

**THE HIGGINS ART
GALLERY AND
MUSEUM, BEDFORD**

WHAT'S ON

October 2026 to March 2027



Handwoven Kashmir Shawl, 1860 © The Higgins Bedford

H
The Higgins
BEDFORD



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

LOTTERY FUNDED



CONTENTS

Exhibitions and Related Events	4
New Exhibitions Coming Soon	7
Displays and Related Events	8
Exhibitions and Displays Ending Soon	10
Events	12
Reminiscence Sessions	17
The Friends of The Higgins Bedford Lectures	18
Wellbeing Programme	20
Family Activities	21
Home Education Groups	23
School Visits	24
Visit Us	26
Access	27

About The Higgins Art Gallery and Museum, 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.

For the latest information about temporary exhibitions and events visit: www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk

EXHIBITIONS

Rhyme and Reason Exhibition

25 September 2026 – 9 May 2027

Wixamtree and Connections Gallery - Free Entry



The Great Resurrection, 1911
Wassily Kandinsky © The Trustees
of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery

Discover the influence of stories and poetry on artists in this new exhibition drawn from the internationally renowned Cecil Higgins Art Gallery Collection. Greek myths and Shakespearian stories, Arthurian legends and poetry will all be explored in the works of artists such as Thomas Gainsborough, Paula Rego, Henry Moore, Ceri Richards and Henri Matisse. A full colour catalogue will be available to buy in the shop.

Rhyme and Reason Exhibition Tours

Thursdays 26 November and 25 February, 12pm-12.30pm

Tickets £3.95 per person, concessions £3.35, **Booking Essential**

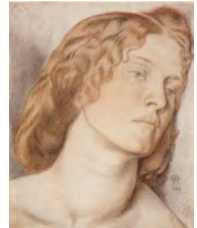
Join the Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art for a half hour tour of some of the highlights of the exhibition.

Rhyme and Reason Study Day

Saturday 13 February 11am-4pm.

Tickets £20. **Booking Essential**

Join us for a day exploring the themes of Rhyme & Reason with the exhibition's curators. The day will start with a tour of the exhibition by Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art, Victoria Partridge, followed by talks by Professor Christiana Payne and Dr Mary O'Neill.



Fanny Cornforth, 1861
Dante Gabriel Rossetti © The
Trustees of the Cecil Higgins
Art Gallery

To book places on exhibition tours and talks please call the Box Office on 01234 718044 (open Weds – Sat 10am–4pm) or go to the website www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk/Book_Online.

Edward Bawden: Snails for All

Runs until 13 June 2027

Edward Bawden Gallery - Free Entry



The Giant Tortoise, 1945 by Edward Bawden
© The Estate of Edward Bawden

In 1945, after returning from his duties as a War Artist in the Middle East, Edward Bawden wrote and illustrated a book about snails for his two young children called 'Snails for All'. In 2025 The Higgins Bedford was gifted this amazing book for The Edward Bawden Archive.

'Snails for All' is no ordinary book. Instead of domestic garden snails, the seven species included are fantastical beasts that share one thing in common: they can't be found. There is the Giant Tortoise Snail of Borneo, so giant that it pushes down trees as it moves, the Lovelies Snail who frequents mausoleums and 'crawls over the bones of girls who have died of love' and the undiscovered Heartsease Snail, whose shell is encrusted with precious stones.

To celebrate this new acquisition, this exhibition displays each page of the book alongside other works from the collection. There is also artwork inspired by the book by children from Putnoe Primary School, made in collaboration with local artist Philippa McDonald from Creative Days.

You can also buy your own copy of 'Snails for All' book with an accompanying essay by design, architecture and art historian Alan Powers. The book, published by No Pattern Ltd, is available to buy from The Higgins Bedford shop.

Snails for All Exhibition Tour

Thursday 19 November and Friday 19 March 12-12.30pm

Tickets £3.95 per person, conc £3.35, Booking Essential

Join the Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art for a half hour tour of some of the highlights of the exhibition.

Edward Bawden Archive Session

Friday 5 March 2pm-3.30pm

Tickets £14.60 per person

concessions £11.60

Booking Essential

Hidden in secret drawers inside the Edward Bawden Gallery are hundreds of prints, drawings and ephemera. Join the Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art for

a delve through some of them. The session is a perfect opportunity to see well known works, as well as pieces that have never been on display before.



