



Summer 2018

The Higgins BEDFORD

Bedford's blue plaques

Join a free guided walk on Saturday 15th September and discover the fascinating history of our famous faces and buildings, through Bedford's historic plaques.



The first blue plaques were placed in 1867 in London, on the initiative of the politician William Ewart. He feared that the links between celebrated people and the places they had lived and worked were in danger of being forgotten in a fast-changing city. The London scheme is now administered by English Heritage, which also advises bodies wishing to erect signs outside the capital.

Saturday 15th September, 11am to 12.30pm. The tour will meet in St Paul's Square. Pre-booking is required. Please contact Sian Hughes Tel: 01234276257 sian.hughes@bedford.gov.uk

arts news The Virtual Orchestra

Explore what it feels like to be a part of a symphony orchestra. A virtual reality experience coming to Bedford's Riverside Square this summer lets you play along with the percussion, stand in the orchestra pit and feel the thrill of being centre-stage during a performance.

The project has been masterminded by the Philharmonia, working in collaboration with Virtual Reality studio Inition, and The Southbank Centre. Visitors don headsets which transport them to London's Royal Festival Hall, taking them behind the scenes at a performance of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony, led by the Philharmonia's Chief Conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen. Sound for the experience was recorded 'ambisonically', which allows users to feel the audio move around their heads as they look around. This brings an extraordinary sense of realism and immersion to the experience.

The Philharmonia was founded in 1945 by Walter Legge, a classical music record producer for EMI. Among the conductors who have worked with the orchestra are Richard Strauss, Arturo Toscanini and Herbert von Karajan. In 1995 the Philharmonia celebrated its 50th anniversary and launched residencies at the Southbank Centre, London, and the Corn Exchange in Bedford. The orchestra's links with our town have grown over the intervening years.

This latest venture, which also travels to Leicester, Canterbury and Basingstoke, is another ground-breaking project from the Philharmonia and will bring the joys of orchestral music to a wider audience in Bedford and beyond.



© Philharmonia Orchestra

Visit www.philharmonia.co.uk/the_virtual_orchestra to find out more.

The Higgins Ice House



Bedford Council has carried out works to refurbish a historic ice house under the Castle Mound. The ice house was built in the 19th century by the Higgins brewing family, through whose generosity The Higgins Bedford was founded. The ice house is over 4 metres deep and its huge chamber would have held far more ice than was required by the family - it is thought that the excess would have been sold to Bedford's inn keepers. In an age before refrigeration (methods for commercial production of ice were only pioneered in around 1900) ice houses, in which snow and river-ice were packed during the winter months, were relatively common.

Work on the ice house was undertaken following the efforts of local historian, David Fowler. The Castle Mound itself is a Scheduled Monument, so all improvements, which include new lighting and safety features, comply with heritage requirements set by Historic England. Access to the ice house is possible on a guided tour. Visit www.bedfordtourguides.org



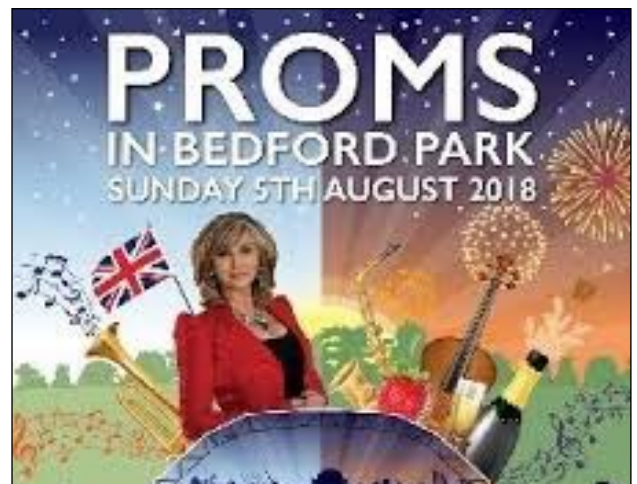
The UK's biggest Gin Festival Tour comes to Bedford this August. Prepare to have your taste buds tantalised by over 100 different gins from around the world. Enjoy talks from gin gurus, trade stands with samples, cocktail demos and lots of live entertainment.

