

St Albans On Demand

Large print labels

Eric Morecambe's pipes

chosen by his son Gary Morecambe:

"I've chosen two pipes that remind me of my dad. He collected quite a few pipes and the one displayed here appealed to him because of the novelty of it! My favourite pipe though is the one in several pieces - you can still see and smell the tobacco in the bowl. The stem has been replaced several times. My dad would take it to Luton football matches and when things got tense, he would bite down on his pipe - there are teeth marks on one of the stems."

Comedian Eric Morecambe moved to Harpenden in the 1960s with his family. One half of the famous double-act Morecambe and Wise, he was rarely seen without a pipe in his hand.

Collective Art from local artists

curated by Collective founder Aisha Adi:

“As a creative and resident of St Albans, I felt that there was not a central space which I could access if I wanted to be in the company of likeminded people.

The vision of the Collective gallery and art project space is to provide opportunities for local artists, students and volunteers to develop their skills and gain knowledge with a view to progressing their personal development.”

Each month, Collective will be featuring a different artist in St Albans on Demand to highlight the diverse talents of their artists. Collective’s aim is to nurture creative talents and build a community of artists and local residents.

They also hope to engage new audiences in contemporary arts particularly underrepresented groups and

those who have barriers to participation, as well as promoting emotional wellbeing through the arts with our range of events and workshops.

This month's Collective artist Amna Rehan (AmRe)

Art and creativity has been Amna's passion for as long as she remember. Living in UK since 2008, she is truly inspired by British countryside and this inspiration has lead her back into painting full time and pursuing my Artist dreams.

Amna's paintings aim to uplift and inspire people to appreciate the beauty of nature through using a bold and vibrant colour palette.

She aims to construct rhythmic paintings to dazzle the eyes through an intuitive paint application and layering to create a vibrant and intense piece.

Examples of Corporation Plate

chosen by the Mayor's Civic Officer
Alison Orde:

“The Corporation Plate of St Albans is a collection of ceremonial silverware. In the past, Mayors were allowed to use the silverware in their home. However, this occasionally backfired – Edward Seabrooke, Mayor in 1702, failed to give back the silverware for three years.”

The casket on display here was designed by students of the St Albans School of Art in 1914. The gavel has a handle made of briar root grown on what is now Victoria Street and the snuff box depicts an image of St Albans Cathedral.

First World War memories of the Bell Family

chosen for Objects on Demand by
Jonathan Finney

I have an interest in the stories of this time because my son's great grandfathers fought on opposite sides in the First World War. Both men were fortunate enough to survive their time in the trenches, but they never spoke about their experiences. The Bell family from 10 Day's Yard, St Albans tell a typical family story.

Herbert Bell, the oldest brother, was born in 1893 followed by (William) Walter Bell in 1896 and Frederick Bell in 1900. All three played their part in the First World War but only two survived. Walter was killed on 30 July 1916 having taken part in some of the most severe fighting on the Western Front. He had been a member of the 9th Queen's Royal

Lancers, a cavalry unit originally formed in Bedford.

The Campaign for Real Ale 50th anniversary

chosen by CAMRA members

In 1971 four journalist friends, dismayed at the state of Britain's brewing scene and the, often, poor quality of beers on offer, decided to challenge the big faceless brewing behemoths of the day who were ever-increasingly buying up and closing smaller breweries and producing dreary, bland, keg beers to maximise profits at the expense of quality tasty cask beer.

Fifty years later, perhaps CAMRA's greatest achievements have been the new and enduring passion and care for Britain's cask-brewing heritage and for providing the inspiration for a new flourishing brewing scene.

St Albans holds a special place in the history of the Campaign for Real Ale. The city hosted the first ever CAMRA Branch meeting – that of the Hertfordshire Branch - and held the first real ale Beer Festival to be held in Britain. St Albans is also home to the organisation's administration, with its offices in Hatfield Road.