The Gnat and the Lion, 1970 by Edward Bawden
© The Estate of Edward Bawden

The Paisley: Mass Production, Migration and Memory Exhibition

Sir William Harpur Gallery – Free Entry

22 November 2026 – 13 June 2027

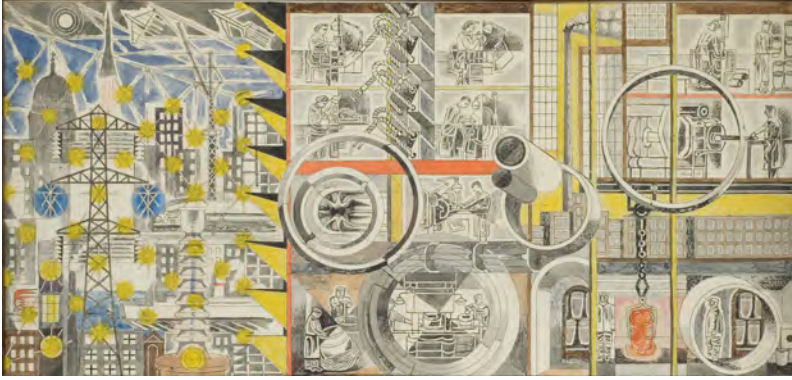


Broken Paisleys, 3D Mixed Media, 2022
© Amina Pagliari

An exhibition by artist Amina Pagliari explores the cultural, political and economic life of the Paisley motif. Originating in Kashmir, the design became globally recognised through colonial trade and industrial production in Britain, particularly in the town of Paisley.

Through artworks, textiles, film, historical objects, and community-led participatory projects, the exhibition traces the motif's transformation. It reflects on histories of empire, migration, and commodification, while asking how ornament can carry memory and be reclaimed in contemporary visual culture.

EXHIBITIONS COMING SOON



Mural for the Entrance Hall to the Morgan Crucible Company Battersea Works, 1957
by Edward Bawden © The Estate of Edward Bawden

Edward Bawden's Murals

Opens 22 May 2027

Wixamtree and Connections Gallery - Free Entry

It is getting harder and harder to find Edward Bawden's murals in the wild. Once millions of visitors would have visited his mural at The Festival of Britain, passengers on cruise ships would have relaxed with cocktails beneath them in the First-Class Lounge and university students would have passed them on their way to lectures. As tastes changed many of Bawden's murals were put away or in some cases painted over but today they are much prized.

This new exhibition will focus on Bawden's remarkable mural career from his early work with Eric Ravilious in the Morley College Refreshment Room to his last mural scale work 'Bunyan's Dream' for The Cecil Higgins Art Gallery. The exhibition will feature well known works alongside those rarely seen in public.



Edward Bawden working on the Morley College Murals, 1928-1930 © The Estate of Edward Bawden

DISPLAYS

Minerals, Mysteries and Collectors Display

13 October 2026 – 9 May 2027

Settlement Foyer case – Free Entry



Amethyst crystals with quartz
© Bev Fowlston

Do you wonder about the shiny bits in your rock collection? How did they form? Why are they shiny? Where did they come from? Who collected The Higgins' rocks, minerals and fossils?

This exhibition, in partnership with Bedfordshire Geology Group, will answer these questions. Explore the properties of minerals and their mysterious formation. Discover some of the fabulous collection seen for

the first time, along with the story of those collectors who have donated to the collection over the years.

Bedfordshire Natural History Society

80th Anniversary Display

Opens 20 October 2026

Great Bedfordians Gallery – Free Entry



John and Chris Dony at BNHS 40th anniversary gathering at Great Haynes Wood, 1986 © Mary Sheridan

Come and discover some of the key personalities that have supported the Bedfordshire Natural History Society over the past 80 years. A display that celebrates people who have been central in studying, recording, and championing the county's wildlife for present and future generations to benefit from and enjoy.