Saturday 18th August,
Bedford Corn Exchange. www.bedfordcornexchange.co.uk

Lesley Garrett headlines Bedford Proms

English soprano Lesley Garrett is known for her cross-over repertoire that stretches from Mozart to Meat Loaf via West End Musicals - she reaches places that other opera stars can only dream of! Join her at the Bedford Park Proms on Sunday 5th August. Bring rugs, pic-nics and chairs for an enjoyable evening in the Park. Tickets cost from £33.50.

Visit www.bedfordparkconcerts.co.uk



Summer Holiday Activities at The Higgins

Every Wednesday - Explore with Kevin the Platypus

Workshops start at 11, 12.30 and 2pm
£2.70 per child.

Enjoy all kinds of crafty fun at these Wednesday workshops.



Every Friday - STEM Specials

Workshops start at 11, 12.30 and 2pm. £5 per child. The Higgins brings you spectacular STEM themed activities for the family every Friday. Enjoy sessions with Teaching Talons and their wild animal encounters, Mini Map Makers and fun with Little Science Labs.

Edward Bawden at Dulwich Picture Gallery

A major exhibition about Edward Bawden has recently opened at Dulwich Picture Gallery. Victoria Partridge, Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art at The Higgins, explains the role played by our museum in lending 20 significant works for the show.

Independent Curator James Russell got in contact with The Higgins back in 2016 to talk about the possibility of staging a Bawden exhibition at Dulwich. The show finally opened after two years of collaboration between The Higgins, Mr Russell (Friends will remember his 2017 lecture on Art and Life in Santa Fe) and the exhibition team at Dulwich. The choice of works to be included was not easy; James Russell arrived at The Higgins with a long wish-list - he wanted works to amuse and elicit a chuckle, and works to surprise and challenge. Furthermore, the pictures were to be arranged thematically, so that the show could explore the evolution in Bawden's style across recurring motifs such as leisure, nature and architecture. Among James Russell's final choices were Bawden's brightly coloured 'Aesop's Fables', the repeating 'Tree and Cow' wallpaper, along with the huge linocuts of 'Brighton Pier' and 'Lindsell Church' and a tiny postcard map for the Curwen Press. Also chosen was a watercolour tapestry design, 'Bunyan's Dream', which holds the key to how The Higgins had the good fortune to become home to Bawden's archive; in 1977, then-Curator, Halina Graham, commissioned Bawden to design a tapestry to mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee, taking John Bunyan as its subject. The commission led to Bawden donating the contents of his studio to the gallery. He wrote to Halina Graham, 'I must say that I should feel immensely happy if I could be allowed to leave my remains to Bedford'.

Once James Russell's list was finalised it was over to the Dulwich exhibition team to put in place all the arrangements involved in loaning works to exhibitions. Nearly every department at Dulwich has been in contact with us over the last year; from the Press and Marketing people,

Cont'd overleaf.



Edward Bawden, Aesop's Fables: Lion and Gnat, 1970
© The Edward Bawden Estate. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery (The Higgins Bedford). Poster © Dulwich Picture Gallery



agreeing the wording for press releases, to the retail department licensing our images to use on ties and cushions sold in the shop. It's been a lot of fun especially seeing sneak-peeks of the exhibition design before anyone else, and the team at Dulwich have been brilliant in making sure that The Higgins name is publicised as the place always to see the work of Edward Bawden. Visit www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk. The exhibition runs until 9th September 2018.

Coming soon...

TURNER AND THE ART OF PERSPECTIVE on loan from the Ashmolean



JMW Turner's unrivalled painting of 'The High Street, Oxford' will be on view at The Higgins Bedford from 22nd September until 16th December 2018. Following a successful campaign by the Ashmolean Museum to acquire this masterful view of Oxford in 2015, the painting is touring our region and will be accompanied by an exhibition exploring the young Turner's interest in architecture and the development of his skills in the art of perspective. 'The High Street, Oxford' is unique in Turner's output and in the history of English art. It represents one of the most beautiful streets in Europe, a street which has materially changed little since Turner painted it. Although he painted many townscapes in watercolour, Turner never again attempted such a picture in oils. Acknowledged as one of the greatest landscape artists of all time, Turner painted over thirty finished watercolours of Oxford views, by far the most numerous group devoted to a single place in his entire output. He was familiar with the architecture of the city, having visited relations in the village of Sunningwell (five miles south-west of Oxford) during his childhood.