The exhibition will highlight what artists have found fascinating about our town.



Unknown Artist, *Bedford Regatta*, 1851 © The Higgins Bedford

Edward Bawden: Architectural Elements

Continues Until 16 January 2022

Edward Bawden Gallery – Free Entry

Architecture is one of the most prominent and reoccurring subjects in Edward Bawden's work. Selected from the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery collection and home of the Edward Bawden archive, explore his passion for architecture through prints, advertising campaigns and private commissions. Includes architecturally inspired wallpaper designs, nostalgic pre-war vignettes of rural houses, 1930s modernist architecture and Victorian ironwork structures, some of which have never before been on public display.



Edward Bawden (1903–1989) *The Floral Hall*, Covent Garden, 1967 © The Edward Bawden Estate

EXHIBITIONS

Edward Bawden: Artist Plantsman

29 January 2022 – January 2023

Edward Bawden Gallery – Free Entry

Explore Edward Bawden's love of plants and gardens in this exhibition of all things botanical.

Drawn exclusively from the Edward Bawden archive, view early wallpaper designs, advertising commissions and iconic linocuts.



Edward Bawden (1903-1989) Autumn, 1960 © The Edward Bawden Estate

Quilla Constance: Teasing Out Contingencies

16 February – 19 June 2022

Sir William Harpur Gallery – Free Entry



© Quilla Constance

Experience a new painting-installation by interdisciplinary artist Quilla Constance (aka QC). QC's artworks for this exhibition are set against opulent interiors from Buckingham Palace and inspired by performative interactions and conversations with the public across London and the South East, through a series of performance workshops at Tate Exchange/Tate Modern in 2019. QC's works for this show also reference her collaboration with presenter-comedians Rob Beckett and Romesh Ranganathan for the TV docuseries 'Rob & Romesh Vs Art', Sky One.

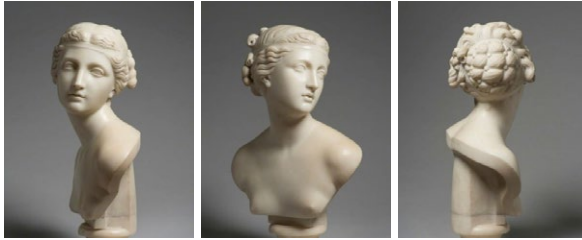
Supported by Bedford Creative Arts, Bedford College, The Higgins Bedford, and Funded by Arts Council England.

DISPLAYS

The Cecil Higgins Art Gallery Sculpture Collection

Continues until 10 October 2021

Outside Settlement Gallery - Free Entry



John Gibson (1790-1866), *Ideal Head*, about 1835
© Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery Collection (The Higgins Bedford)

To celebrate the Cecil Higgins sculpture collection featuring on Art UK as part of its online showcase of publicly owned sculpture, The Higgins Bedford is displaying some of the collection. Ranging from the 18th century to the present, the collection features artists such as Auguste Renoir, Henry Moore, John Gibson and Jacob Epstein.

Warden Abbey Revealed

19 October 2021 – October 2022

Outside Settlement Gallery – Free Entry

Research by the Old Warden History and Heritage Society alongside the results of the geophysical survey by MOLA (Northampton) have revealed the grandeur of the medieval Cistercian abbey.

The reconstruction illustration by Peter Dunn based on this work will be on display with a selection of archaeological artefacts recovered from excavation at Warden Abbey. commissions and iconic linocuts.



Early 14th century floor tile in the shape of a Lion's head, Warden Abbey, courtesy of the Southill Estate

DISPLAYS

Blunt Blades

11 November 2021 – 30 October 2022

The Higgins House – Free Entry



© Arabel Lebrusan

In 2013, artist Arabel Lebrusan received several crates of confiscated knives and weapons from Bedfordshire Police. Through photography, drawings, sculpture, jewellery and audio, this display curated by Arabel

explores our complex relationship with knives, and whether the meaning of an object can be re-established and transformed to evoke different emotions.