BNHS 80 years: The Art of Nature Workshops

15 October, 26 November, 9 December

11.30am–1.30pm, Barbican Studio

Free - Booking Essential

Come and create your own artwork inspired by our natural world. In celebration of the Bedfordshire Natural History Society's 80th Anniversary we are running artist-led workshops with Fiona Wilson, who will encourage you to reconnect with nature through exploring your own creativity. A selection of the artwork created in these workshops will be chosen for our staircase display. Workshops for adults are free but places are limited, booking is essential. See website for booking online.



© Fiona Wilson

A Brewery in Bedford: Celebrating 150 years of Wells and Co.

Continues until 18 April 2027

Somewhere in England Foyer, First Floor - Free Entry



Mobile Bar, © Wells and Co.

Founded in 1876 by Charles Wells, the business began at Horne Lane Brewery, brewing beers and growing a thriving pub estate. Covering 5 generations and 3 brewery sites this display shares objects and stories across the decades.

In 2019, the brewery relocated to Brewpoint and rebranded as Wells & Co., marking an exciting new chapter. Come and find out more about their 150-year journey. See our website for details of special events.

EXHIBITION AND DISPLAYS ENDING SOON

Stamp Collecting Posters

The Hobby of Kings by Bedford Philatelic Society

Continuing until January 2027

Staircase Display – Free Entry

King George V started the royal stamp collection and this has been continued down the years.

Since the first stamp, the Penny Black, people young and old have been collecting these small sticky squares of paper. Our staircase

display of stamp and postal related posters from the Bedford Philatelic Society collection has been curated by Richard Hart. It shares a broad range of significant postal themed material for all ages to enjoy. The Bedford Philatelic Society, formed in 1944, continues to meet once a month at Bunyan Meeting Church, Bedford. They welcome interest from new members.



First day covers © Richard Hart,
Bedford Philatelic Society

Ukrainian Heritage, Costume and Textile Display

Continuing to end March 2027 – Free Entry

Collectors Gallery and Pysanky trail around the galleries

Following the success of the Ukrainian Folk Art and Heritage Exhibition there will be a continuing changing display of costume and textiles in our Collectors Gallery inspired by Ukrainian Heritage curated by Daria Bilan. The



display will feature the specialist embroidered clothing representing a range of regions in Ukraine, and symbolism. The Pysanky decorated-egg trail will continue to be displayed throughout galleries as a fun activity for families.

George, A Windrush Boy

Continuing until 27 March 2027

Dressing Room Display in The Higgins House – Free Entry



Gilroy Gregory (right), for Meet the Author event

This display is inspired by a historical novel, *George (the teenage years)*, which tells the story of an 11-year-old Windrush boy who came to England from Jamaica and lived in South London during the 1960s and 1970s. The author Gilroy Gregory and his daughter (the artist) tell the story with illustrations, of this black immigrant boy. The display is a glimpse into the lives of these unknown British children who came with their parents from the colonies to help in the rebuilding of Britain after World War 2. These children are a lost generation (lost to the government and the British public) and in more recent times mistakenly identified and forcibly removed as illegal immigrants, others losing their jobs, houses and healthcare. The exhibits are all a connected part of George's story and experience. See the website for Meet the Author event details.

Cultural Roots Sound System Display

Continuing until June 2027

Somewhere in England Gallery



This display explores the formation of the Sound System culture as the community settled from the Caribbean in Bedford through the 1950s – 70s, as well as celebrating the achievements of prominent people in the community.

EVENTS

Turning Disaster into Triumph: the discovery of a medieval pottery kiln



© Albion Archaeology

Thursday 1 October 11.30-12.30, Free – Booking Essential

Talk by David Ingham, Project Manager at Albion Archaeology

In 2024, what was meant to be a small watching brief at Sutton Primary School uncovered a large medieval kiln, with one of the largest pottery assemblages ever excavated in the county. Albion Archaeology involved the local community, as well as volunteers from across the region culminating with a display at The Higgins Bedford (ends 4 October).

Fun Palaces

Saturday 3 October, 11am–4pm, Free

Fun Palaces is a national and international celebration of community sharing. The Higgins Bedford has been celebrating Fun Palaces for over 10 years! It is a free event put together by local people for their own community. At Fun Palaces people come together to share their skills, passions and interests, and to show the world just how brilliant and packed full of genius their community is. Find out more about Fun Palaces here <https://funpalaces.co.uk>.



