

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

WHAT'S ON

October 2025 to March 2026



A 'Stanny Stu' swimmer, Commercial Road Baths (1903)
© BPEOSA Collection

 **Funded by
UK Government**

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**The Higgins
BEDFORD**

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ENGLAND**



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All information is correct at time of printing, August '25. Please visit our website for further details www.thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk

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

Colour & Light Continues until 2 November
Wixamtree and Connections Gallery – Free Entry

This exhibition explores the fascinating relationship between colour and light in art from the 18th century to the present day. The exhibition showcases a dazzling array of works from The Cecil Higgins Art Gallery Collection, including iconic pieces by JMW Turner, John Singer Sargent, Sonia Delaunay, Peter Blake and Paul Nash.



Observers Post c.1939-1940 by Eric Ravilious
© Trustees of The Cecil Higgins Art Gallery

A highlight of the exhibition is 'Cecil and Kali', a vibrant work by Chila Kumari Singh Burman created during her residency at The Higgins in 2003. This unique piece incorporates her signature colourful "girly" accessories alongside objects from the museum's own education collection.

New Digital Artwork – Light & Colour

The exhibition features a specially commissioned artwork by artist Dr Alison Goodyear. This immersive digital experience, created in collaboration with four Bedford community groups, is inspired by the works in the exhibition. It is presented as an animated film and in augmented reality, allowing visitors to engage with the exhibition in new and exciting ways.



Still from *Light & Colour*, 2024 by
Alison Goodyear © Alison Goodyear

Colour & Light Exhibition Tour

17 October 12-12.30pm Tickets £3.60 per person,
concessions £3.05 Booking Essential

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

Noel Carrington: Nothing Need Be Ugly

15 November – 28 June 2026

Wixamtree and Connections Gallery – Free Entry



Pantomime Stories, 1943 by Hilary Stebbing
© Hilary Stebbing Estate

Curated by writer and publisher Joe Pearson, this exhibition tells the story of publishing's unsung hero Noel Carrington (1895–1989). Schooled in Bedford with his sister Dora, Noel Carrington became one of the most influential figures in 20th century design. Through the Puffin Picture

Books and Country Life he commissioned, edited and published some of Britain's most loved children's picture books. He saw the genius in the artist Kathleen Hale, publishing books about Orlando the Marmalade Cat and championed emerging artists such as Hilary Stebbing. With Eric Ravilious, Edward Bawden and Mervyn Peake he commissioned books including 'High Street', 'Life in an English Village' and 'Captain Slaughterboard'. Showcasing beloved children's books, forgotten gems and original artwork this exhibition will take Noel Carrington out of the footnotes and into the spotlight.

Noel Carrington Exhibition Tours

5 December, 6 February, 24 April 12–12.30pm

Tickets £3.60 per person, concessions £3.05 – **Booking Essential**

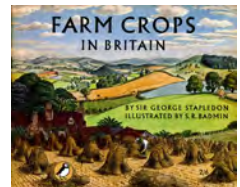
Join the Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art for a lunchtime tour of some of the highlights of the exhibition.

Talk on Noel Carrington by Joe Pearson

27 February 2–3pm Free – **Booking Essential**

Join exhibition curator Joe Pearson to learn more about the amazing career of Noel Carrington and the artists he championed.

Joe is an established collector and writer on mid-century lithography. In 2015 he founded Design for Today, a press and publisher, with the aim of working with designers and illustrators to create limited edition books and cards.



Farm Crops in Britain, 1955 by Stanley Badmin. Reproduced with kind permission of the estate of Mrs R Badmin.

Stanny's Stus: Images of Bedford Physical Training College

6 November – 31 May 2026

Sir William Harpur Gallery – Free Entry



© BPEOSA Collection
Student Hockey-players (1903)

‘Stanny’s Stus’ – A Glimpse into Women’s Sporting and Social History.

In 1903, Margaret Stansfeld founded the Bedford Physical Training College, an all-female institution located on Lansdowne Road. Locally, its students and staff were affectionately known as ‘Stanny’s Stus.’ Many of them were enthusiastic photographers who captured their everyday experiences, documenting aspects of sport, leisure, and teaching in Bedfordshire.

These photographs offer valuable insights into the social and sporting lives of women in the early 20th century. Thanks to recent digitisation efforts, these historic images, part of the Bedford Physical Education Archive, are now being exhibited publicly for the first time outside of their home at the University of Bedfordshire.



