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The Higgins
BEDFORD

WHAT'S ON

May to September 2021



© James Knight, Bedford College, as part of Airship Dreams: Escaping Gravity project



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.

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

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 or anyone in your household, has had any COVID-19 symptoms in the last 14 days.

To help manage the number of people in the museum at any one time, capacity has been reduced and visitors will need to book a free timed entry ticket in advance online at www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk.

If you are unable to book online, please telephone the Box Office on 01234 718044. All visitors over the age of 16 will be asked to provide their name and contact details.



All visitors must wear a face covering, except for children under 11 or those who are exempt.



A one way system is in operation with separate entrance and exit routes, hand washing and sanitising facilities are available throughout the building.



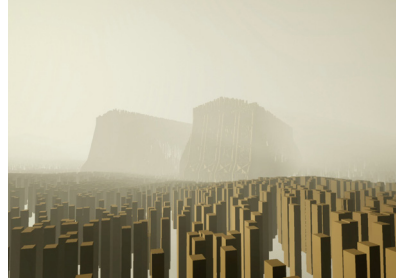
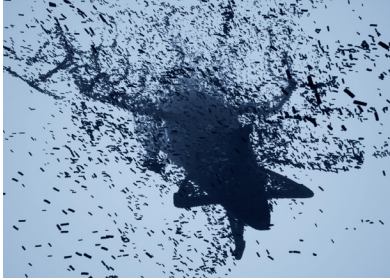
Customer toilet facilities are open with clear queuing systems in place and cleaning has been increased.



Interactives have been removed as well as shared information folders about the displays, but visitors will be able to access these on mobile devices by scanning QR codes in some of the galleries.

Find out more about the COVID-19 safety measures at www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk

EXHIBITIONS



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

Airship Dreams: Escaping Gravity

10 July – 28 November 2021

Sir William Harpur Gallery – Free Entry

10 July 2021 – 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



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

Going to Town – 200 Years of Bedford's Art

10 July 2021 – 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 Orchart. The exhibition will highlight what artists have found fascinating about our town.

A special programme of related events and activities will accompany the exhibition, details of which will be available online at www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk

EXHIBITIONS



Alfred Sisley (1839 – 1899) - *Fete Day at Marly-le-Roi*, 1875 © The Higgins Bedford

Under the Same Sky

Continues until 27 June 2021

[Wixamtree and Connections Gallery – Free Entry](#)

Spanning two galleries, discover the local impact of weather alongside artists' depictions of the sky above.

Drawn from the internationally renowned Cecil Higgins Art Gallery collection, explore storms and calm skies, fluffy clouds and drenched cities, sun worship and visions of the moon in the work of artists such as JMW Turner, Alfred Sisley, Eric Ravilious, Paul Nash and Edouard Manet. Covering 200 years of art, this exhibition includes well known works as well as several that have not been on public display in over a decade.

In addition, celebrate local pioneers and research organisations including the founders of the national Royal Meteorological Society, the weather forecasters for the airships at Cardington and the recorders of rainfall. Discover the effects of weather on changing river levels and habitats for wildlife.

Edward Bawden: Architectural Elements

Continues until 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

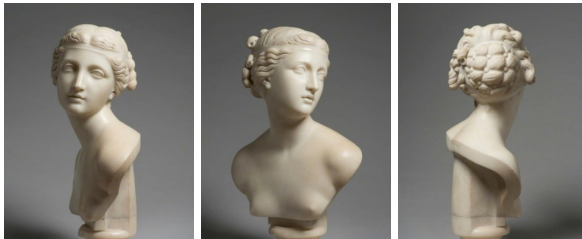


Edward Bawden (1903–1989) *The Floral Hall*, Covent Garden, 1967 © The Edward Bawden Estate

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.

DISPLAYS

ART^{UK}



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

The Cecil Higgins Art Gallery Sculpture Collection

Continues until 10 October 2021

Outside Settlement Gallery - Free Entry

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.

DISPLAYS

Let's Be Open About Mental Health to Break the Stigma

May – December 2021

An exciting partnership with East London Foundation NHS Trust has brought together poetry, artwork and messages from people in Bedford and Luton, as well as information on groups offering mental health support. See them in the Castle Lane display cases outside The Higgins Bedford, or view the display online at <https://bit.ly/2XNp06Z>

Poetry, artwork & messages of hope, personal experiences and challenging the stigma around mental illness



Let's Be Open About Mental Health To
Break The Stigma



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Bedfordshire
& Luton
mental health and wellbeing services
provided by EFT



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

Due to the changing situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, some events may take place in the museum and others online. If an event is held in the museum, we have introduced a number of measures to help ensure the safety of visitors - see page 3. Please visit www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk to find out more about upcoming events.

Refugee Week

14 – 20 June 2021

Refugee Week is a nationwide initiative that celebrates the contributions of refugees to the UK and encourages better understanding between communities. This year's events are inspired by the theme, 'We Cannot Walk Alone'.

Knitting Together

Tuesday 15 June, 11am – 3pm, Free Entry

The Higgins Knitting and Crochet Group is inviting everyone to join them on Zoom to knit or crochet a square that can be made into blankets and distributed to refugee families. The squares should be 6inch or 15cm square. To register your interest, please email gemma.hutton@bedford.gov.uk.

Creative Workshop with Leila Mehulić

Thursday 17 June, 2pm – 3:30pm

Free Entry, Booking Essential

Join curator and art historian, Leila Mehulić, for this exploration of memories and objects. Using objects from the collections that might remind you of your homeland, create your own version of Boîte-en-valise (box in a suitcase), a work by Marcel Duchamp. This famous artist intended to find a way to carry around his most important works, presented as mini reproductions, in a travelling box. You can also add in your own photos and objects brought from your homeland. To register your interest, please email gemma.hutton@bedford.gov.uk.