The Egypt You Don't Know: Stories, Memories and Living Heritage

Saturday 17 October 2pm – 3pm, Free – Booking Essential

Join Dr Tasneem Ramadan, an Egyptian researcher exploring performance, culture and heritage, in a journey of discovery of the Egypt you don't know. This talk will explore overlooked Egyptian women's cultural traditions, including storytelling, music and ritual.

Being Human Festival 2026

5 - 14 November

Entrance Foyer display – Free Entry

Events, workshops and foyer display on the theme

'Writing Lives at the Crossroads' in partnership with Panacea Museum and University of Bedfordshire. These events will feature research from staff and students and local authors. Please see the website for a full programme.



UK Disability History Month 2026

19 November – 19 December

Entrance Foyer display – Free Entry

The UK Disability History Month 2026 theme is 'Disability, Politics and Democracy'. A display of local artwork on activism



Artwork of Platypus 'Hawkin', mascot for BDEX.

is curated by our community partners Bedford Disability EXPO and FLAG Bedford (Friendship Link And Action Group) alongside events, art workshops and talks during the month.



Talk: From Solstice to Santa!

28 November 11.15am-12.15pm £7.75, concessions £6.20



In this journey through winter celebrations, Helen Ohlsson will explore winter solstice celebrations of the Bronze Age at Stonehenge, the Roman Saturnalia, Medieval twelve days of Christmas through

to traditions introduced by the Victorians and the festivities that we recognise today.

Handling Sessions 1pm-3pm, Settlement Gallery, Free, Drop in

Discover more about periods of history represented in the museum with Higgins volunteers and our handling collection on:

16 September: Prehistory artefacts

7 October: Romans

18 November: Anglo Saxons

9 December: Vikings



Holocaust Memorial Day 26-31 January 2027

Entrance Foyer – Free Entry

This year's theme, 'No place for prejudice', encourages viewing prejudice through a historical lens to see how it shaped and enabled the Holocaust and applying those lessons to the present day. There will be a themed foyer display and talk given on 28 January 11.30am-12.30pm by Holocaust Memorial Trust speaker Paul Salver BEM.



LGBT+ History Month – February 2027

Entrance Foyer – Free Entry

From BC to AD LGBT+ people have existed. The month highlights the incredible things LGBT+ people in all their diversity have achieved throughout history, in all areas of life. Working in partnership with Rainbow Bedfordshire and QYouth Bedford there will be a co-produced foyer display and festival event, with hosted talks and workshops by the community to celebrate together. Please see our website for programme details.

Science Labs Event Day

6 March, 11am-3pm



This year the theme for British Science Week is adaptation, we will be exploring this in relation to transport innovation. Enjoy a range of free, bookable and drop-in STEAM activities for all ages. Expect Little Science Lab, Cosmic Latte, K.Leidoscope plus more!



© Peter Hemmerman, original held by
Farnborough Air Sciences Trust

Talk by Dr Nina Baker: Who was Hilda Lyon and what has she got to do with airships and submarines?

Friday 12 March, 2pm-3pm, Tickets £7.75 per person, concessions £6.20, Booking Essential

Hilda Lyon, a shopkeeper's daughter who became arguably one of the most influential engineers of the twentieth century. An aeronautical engineer helping design the R101

airship, inventing the Lyon Shape and the first female recipient of the Aeronautical Society's Memorial Prize are just some of her accomplishments yet very few people have heard of her.

The Higgins Knitting and Crochet Group

Tuesdays: 20 October, 17 November,
15 December, 19 January, 16 February, 16 March
11am-1pm, Free Entry, Booking Essential



This friendly, informal group meets on the third Tuesday of every month to knit and crochet together. They sometimes work on their own projects but also knit for charities and events throughout the year. To join the group or for more information email gemma.hutton@bedford.gov.uk.

Geology Drop-in

With Bev Fowlston from Bedfordshire Geology Group
Wednesdays: 9 September, 14 October, 11 November,
9 December, 13 January, 10 February, 10 March
2pm-4pm, Free Entry, Booking Recommended



Do you have geology specimens that you would like identified? Bring in your best rock, fossil, mineral and crystal finds and Bev will help to answer your geology questions. This session is

delivered by a volunteer, booking ahead helps us to manage the session on behalf of Bev.