© BPEOSA Collection
Student with camera (1903)

Edward Bawden Printmaker

Continues until April 2026

Edward Bawden Gallery – Free Entry

Edward Bawden has, quite rightly, been described as 'The Master of the Linocut'. This new exhibition, drawn from the Edward Bawden Archive, shows the inventiveness and skill involved in printing some of his most famous works through original lino blocks, sketches and the marvellous prints themselves.

Edward Bawden Archive Session

6 March, 2pm–4pm

£13.25, concessions £10.65 – Booking Essential

Join the Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art for a delve through the Edward Bawden Archive. This is an opportunity to see well known works as well as pieces that have never been on display before.

Exhibition Tour

11 February 12–12.30pm

Tickets £3.60 per person,
concessions £3.05

Booking Essential

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



A Frog and an Ox, 1970 by Edward Bawden

© The Estate of Edward Bawden

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

Ukrainian Folk Art and Heritage Exhibition

Continues until 19 April 2026

Outside Settlement Gallery, Collectors Gallery
and Dressing Room – Free Entry



Kylym woven rug, © Daria Bilan

Join us for an exhibition of beautiful, colourful, regional antique heritage items associated with Ukraine, curated by Daria Bilan of the Ukrainian Culture Club. It will showcase costume and textiles, artwork, photography and historic folk heritage themed items.

Throughout the year exhibits will change with individual collections being displayed and various crafts, such as Hutsul wood craft and Petrykivka art. Ukrainian folk art and textile workshops will be run during the year. For further details please see The Higgins website www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk

Visitor Survey

We would love to hear from you after your visit. This survey helps us to learn about our audiences and improve The Higgins for everyone. The data collected is non-identifiable, it cannot be traced back to individuals. To fill in the survey follow this link or use the QR Code.
www.illuminate-data.org.uk/survey/dgfqxc



DISPLAYS

Bedfordshire Police: A history

Continues until 11 May 2026

Somewhere in England Foyer, First Floor – Free Entry



PC George Whyatt with
Police Dog Sabre, 1981

Come and discover the history of our local Bedfordshire Police forces curated by the Bedfordshire Police Historical and Museum Society. The society is run by volunteers who carry out research and maintain a display at Bedfordshire Police Headquarters. The bulk of the collection is housed at the former Police Station at Kempston, visits by appointment only. The display will highlight objects and their stories collected over the decades.

Stamp Collecting Posters

The Hobby of Kings by Bedford Philatelic Society

Continues until February 2026, Staircase Display



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.

Christmas Workshop with Anne-Marie Abbate

27 November, 2pm – 4.30pm, booking essential, £12 per person

Come and have a fun afternoon reusing colourful vintage postage stamps to make Christmas cards and gifts. All materials provided.

COMING SOON

Schools Art Competition Exhibition

20 June 2026 – 27 September 2026

Sir William Harpur Gallery



The Schools' Art Competition funded by The Harpur Trust, featuring more than 100 pieces of artwork created by pupils from schools across the borough, will run throughout the summer. The children aged 4 to 18, will be creating their artwork during the Autumn and Spring terms at workshops from professional visiting artists in their schools, organised

by The Trust. The theme for the 2026 exhibition is 'Aspire: Nurturing Potential', based on their aspirations, goals, dreams, hopes and what they want to be or do in life. This may be looking ahead to the year before they go to secondary school, when they leave school, or even later in life. Further information please see www.harpur-art-competition.org.uk.

Rhyme and Reason

11 July 2026 – February 2027

Wixamtree and Connections Gallery – Free Entry



*Frontispiece for Venus and
Tannhauser, 1895 Aubrey Beardsley
© The Trustees of the
Cecil Higgins Art Gallery*

Discover the influence of stories 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 by curators Professor Christiana Payne and Dr Mary O'Neill will be available from The Higgins Bedford shop.

TOURS

Bringing A Group

The Higgins Bedford is the perfect place to bring a group. Join one of our knowledgeable tour guides and discover the history of The Higgins Bedford's outstanding collections. You could also stop for lunch at our onsite café and restaurant, pick up gifts from our beautifully curated shop or enjoy the surrounding attractions in Bedford's Cultural Quarter. If your group is interested in booking a group tour, please email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk or telephone 01234 718618 to discuss the details. Please allow a minimum of four weeks' notice for group bookings. Tours are subject to availability during opening hours. The following tours can be offered for groups of 10-15 people.