To accompany the exhibition, there will be a new website highlighting the objects on display, online workshops and a publication featuring community writers. Please visit our website for more information.

Innovation and Tradition: 40 years of Morris

Continues Until Early 2023

Outside Somewhere in England Gallery – Free Entry

The last forty or so years have seen great shifts in what most people think of as a fixed and unchanging English tradition. This display traces the impact of innovation and change on tradition through the story of two local Morris teams: Redbornstoke Morris and Bedfordshire Lace Morris. See original objects and costumes connected with these teams and discover archive photographs of their local performances over the years.



Redbornstoke Morris Team, Jack 'O the Green Festival, Hastings, 2015, © Chas Leslie

EVENTS



Fun Palaces – Airship Paper Lanterns

Saturday 2 October, 11:15am, 12:15pm, 1:45pm, 2:45pm

Free Entry, Booking Essential

Join artist Anne-Marie Abbate for our Fun Palaces workshop. Get creative and decorate your own airship paper lantern with a futuristic design. We will be using tissue paper and glue to make our designs, so be sure to wear your messy clothes! Aimed at ages 5+
Book your place online at www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk.

The Higgins Knitting and Crochet Group

Every Third Tuesday of the Month: 19 October, 16 November, 21 December, 18 January, 15 February, 15 March, 11am – 1pm. Free Entry, Booking Essential

Get creative and join like-minded crafters to create items for charities and events. Sessions will be running both at The Higgins Bedford and online. To book, or to receive the Zoom login, please email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk.

You can also join The Higgins Knitting and Crochet Group on Facebook: www.bit.ly/HigginsKnittingGroup.

Portable Antiquities Scheme

Wednesdays: 26 January, 23 March, 1pm – 3pm

Free Entry, Booking Essential

Have you ever found archaeological objects whilst digging in the garden, taking the dog for a walk or metal detecting? Would you like to find out more about them? Matt Fittock, Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme can help. The Portable Antiquities Scheme is a nationwide service run by the British Museum, to find out more, visit www.finds.org.uk. Limited timed sessions available, book your place by emailing Matthew.Fittock@stalbens.gov.uk.



Bronze mirror found at
Old Warden, Bedfordshire,
c.1st century BCE
© The Higgins Bedford

WELLBEING

A great way for local people to improve their physical and mental health while learning new skills and socialising with others. We also work with partner organisations to provide suitable spaces and workshops for group sessions.

**There may be a limited number of spaces on our sessions.*

Yoga

Every Monday (except Bank Holidays),

10:30am – 11:30am, £5.

Enquiries: juandhannigan@yahoo.co.uk

Table Tennis

Every Monday (except Bank Holidays),

12:30pm – 1:30pm, £3. All levels welcome.

Pilates

Every Monday from 13 September – 20 December,

2:45pm – 3:30pm, £3. All levels welcome.

Bring your own mat.

Mindful Walking

Every Friday (except Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve),

11am – 12pm, (with optional coffee stop after), Free

Sketch Fridays

Every Friday, (except Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve),

11am – 4pm. Materials and paper provided, or bring your own (no paints please)

Come in, grab a chair and find a painting or object you would like to sketch. You can also join our Facebook group www.bit.ly/sketchfriday for monthly images to inspire you to create your own piece of art. All levels welcome.

For further details email vicki.blair@bedford.gov.uk

Keep an eye on our website and social media pages for new activities.

REMINISCENCE SESSIONS

Remember When?

Reminiscence Mornings at The Higgins Bedford

Free Entry, Refreshments £1, Booking Essential

Join in with friendly, informal reminiscence sessions.

A great way to meet new people and be inspired by memories and stories of the past.

Going to Town - Part 1 Off to the Shops

Thursday 14 October, 11am

Going to Town - Part 2 The Embankment

Thursday 18 November, 11am

Break for December and January

Cinema Blockbusters Thursday 10 February, 11am

Garden Delights Thursday 17 March, 11am

To book your place, please telephone **01234 718618** and ask to speak to Lydia Saul.