Book your place by emailing thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk

All event details are correct at the time of printing. Events may be changed or cancelled at short notice. Please check the website www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk for up-to-date information before travelling.

The ticket prices stated are valid for any event bookings made in 2026. Ticket prices will increase from 1 January 2027. If booking for chargeable talks, tours, workshops or holiday activities after this date, the new price will be shown on the website and online booking system.

Aragon Lace Demonstrations

Saturdays: 17 October, 21 November

Demonstrations in Foyer, 11am–2pm, Free, Drop in

Aragon Lacemakers are delighted to share the traditional craft of bobbin lacemaking at monthly demonstrations with a ‘have a go pillow’.

Young Lacemakers Workshops

Saturdays: 17 October, 21 November, 12 December,

16 January, 20 February, 20 March

11.30am–1.30pm or 2pm–4pm, £2 per child, Booking Essential

Aragon Lacemakers are also offering Young Lacemakers sessions once a month for children aged 6 to 16 years.

The lessons are tailored to each child’s pace in a supportive environment and equipment is provided. To book a place or for more information please email Aragonlacemakers@gmail.com.

Rainbow Bedfordshire - Queer Craftivism workshops

Scan the QR code for dates of LGBTQ+ themed craft workshops held at The Higgins Bedford.



Rainbow Bedfordshire Crochet and Craft Group

Wednesdays: 7 October, 4 November, 2 December,

6 January, 3 February, 3 March, 2pm–4pm

Free entry, tea / coffee and sometimes biscuits!



A welcoming group in a relaxed social space. No pressure to chat if you don't feel like it. For complete beginners who want to learn as well as people who are more experienced at knitting, sewing or cross stitch. A great place to learn and share resources, tips and advice. Please contact Rainbow Bedfordshire for more information info@rainbowbedfordshire.co.uk.

Reminiscence Sessions

Remember When?...

Reminiscence Mornings, Thursdays 11am–12.30pm

Free Entry, Refreshments £1, No booking required

Join in with friendly and informal reminiscence coffee mornings. A great way to meet new people, be inspired by memories and stories of the past. For further information contact Lydia.Mcdonald@bedford.gov.uk

22 October – W H Allens Engineering over the decades

Join us in exploring key moments in the company's history and bring your own memories to share.

12 November – Writing Lives at the Cross-roads

Inspired by the Being Human Festival theme, we will focus on local author Mark Rutherford (William Hale White), as well as anti-apartheid campaigner Father Trevor Huddleston and reminisce about our local bookshops including Wildman's, Hockliffe's and Eagle bookshop.



Mark Rutherford by
Arthur Hughes
© The Higgins Bedford

3 December – Disability Awareness and Activism

Come and be inspired by our local community stories of strength, resilience and activism, and share some of your own experiences.

Break in January

4 February –Vital Minerals

Inspired by our Mineral, Mysteries and Collectors display, we will be sharing our own understanding and collections of geological minerals, as well as those needed for health and well-being.

11 March – Bedfordshire Natural History Society

BNHS team will be sharing their key local Bedfordians, as well as artwork created by the community and inspired by the natural world around us. Come and share your own memories about the natural world and what it has offered you over the years.

The Friends of The Higgins Bedford

The Friends organisation plays an important part in the life of the art gallery and museum, individual members can enjoy an excellent range of benefits. Joining the Friends will put you at the heart of The Higgins Bedford.

As a Friend you will have access to:

- Regular talks and lectures
- Exclusive visits to private museums and houses
- New exhibition previews
- Discounts in The Higgins Bedford shop
- Discount on daytime purchases at The Higgins Pantry

Lecture Programme

Talks are free with Friends' membership. Members are encouraged to bring guests for a donation of £10 cash as the door or, to benefit from Gift Aid please pay in advance via www.justgiving.com/charity/friendsofthehiggins

Lectures are Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm at St Andrews Church Hall, Kimbolton Road unless otherwise stated (please check the website nearer the time for any changes to the programme).