The Higgins Tour

The perfect introductory tour of the highlights of The Higgins Bedford. The tour includes collections relating to the history of Bedford as well as some of the fine and decorative art collections. **Time: 1 hour, Costs for 2025: £7.05 per person (Conc £5.65).**

Fine and Decorative Art Tour

A tour of the internationally renowned Cecil Higgins Art Gallery Collection. Highlights include the furniture by William Burges, linocuts by Edward Bawden and European porcelain.



Time: 1 hour, Cost: £7.05 per person (Concessions £5.65)

Art Exhibition Tour

A tour of the current art exhibition with the Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art. **Time: 30 mins, Costs for 2025: £3.60 (Concessions £3.05).**

Please note that tour and workshop prices will increase from 1 January 2026. Any bookings made after 31 December could be subject to a higher fee than stated in the What's On guide.

FRIENDS OF THE HIGGINS BEDFORD

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

As a Friend you will enjoy:

- Regular talks and lectures
- Exclusive visits to private museums and houses (extra charges can apply)
- Special access to 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 at the door or a minimum of £8.00 via www.justgiving.com/charity/friendsofthehiggins

Tuesday 9 September, 7.30pm, venue St Andrew's Church Hall
 Harrison Goldman on Dogs in Art
 Generously sponsored by Acorn House Veterinary Hospital.

Tuesday 14 October, 7.30pm, venue to be announced
 James Russell on Tirzah Garwood

Tuesday 4 November, 7.30pm, venue St Andrew's Church Hall
 Hugh Belsey on Thomas Patch

Tuesday 18 November, 7.30pm, venue to be announced
 Nigel Lutt on The Duke of Manchester's Light Horse

Tuesday 2 December, 7.30pm,
 Venue to be announced
 Cities of Culture to visit: The Art of Venice
 Generously Sponsored by Eagle Travel.



Tazza about 1500, Venetian

Tuesday 16 December, 7.30pm,
venue to be announced
Natalie Doig, from the award-winning
podcast *Weird on the Wade*, on the Milton
Ernest Witches: Mary and Mother Sutton



Tuesday 20 January, 7.30pm, Zoom lecture
Bernard O'Connor on Jasper Maskelyne, the illusionist
who hid Tempsford Airfield

Tuesday 3 February, 7.30pm, Zoom lecture
Perry Straker on Norman Hartnell

Tuesday 17 February, 7.30pm, venue to be announced
Mark Lewis on Graham Sutherland

Tuesday 3 March, 7.30pm, venue to be announced
Professor Paul Coldwell on Woodcuts, his new book

Tuesday 24 March, 7.30pm, Zoom Lecture
Perry Straker on Women in the Civil War

Tuesday 7 April, 7.30pm, venue to be announced
Sarah Flynn on The Neiger Brothers and Egyptian
Revival Jewellery

Membership of The Friends of The
Higgins Bedford for 2025/2026
is £40 for an individual, £60 for joint
membership or £20 for students. To
join visit www.friendsofthehiggins.org
or scan the QR code.



Lectures are currently not taking place in The Higgins
Bedford lecture room due to building repairs. Please
check the website for further details of venues and
times plus private visits and special events.

EVENTS

The Higgins Knitting and Crochet Group

21 October, 18 November, 16 December,
20 January, 17 February, 17 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

Portable Antiquities Scheme

24 September, 26 November,
28 January, 25 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, the Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme run by the British Museum can help. Email Matthew.Fittock@stalbans.gov.uk to book your place. To find out more visit the website www.finds.org.uk. Please note these sessions may be subject to cancellation at short notice, please book a place or phone The Higgins before you travel to attend.

Geology Drop-in

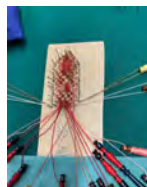
With Bev Fowlston from Bedfordshire Geology Group
10 September, 8 October, 12 November, 10 December,
14 January, 11 February, 11 March
11am – 1pm, Free Entry, Booking Essential

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



Lacemaking

20 September, 25 October, 15 November,
13 December, 17 January, 21 February, 28 March
Aragon Lace demonstrations 11am – 2pm
Foyer, 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 sessions in Garden Room

2pm – 4pm, £2 per session, booking essential.