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

October Half Term

Between 27 – 29 October 2021

Creative workshops inspired by Halloween.

February Half Term

Between 15 – 18 February 2022

Creative workshops.

Workshops usually last for an hour and are aimed at 4 to 12 year olds. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Places are limited.



To stay updated with our latest activities and events for families, please visit our website and social media pages.

JOIN THE FRIENDS

The Friends of The Higgins Bedford play an important part in the life of the art gallery and museum. Joining the Friends will put you at the heart of The Higgins Bedford and will help support our work.

Membership information is available at www.friendsofthehiggins.org/join-the-friends or contact the Membership Secretary at annayres@me.com

Lecture Programme

The lectures in 2021 when online will start at 7pm on Zoom and when held at The Higgins will commence at 7:30pm. Members will be notified in advance of attending details.

John Betjeman, John Piper and the Shell Guides -
Professor Frances Spalding
Tuesday 5 October

The Collections of Mount Stuart,
The Isle of Bute – Jessica Insley
Tuesday 26 October

The Birth of a Portrait:
Commissioning a Portrait Today - Annabel Elton
Tuesday 2 November

Stephen Dykes Bower and St Edmundsbury Cathedral,
Bury St Edmunds – Dr Alan Powers
Tuesday 7 December

Find out more at www.friendsofthehiggins.org

COMING SOON

Body and Soul

2 April – 2 October 2022

Wixamtree and Connections Gallery – Free Entry

Drawn from the internationally renowned Cecil Higgins Art Gallery Collection, explore artists' depictions of women over the past two centuries. Old and young, fleshy or ethereal, fashionably dressed or nude, this exhibition examines how beauty and femininity has been celebrated and challenged through the ages, whilst questioning our own modern perceptions.



Edvard Munch (1863–1944),
Woman with a Brooch (Madonna), 1903 ©
Cecil Higgins Art Gallery (The Higgins Bedford)

Almost 60 watercolours, oils and prints will be on display, including works by Edgar Degas, Edvard Munch, Dora Carrington, Stanley Spencer, Henri Matisse, Gwen John, Roy Lichtenstein and Chila Burman.

Future Bedford – An Exhibition of Children's Work from The Harpur Trust Art Competition

9 July – 4 September 2022

Sir William Harpur Gallery – Free Entry

The Higgins will host a selection of work produced by local children and young people aged 4-18 as part of The Harpur Trust biennial art competition. The competition runs from September 2021 over the autumn and spring terms during which time free workshops will be offered for up to 35 state schools to support pupils to take part. There are five age categories with entries invited on a theme of 'What would be your perfect future Bedford'? For further details, visit www.harpur-art-competition.org.uk.



SHOP AT THE HIGGINS BEDFORD

Our shop has a range of products inspired by the collections, exhibitions and events. Greetings cards, postcards, books and gifts as well as a bespoke range for temporary exhibitions can be purchased.

National Art Pass members can receive a 10% discount in the shop on stationery and gifts.

Museum Shop Sunday

Sunday 28 November,
2pm – 5pm

Enjoy Christmas shopping at The Higgins Shop and purchase creative and unique gifts inspired by the museum's collections and exhibitions.



Christmas and New Year Opening Hours:

Friday 24 December – Christmas Eve Closed

Saturday 25 December – Christmas Day Closed

Sunday 26 December – Boxing Day Closed

Monday 27 December – Bank Holiday Open 2pm – 5pm

Tuesday 28 December – Bank Holiday Open 2pm – 5pm

Wednesday 29 December Open 11am – 5pm

Thursday 30 December Open 11am – 5pm

Friday 31 December – New Year's Eve Open 11am – 3pm

Saturday 1 January – New Year's Day Closed

Sunday 2 January Open 2pm – 5pm

Monday 3 January – Bank Holiday Open 2pm – 5pm

From Tuesday 4 January Normal Opening Times

ACCESS

General Access

The Higgins Bedford has step free access to all levels. Wheelchairs, mobility scooters, pushchairs and assistance dogs are all welcome.