22 September - Tony Ploszajski on The Birds of Bedfordshire

29 September - Martin Snaith on The 1931 Schneider Trophy Race. Lecture sponsored by Michael R Peters.



13 October - Tim Knox, Director of the Royal Collection on Royal Patronage. At Quarry Theatre in association with Bedford School Lectures

27 October - David Longman on Tales from Bedfordshire Churches: The Admiral, the Rector and Long John Silver

3 November - Damien Odell
on Haunted Bedfordshire

24 November - William Rees on
The Martin Brothers

1 December - Matthew Edwards on
the finding of Richard III

8 December - James Willis the History
of Art in 90 minutes

12 January - Dr Roger Bowdler on
Sculpture in the Gardens of Death
(possibly a Zoom lecture)

26 January - Adrian Woodhouse on
Angus McBean (possibly a Zoom lecture)

23 February - Hugh St Clair on Cedric Morris

9 March - Matthew Hirst on Wentworth Woodhouse



Jardiniere, about 1894 by
Martin Brothers
© The Trustees of the Cecil
Higgins Art Gallery

To join visit www.friendsofthehiggins.org or scan
the QR code. Please check the website for further
details of venues and times, plus private visits and
special events.

Membership of The Friends of
The Higgins Bedford for 2027 is
£40 for an individual, £60 for joint
membership or £20 for students.



WELLBEING

A great way for local people to improve their physical and mental health while learning new skills and socialising with others. There may be a limited number of spaces available in our sessions. Unfortunately, it may be necessary to cancel sessions at short notice if trainers are not available.

Table Tennis: Every Monday (except Bank Holidays)

12:30pm–1:30pm

£3 per session

All levels welcome.



Pilates: Every Tuesday

10am–10.45am, £3 per session

All levels welcome.

Bring your own mat.

Mindful Walking Every Friday

11am–12pm, Free

Walk with optional coffee stop afterwards at a local café.

Sketching Station during opening hours

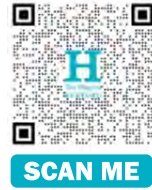
Being creative can help to improve your mental wellbeing. Grab a chair, materials and find a painting or object that you would like to sketch. Materials and paper provided, or bring your own, but no paints please. All levels welcome.

For further details on any of these activities please email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

October Half Term: 27, 28, 29, 30 October

Tuesday 27: The Good Life Garden is celebrating Autumn 12pm-3pm, Drop in, Free, All ages



Wednesday 28: Cosmic Latte explores Flight
12pm-3pm, Drop in, Free, All ages

Thursday 29: Little Science Lab: Make Some Noise
Workshops at 11.15am, 12.45pm and 2.15pm,
£6.05 per child. Booking Essential, 5-12 years

Friday 30: Painting Music with artist Fiona Wilson
Workshops at 11.15am, 12.45pm and 2.15pm,
£6.05 per child. Booking Essential, 5-12 years

Saturday 12 December: Imajica Theatre Performances
Free, Drop In, 1pm-1.45pm and 2.15pm-3pm
Places are limited so booking is essential.

Join the North Pole Elves for a Magical Musical Storytelling Adventure. Filled with lots of singing, dancing and BSL signs. SEN and Neurodivergent families are welcome. Suitable for ages 3-8 years.



February Half Term and Easter Activities 2027

Details of our February half-term and Easter holiday activities will be released on our website and social media in the New Year.

All workshops last an hour. All children must be accompanied by an adult. To book a place for children on all holiday activities, visit the website www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk/ **Book Online** or call the Box Office on **01234 718044** (open Wednesday – Saturday 10am – 4pm).

If a booked place is no longer required, please let us know so that it can be made available to another family, thank you!



Puggle Club

Fridays: 2 October, 6 November, 4 December,
8 January, 5 February, 5 March
10.30am–12pm and 1pm–2.30pm, Free, Drop in

A chance to get creative, have fun, and socialise!

Puggle Club is a free drop-in activity, so no need to book. Just pop in any time and stay for as long as you like. Siblings are welcome during holiday Puggle sessions. For details of outreach Puggle Club in Queens Park and Goldington, scan the QR code or visit our website.



For all Puggle activities, children must be accompanied by an adult and some activities might not be suitable for children under 36 months. All activities are subject to availability, if the room is getting a bit full, we might ask you to wait until there is space.

Storytelling in the Gallery

Sundays: 11 October, 8 November,
10 January, 14 February, 14 March
Free, no need to book, 2.30pm

Children will be engaged with an immersive story reading experience that uses resources such as puppets, drawings, songs and the artwork from the gallery. All of our story sessions last 30 minutes and are ideal for ages up to 7. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Please be aware that space in the gallery is limited and is offered on a first come first served basis.