John Wheeler's miniature paper figures

chosen by Lockdown Life visitors

During Lockdown a "Mystery Maker" started leaving miniature figures in the Little Free Library in Milehouse Lane. John's identity was revealed in November 2020 when he was 'caught' by the library's owner Esther Wragg, placing St Andrew ready for the end of the month! The figures were admired by many people, and the uplifting story brought much joy to the local community.

After displaying John's figures based on some favourite books in Lockdown Life many visitors asked if we could display them for longer, a perfect example of St Albans on Demand! The 'calendar' figures are still with Esther and her library and will be making re-appearances at the Little free Library, on the relevant dates throughout the year.

World War 2 & Covid-19 Leaflets

Chosen by Ines Basille (Programme Coordinator):

“I first came across these World War II government-issued pamphlets while browsing the contents of the Museum’s reminiscence boxes in February 2020; I was astonished by the contrast between the seriousness of the subject matter (air raids, shelter, bombs) and the pragmatic aspect of these how-to guides. One month later, we began living in the pandemic era and received similar pamphlets in the mail, instead urging us to stay at home, avoid contact, and wash our hands. I find the similarities between these documents quite solemn and sobering.”

Reminiscence boxes contain objects from the past meant to stimulate memory and initiate story-sharing; it is likely that Covid-19 related memorabilia will be added to reminiscence boxes in the future.

Tea Party at Napsbury by Louis Wain

chosen for The Electrical Life of Louis Wain

On 5 November 2021 The Electrical Life of Louis Wain is being released on Amazon Prime Video. The film is based on the true story of Louis Wain, who adopted a stray kitten that inspired him to paint amazing images of cats for which he became a famous artist. The film's timeline spans from the late 1800s to the 1930s. Wain was a brilliant yet troubled man who was alleged to suffer from schizophrenia that would see him institutionalized.

After his diagnosis with schizophrenia in 1923 Wain was moved between hospitals before coming to the Middlesex County Asylum at Napsbury where he lived from 1930 to his death in 1939. Wain

continued to draw and paint during his time in hospital, with his sisters bringing his artist's materials and collecting any finished works to sell. This painting of A Tea Party at Napsbury with its cats and vivid colours is typical of his works at this time.

Thomas Watters by Frank Casey

Chosen by ArtUK

“We have to aim for something, and to me the only thing worth aiming for surely has to be peace...”

Artist Frank Casey met Thomas Watters in St Albans before Thomas' death in 2012. As a young man Thomas volunteered to join an ambulance unit in Spain during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Thomas spent two years in Spain, helping those injured in the conflict and in 1938 he was awarded an O.B.E. for providing humanitarian aid. After the war he moved to Hertfordshire and began working for Handley Page. He remained in the aeronautical industry for the rest of his working life.

You can explore all of St Albans Museums' sculpture and oil paintings at www.ArtUK.org

Abduction of the Sabine Women (after Giambologna)

Chosen by ArtUK

“Following a three-year project the UK became the first country in the world to create a free-to-access online photographic showcase of its publicly owned sculpture. The ambitious project aimed to transform the way people access and learn about their sculpture heritage, and allow audiences to share knowledge, exchange opinions and visit sculptures, both in-person and online.”

The Abduction (or Rape) of the Sabine Women is a sculpture by Giambologna in the Piazza della Signoria, Florence. The sculpture was originally meant to be a way for the artist to show how he could depict a sculptural group and it was only later decided to give the sculpture this title and theme.

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Jim Rodford's guitar, record and award

chosen by the Rodford family:

“Jim loved his home every bit as much as his music. He was always happy, a super dad, brilliant grandad and a loving and caring husband. What a lucky lady was I. He is missed so terribly. In all our hearts forever. Rock on Jim, god gave rock and roll to us all.”

Jim Rodford played bass guitar in several British rock groups including Argent, The Kinks and The Zombies. Alongside his guitar, you can see his Ivor Novello Award for Outstanding Services to British Music and two of his gold records.

What would you choose to display here and why?

Let us know

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