Disabled Parking

There are four parking spaces at the entrance to the museum for visitors with Accessible Parking Permits or Blue Badges.

Wheelchair Users

There are two adult wheelchairs available to borrow, please contact us ahead of your visit if you would like to book one. There are three wheelchair accessible toilets on the ground floor.

D/deaf and Hard of Hearing Visitors

Reception areas, meeting and activity rooms are equipped with induction loops, which correspond to the 'T' position on most hearing aids. A portable loop is available for use. The Higgins works with Access Bedford to provide BSL talks, tours and events.

Blind and Partially Sighted Visitors

Large print captions for temporary exhibitions are available on request at reception. QR codes are available in some of the galleries to read captions online.

Families with Members with Autistic Spectrum Conditions

An Autism Friendly Guide to the museum is available at reception or download it from the website.

For Families and Young Children

There is a separate baby change facility on the ground floor.

CONTACT US

Opening hours

Tuesday to Saturday
11am – 5pm

Sunday and Bank
Holiday Mondays 2 – 5pm

Closed on Mondays,
Good Friday, Christmas Eve,
Christmas Day, Boxing Day
and New Year's Day

Entrance is free
Donations are welcome

Visit the website at

www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk

Email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk

or call us on 01234 718618

Stay in touch...



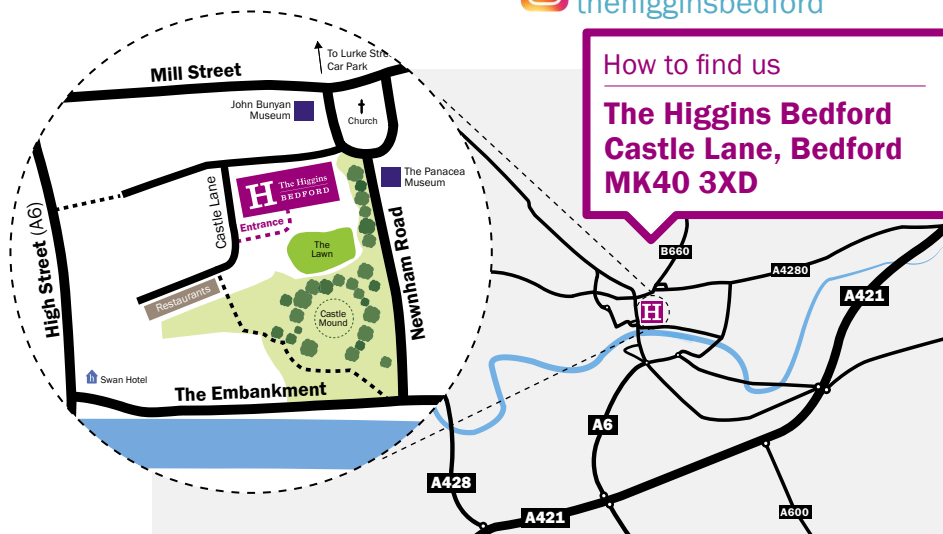
On Facebook
[thehigginsbedford](https://www.facebook.com/thehigginsbedford)



On Twitter
[higginsbedford](https://twitter.com/higginsbedford)



On Instagram
[thehigginsbedford](https://www.instagram.com/thehigginsbedford)



How to find us

The Higgins Bedford
Castle Lane, Bedford
MK40 3XD

Parking

The nearest public car park is at Lurke Street, just 5 minutes walk from The Higgins Bedford. Two hours **free** parking every Saturday and all day **free** parking every Sunday in all Council-owned town centre car parks. Further information is available at www.bedford.gov.uk/parking. There are limited parking spaces at the entrance of The Higgins Bedford for visitors with Accessible Parking Permits or Blue Badges.

The Higgins Bedford is a Bedford Borough Council Cultural Service. Home of the Cecil Higgins Collection.

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design@bedford.gov.uk