Sunday Crafternoons

27 September, 18 October, 22 November, 6 December,
17 January, 21 February, 21 March. Free, Drop in, 2pm-4pm

Each month families are encouraged to come and make something together. Experienced artists and volunteers develop a range of creative activities, often relating to our current displays. Suitable for under 12s, older children are welcome. Last admission is 3.30pm. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Please be aware that space is limited and there may be a wait to start.

HOME EDUCATION GROUPS

Book a visit for your group to explore the galleries and collections at your own pace. Also choose from a range of art and history workshops and we will support you to create your own programme of learning that fits with the focus of your group. Please email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk for more information.

We are also running a number of dedicated sessions for Home Education families. For more information about the content, please scan the QR code. The minimum group size is 15 children plus accompanying adults.

22 September: Egyptians 11.15am (Key Stage 2)

29 September: Romans 11.15am (Key Stage 2)

20 October: Robotics 11.15am (Key Stage 1)

21 October: Robotics 11.15am (Key Stage 2)

4 November: Anglo Saxons & Vikings 11.15am (Key Stage 2)

24 November: Castle 11.15am (Key Stage 1 & 2)

15 December: Victorian Christmas 11.15am (Key Stage 1 & 2)

12 January: Victorians 11.15am (Key Stage 2)

9 February: WWII 11.15am (Key Stage 2)

2 March: STEAM workshop 11.15am (Key Stage 1 & 2)

Booking essential for all sessions.

All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Sessions in 2026 will cost £3.90 / child, new

prices will take effect from January 2027.

Adults do not need to book a place.



SCAN ME

To book a place for children call the Box Office on **01234 718044** (open Wednesday – Saturday 10am – 4pm) or visit the website www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk/ **Book Online** or scan this QR code.

If a booked place is no longer required, please let us know so that it can be made available to another family, thank you!

SCHOOL VISITS



The art gallery and museum have much to offer school groups across all key stages and topic areas. Hands-on, curriculum linked sessions and workshops provide students with opportunities to investigate and

learn from real and replica artefacts. Fascinating historical objects and world-renowned works of art can be seen on display. All visits by school groups must be booked in advance. We strongly recommend that you contact us to chat about your requirements. Pre-visits are welcome at any time during opening hours.

Self-Led Visits for Schools

Book a visit for your group to explore the galleries and collections at your own pace. We can advise on the best galleries to visit to suit your area of study and have a range of resources including themed trails to support your visit. Admission to The Higgins Bedford is free and self-led visits can be booked for any time during our usual opening hours.



History and Art Sessions for Schools



Experience the diverse and world-famous art in our collections. Be inspired by the work on display and create your own art as a result. Explore the galleries and investigate local life over thousands of years of human history using real and replica artefacts and costume. Discover a local Bronze Age burial, handle items used

by the Romans, Anglo Saxons and the Vikings. You can investigate life in Bedford Castle, sample life as a Victorian and understand what it was like to be an evacuee in WWII.

Our history sessions include:

- Archaeology Detectives
- Prehistory
- Anglo Saxons and the Vikings
- Bedford's Evacuees of World War II
- Toys of the Past
- Romans
- Bedford Castle
- Victorians

Each session offers opportunities for cross-curricular learning too. We can also develop bespoke sessions depending on your topic or curriculum requirements.



Loan Boxes

Get hands on with history in your school! We offer a range of boxes containing real and replica objects so that you can get hands on with history in your classroom. There is a charge of £25 per box.

Outreach



We are able to deliver some learning sessions within your classroom by bringing a selection of objects for children to handle and investigate. If

this is of interest to you, please contact us by email stating the topic that you are learning about.

Art with Local Artists – Workshops for Schools

We work with a wonderful range of local artists and crafters and can arrange bespoke workshops to meet the learning needs of your group. Specialist sessions could include printing, clay or lace-making. Charges vary according to workshop and provider.



Please email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk to discuss your curriculum needs or for further information on booking for school groups and 2026/27 charges.

VISIT US

Booking

If you are required to book for an event, please visit the booking section of our website www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk/Book_Online or telephone the Box Office, 01234 718044 open Wednesday to Saturday 10am - 4pm.