Aragon Lacemakers are also offering Young Lacemakers sessions on the same day from 2pm to 4pm for children between the ages of 6 to 16 years. The lessons are tailored to each child's pace in a supportive environment and equipment is provided. There is a small charge of £2 per session per child. To book a place for the Young Lacemakers session please email Aragonlacemakers@gmail.com for more information.

Fun Palaces

Saturday 4 October, 11am – 4pm, Free

Creativity in the community can change the world for the better. Come and join Fun Palaces at The Higgins Bedford when the whole museum will be full of free creative fun things to do. Keep an eye on social media and the website for details of what's on for Fun Palaces.



Murder in the Museum

4 October – 22 February



Cardboard Clues returns with an all-new murder mystery experience with three brand new cases to crack, new puzzles and even more murder! Teams will discover different cardboard characters and clues hidden throughout the museum's collections solving new mysteries using the interactive smartphone app. Perfect for families, friends, and puzzle enthusiasts looking for a unique way to explore the museum. To book a ticket visit www.cardboardclues.com

EVENTS

Being Human Festival 6 – 15 November

Being Human is the UK's national festival of the humanities. Founded in 2014 it is a celebration of humanities research through public engagement.



Being Human aims to connect researchers in the humanities to produce events with local communities to share ideas and knowledge. The theme for 2025 is Between the Lines, a space of hidden histories, shifting borders and unspoken meanings. In partnership with the University of Bedfordshire, The Higgins Bedford and the Panacea Museum will be offering a wide range of events including creative workshops and talks.

Between 4 – 16 October an exhibit in The Higgins Bedford foyer, in partnership with Dr Alex Baird of the University of Bedfordshire, will feature their research on LGBTQ+ lives and leadership in communities. Please see The Higgins Bedford and Panacea Museum websites for further details.

Talk by Michael Hall

A Queer Inheritance – Alternative Histories in the National Trust

Tuesday 11 November 12.30pm

Free, Booking Essential



Michael Hall will be talking about his new book 'A Queer Inheritance – Alternative Histories in the National Trust'. National Trust houses and landscapes might seem to embody conventional family values, but for generations some very different stories were hidden away. These belong to owners now considered queer for defying the norms of sexual orientation or gender identity – sometimes blatantly, occasionally as open secrets, but most often very discreetly.

In his book Michael explores not only the best-known examples of sexual difference, such as Lawrence of Arabia at Clouds Hill, Vita Sackville-West at Sissinghurst and the 'Dancing Marquess' at Plas Newydd; he also covers more

recently unveiled stories, such as the lesbian community at Smallhythe Place and the homosexual scandals associated with Clumber. Then there were the quietly confirmed bachelors, keen to pass their properties and collections to the Trust for posterity.

Michael Hall is a former Architectural Editor of Country Life and Editor of Apollo. He was Editor of The Burlington Magazine from 2017-2024.

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

LGBT+ History Month February 2026

LGBT+ History Month shines a light on LGBT+ history and encourages the community to Claim our Past, Celebrate our Present and Create our Future. Every year Schools OUT encourages us to get involved in LGBT+ History Month to celebrate and 'Usualise' LGBT+ lives in their full diversity. Come and create your own artwork and join the display in The Higgins Foyer on this year's theme. Celebrate with us on our Festival Day with talks and workshops from local speakers, artists, poets and creatives. See the website for more information.

LGBT+
History
Month

Founded by:
SCHOOLS
OUT



Rainbow Bedfordshire – Queer Craftivism workshops

Rainbow Bedfordshire meets regularly and runs Queer Craftivism workshops.

EVENTS

Holocaust Memorial Day – Bridging Generations

27 January

This powerful and timely theme invites us to reflect on the ways in which we connect across generations to remember, learn, and build a better future. We are reminded of the importance of preserving the voices of survivors of the Holocaust. Bridging Generations speaks to the act of passing on memories and lessons. It's about ensuring the legacy of those who suffered and survived is not lost as we move further from the events themselves. It also highlights the essential role of younger generations in actively taking on the responsibility to remember and educate others. Please see The Higgins Bedford website for further details around the civic commemoration and events for HMD 2026.



Introduction to Archaeology

7 February, 11.15am-1pm, Free, Booking Essential

Archaeology is the study of past human life.