EVENTS

Craft Club

Every Second Thursday of the Month – 10 June, 8 July, no session in August, 9 September, 10:30am – 12noon, Free Entry



Treat yourself to a relaxing morning of Craft Club for adults. Try out new creative techniques whilst enjoying a friendly chat. Each month, there will be a new activity which will be announced online at www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk.

As COVID-19 restrictions are eased some sessions may be held on-site as well as online. To register your interest, please email gemma.hutton@bedford.gov.uk

The Higgins Knitting and Crochet Group

Every Third Tuesday of the Month – 15 June, 20 July, 17 August, 21 September, 11am – 12noon, Free Entry

Get creative and join like-minded crafters to create items for charities and events. Meetings are currently taking place on Zoom, but as COVID-19 restrictions are eased some meetings may be held on-site as well as online.

If your charity or organisation needs knitted items please do get in touch. To register your interest, please email gemma.hutton@bedford.gov.uk.

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

Sketch Friday



Sketch Friday has been running online since March 2020, with the group creating their own pieces of art inspired by the collections. As COVID-19 restrictions are eased, the group will return to on-site sessions when possible. You can join the Sketch Friday group on Facebook: www.bit.ly/sketchfriday

Katie Allen's interpretation of William Burges' Zodiac Tiles



Bedford Young Archaeologist's Club (YAC)

Bedford YAC runs monthly sessions on a Saturday, led by The Higgins Bedford and Albion Archaeology. The workshops are aimed at children between the ages of 8 and 16 who have an interest in archaeology.

Each month's session is centred on a different theme and is packed with a variety of activities. The branch has been running for many years and previous themes include flint, weapons, pottery identification and Prehistoric and Saxon burial practices.

We have organised visits to Durobrivae Roman Excavations, a dig at Nassington and Flag Fen in Cambridgeshire. Members of Bedford YAC have participated in excavations at Willington, Bedfordshire and we are always on the lookout for further dig opportunities.

Currently, to keep our members safe, we are running our sessions via Zoom. Future online sessions include The Saxons at Sutton Hoo, Musical Instruments and Photography and Archaeology.

More information about YAC and the Bedford branch activities can be found online at www.yac-uk.org or email clare.rogers@bedford.gov.uk

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 Tunnard, the Sandy born 20th Century Artist
- Sarah Flynn
Tuesday 11 May

Wartime London in Paintings – Suzanne Bardgett
Tuesday 25 May

The Landmark Trust - Alastair Dick-Cleland
Tuesday 7 September

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

Find out more at www.friendsofthehiggins.org

COMING SOON

Warden Abbey Revealed

Opens 19 October 2021

Outside Settlement Gallery – Free Entry



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

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.

Edward Bawden: Artist Plantsman

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

SHOP AT THE HIGGINS BEDFORD

Our shop has a range of products inspired by the collections, exhibitions and events. Cards, postcards, books and gifts as well as a bespoke range for exhibitions and a growing number of cards and gifts sourced from local makers can be purchased. Ranges include: Bawden, Exhibitions, Collections, Bedford, Garden, Mini and Seasonal.

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

Measures in line with Government and public health guidance are in place to help ensure a safe and enjoyable experience:



- Visitors must book a free timed entry ticket to visit the museum and shop, but shop only visitors will not need to.
- A one way system is in place throughout the building to help manage social distancing, and visitors will need to enter the shop through the main entrance and exit through the Settlement Gallery.
- All visitors to the shop must wear a face covering, except for children under 11 or for the legitimate reasons set out in Government guidance.
- There are separate payment areas at the front desk with protective screens in place to help ensure everyone's safety. At the current time payment will be accepted by card only (the limit for contactless transactions is currently £45).

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.

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

Entrance is free
Donations are welcome

Opening hours

Tuesday to Saturday
11am – 5pm

Sunday and Bank
Holiday Mondays 2 – 5pm

Closed on Mondays,
Good Friday, 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...



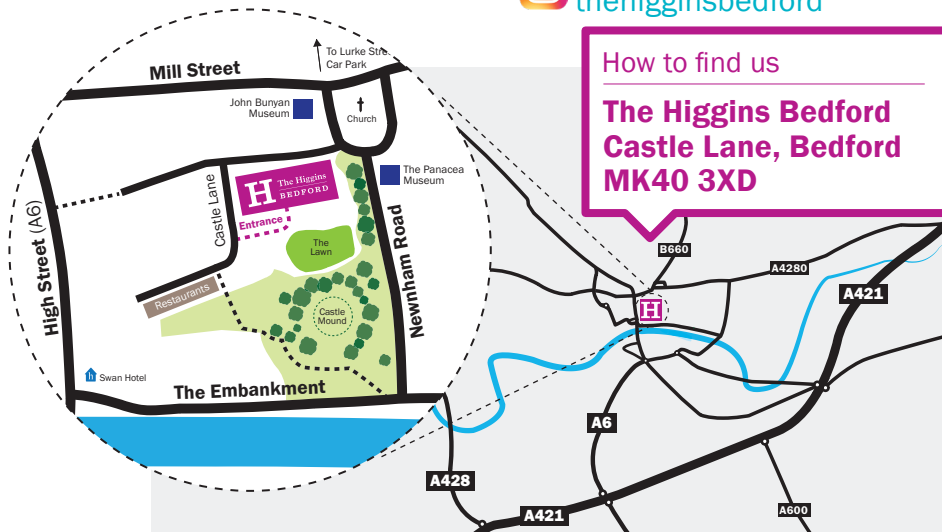
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On Instagram
[thehigginsbedford](https://www.instagram.com/thehigginsbedford)



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