Christmas Opening Hours

21 Dec	Closed	28 Dec	Open 2pm – 5pm
22 Dec	Open 11am – 5pm	29 Dec	Open 11am – 5pm
23 Dec	Open 11am – 5pm	30 Dec	Open 11am – 5pm
24 Dec	Closed	31 Dec	Open 11am – 3pm
25 & 26 Dec	Closed	1 Jan	Closed
27 Dec	Open 2pm-5pm	2 Jan	Open 11am – 5pm

Please check the website before your visit for any changes.

The Higgins Pantry

Why not stop for coffee, lunch or tea at the adjacent Pantry café as part of your visit to the Higgins. For large groups it is advisable to make a reservation ahead of your visit, call 01234 912996 or email eat@thehigginspantry.co.uk

Shop at The Higgins Bedford



Shop for a range of products inspired by the collections, exhibitions and seasonal events. Cards, gifts, books and toys are available during museum opening hours as well

as a bespoke range relating to temporary exhibitions. Every purchase helps to support The Higgins Bedford. National Art Pass members can receive a 10% discount in the shop on stationery and gifts. Please show your membership card at the till.

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

Limited parking is available in front of the courtyard entrance for visitors with limited mobility, Accessible Parking Permits or Blue Badges. The car park gate is sometimes shut so please contact us ahead of your visit or phone reception on 01234 718185 on your arrival so that the gate can be opened for you.

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 in the art galleries. QR codes to read captions online are available in some of the galleries.

Families with Members with Autistic Spectrum Conditions

An Autism Friendly Guide on how to get to the museum is available to download from the website on the Visit Us / Accessibility page.

For Families and Young Children

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

Changing Places Toilet

Toilet providing sanitary accommodation for people with multiple and complex disabilities is located at the end of the Settlement Gallery, includes an adult-sized changing bench and hoist.

CONTACT US

Entrance is free
Donations are welcome

Opening hours

Tuesday to Saturday
11am–5pm

Sunday and Bank
Holiday Mondays 2–5pm

Closed on Mondays,
Easter Sunday, Christmas
Day, Boxing Day and
New Year's Day

Visit the website at

www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk

Email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk

or call us on **01234 718618**

Stay in touch...



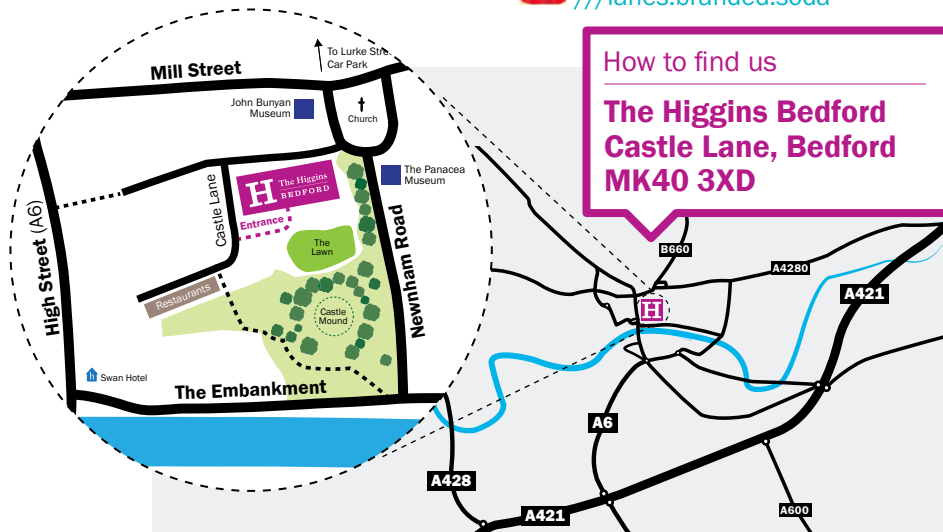
On Facebook
[thehigginsbedford](https://www.facebook.com/thehigginsbedford)



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



what3words
[///lanes.branded.soda](https://lanes.branded.soda)



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. There is **two hours free parking** every Saturday and free all day on Sundays in all Council town centre single and multi-storey 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.

CUL042_26

design@bedford.gov.uk