Archaeologists primarily focus on material remains. In this introduction to archaeology, we will explore some of the approaches used by archaeologists to reconstruct past lives, with a specific focus on excavations in and around Bedford.



Science Labs

14 March, Free but some events may be bookable

Science Labs is following the theme of the next British Science Week, 'Curiosity: what's your question?' Consider what you most want to know about the world, and how you could find it out. Everything has a STEM element; sport, food & cooking, animals, history, video games, health & beauty, the environment and car racing, the list is endless. As well as inviting Little Science Labs and artists to contribute, we are also seeking involvement from schools within Bedford Borough to participate in Science Labs to present the experiments they conducted to find the answer to their curious questions. More information can be found on our website. If you would like your school to take part, email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk.



REMINISCENCE SESSIONS

Remember When...?

Reminiscence Mornings, Thursdays 11am – 12.30pm

Free Entry, Refreshments £1, No Need to Book

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.



18 September – Bedford Markets

Exploring the central role of the market in our town over the centuries and more recent decades, share your memories of favourite stalls and stallholders.

16 October – Bedfordshire Police Stories from the archive

Join Keith Jackson from the Beds Police Museum at Kempston and share stories of your own local police force over the decades.

20 November – Bedfordshire Railways remembered

200th anniversary special. We will be exploring the history of our local railways and remembering train journeys taken over the years.

11 December – Ukrainian Christmas Folk Traditions

Explore our Ukrainian Folk and Heritage exhibition and learn about their Christmas traditions, along with sharing some festive treats.

Break for January

12 February – Puffin Picture Books

Come and share your favourite Puffin books and find out more about their history in our exhibition about Noel Carrington, their founder.

12 March – ‘Stanny’s Stus’, Bedford Physical Training College

We share stories around inspiring women from this exhibition and inspirational women in our own lives over the years.

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)

11.30am – 12.30pm and
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

Workshops at 11.15am, 12.45pm and 2.15pm, £5.50 Booking Essential, 5-12 years

28 October: Make a 'Day of the Dead' inspired paper plate mask with artist Lisa Tilley using a mixture of materials including some that magically glow.

29 October: Enjoy a geology workshop with the Bedfordshire Geology Group.

30 October: Join Kaye Leidoskope for a shadow puppet making workshop. You will design and create your own shadow puppet and explore how to use it in a shadow box theatre.



Make Your Mark on 2026

2 January – Booking Essential
11.15am, £5.50

Join us for a new year craft activity for all the family.

February Half Term

17, 18, 19 February – workshops at 11.15am, 12.45pm, 2.15pm Booking Essential

Visit our website, scan the QR code in the new year to find out about the wonderful animal themed workshops we have planned.



All workshops last for an hour and are suitable for ages 5 to 12. Check our website and social media for up-to-date details on availability and charges for holiday activities.

To book a place on all holiday activities visit the website at www.thehigginsbedford.org.uk/Book_Online or call the Box Office on 01234 718044 (open Wednesday – Saturday 10am – 4pm).

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Puggle Club

Creative activities for Early Years (age 5 and under)

3 October, 7 November, 5 December, 9 January, 6 February,

6 March: 10.30am–12 and 1–2.30pm



A chance to get creative, have fun, and socialise! Come and join in the fun. It's a free drop-in activity, so no need to book. Just pop in any time between 10.30am–12pm and 1–2.30pm, stay for as long as you like. 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.

Pop – Up Mini Puggle

15 September, 8 & 22 October, 5 & 19 November,

3 December, 14 & 28 January, 11 February, 25 March

We are running a mini Puggle Club at St Mary's Church Hall in Goldington from 9.30am–10.30am and Queens Park Community Centre from 12.30pm–2.15pm, come and see us for some crafty fun.

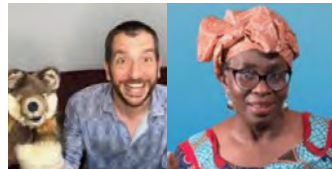
Storytelling in the Gallery

28 September, 26 October, 30 November, 28 December,

25 January, 22 February, 22 March

Free, no need to book, 2.30pm

We have two wonderful storytellers telling tales in the Gallery over the next few months. As well as Toby's Tall Tales, Belinda Ajayi will also be



leading children on a creative exploration of stories. Children will be engaged with an immersive story reading experience that uses resources such as puppets, drawings, songs and the artwork from the gallery. Ideal for ages up to 7. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Please be aware, space in the gallery is limited and is offered on a first come first served basis.

Sunday Crafternoons

19 October, 23 November, 14 December, 18 January,
15 February, 15 March, Free, Drop in, 2 – 4pm

Monthly creative activities for families to enjoy making things together. Suitable for under 12s. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Please be aware that space is limited and there may be a wait to start.



I Spy with Kevin the Platypus



Kevin the Platypus has been with the museum for well over 100 years and he still loves exploring. Pick up a free 'I Spy' trail and discover awesome objects and amazing art all over the galleries and collections. There are several themes to choose from.

Home Education Groups



Book a visit for your group to explore the galleries and collections at your own pace. You can also choose from a range of 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.

SCHOOL VISITS

The art gallery and museum has 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, take part in a Victorian Wash Day and understand what it was to be an evacuee in WWII. School sessions are less than £3 per pupil.

Our history sessions include:

- Archaeology Detectives (KS1)
- Toys of the Past (KS1)
- The Bronze Age Archer (KS2)
- Romans (KS2)
- Anglo Saxons and the Vikings KS2)
- Bedford Castle (KS1 & 2)
- Victorians (KS2)
- Bedford's Evacuees of World War II (KS2)



Each session offers opportunities for cross curricular learning too. We can also develop more bespoke sessions, depending on your topic or curriculum requirements, just drop us an email.

Loan Boxes

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

Outreach

We are able to deliver some of our learning sessions within your classroom by bringing a selection of objects for children to handle and investigate. If this is of interest to you, contact us by email stating the topic that you are learning about.



Art with Local Artists – Workshops for Schools

We work with a 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 the workshop and provider.

Please email thehiggins@bedford.gov.uk to discuss your curriculum needs or for further information on booking and 2025/26 charges for school groups.

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 times

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

Usual opening hours apply from 2 January. 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 276340 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.

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 to the museum and art gallery for visitors with limited mobility, Accessible Parking Permits or Blue Badges. The car park gate is kept 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 galleries. We also have QR codes in some of the galleries to access captions online.

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 [Accessibility\(thehigginsbedford.org.uk\)](http://Accessibility(thehigginsbedford.org.uk))

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 located at the end of the Settlement Gallery, includes an adult-sized changing bench and hoist.

CONTACT US

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

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)



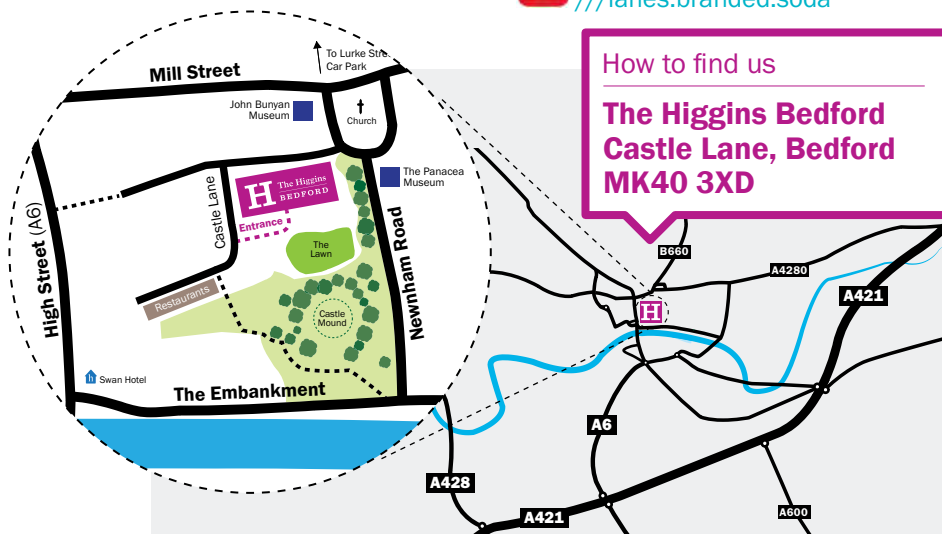
On Instagram

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



what3words

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



Parking

The nearest public car park is at Lurke Street, just 5 minutes walk from The Higgins Bedford. Up to four hours **free** parking Monday to Saturday and all day **free** parking every Sunday in 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