



Our fabulous women-powered volunteer team behind Our Street Gallery in front of our new billboards by Northcliffe Park in Shipley, International Women's Day.

Volunteer Newsletter: Bradford Libraries, Museums and Galleries



A few words from Rosie Crook, Interim Museums Manager

Dear Volunteers

I hope you are keeping well and safe and thank you for sticking with us during this tough time – hope you're enjoying meeting at coffee mornings and we're very much looking forward to seeing you again when we can.

Following the Gov't's roadmap, museums and galleries are in step 3 so can reopen from the 17th May. That's a Monday

so we're planning to reopen from the 18th, hopefully across all sites. We may need to phase back into fulltime hours over the following month, depending on what happens with social distancing and its impact on the numbers of staff needed to run a site, but we're very much hoping to be getting back to normal and welcoming volunteers again. It will likely be outdoor volunteers first then indoor in the following few weeks but we'll have more info on this over the next few weeks as we do our Risk Assessments again and get our Covid safe approvals through the Council refreshed.

In the meantime, we are flat out doing building works and repairs, reviewing our marketing, evaluation and collections work, looking at how events might be for us post Covid and installing new electronic shop systems and planning a new website, all funded by our Cultural Recovery Fund grant. Phew! Hopefully by the time you can come in again. You'll see the results of all this and in the meantime I'll look forward to reporting back and taking questions at the coffee morning on March 19th.

All the very best

Rosie



A few words by Christine May, Interim Manager, Bradford Libraries

Library volunteers will be aware that the Prime Minister has set out a 4 step road map for opening up services and returning to a more normal way of life, dependent on progress against 4 key tests. The road map sets out that

libraries can reopen in step 2 from 12 April at the earliest. So we are beginning to plan how we can safely reopen library buildings to customers again in a safe and controlled way. The prospect of welcoming customers back into libraries is exciting, and we are awaiting further details in the regulations and guidance to follow. The Community Libraries Team will be in touch with our community libraries in due course to help them prepare and plan for this next step.

Regards

Christine

The Joys and the Sorrows! by Angela Chorlton Volunteer Run Heaton Hub Library

I am writing this on the third anniversary of Heaton Hub Community Library. In February 2018, we opened our doors for the first time to the newly developed, small but beautiful space, inside St. Martin's Church, Haworth Road. It took a while for locals to find us, but we are now quite well known in the area and are well positioned next door to a Primary

School. We began with a small band of six volunteers and whilst this number has generally risen it also sometimes falls. But when volunteers leave, as hard as it is for the volunteer co-ordinator arranging rotas! 😊, it is usually also a moment to celebrate. "Why?!" I hear you say! Because their time with us has often provided them with a timely springboard into new areas of work, training or other areas of voluntary service. Over the last three years I have had the joy (and the sorrow!) of writing a number of references for volunteers. One lady found work in the local primary school, another, work with the council, another secured a place on a further education childcare course and just last week I was asked to write a reference for a great new volunteer who has finally decided to take the plunge into teacher training! And so the search for a new volunteer begins again!....A reminder to us that community libraries are much more than places for people to borrow books...they are also places where the public and volunteers alike can find community, connection and new opportunities.

Photo: Heaton Hub Volunteers 2019 – 1st Birthday Celebration

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/libraries/find-your-local-library/heaton-hub/>



'Spring' by volunteer Samar Shahdad

Our volunteer blog has been written by Samar Shahdad, an exiled Iranian poet and a researcher whose work explores the themes associated with exile such as language, identity, and belonging. Samar holds an MA in Middle East Politics and Security

Studies, and her literary research explores Portuguese and Spanish literature.

Samar is currently volunteering with Bradford Museums and Galleries on "Our Street Gallery" project, and this blog is an attribute to those who departed in the winter of the pandemic, and to those who are left behind to remember them in Spring, and with Spring.

Everyone at Bradford Museums and Galleries loves keeping in touch with our volunteers and hearing how they use their skills during lockdown. We hope you enjoy reading Samar's blog.

From the chirping of birds sitting on the naked branch of the tree outside my window, I hear her light footsteps. I see her dressing up in the green sprouts, the colour that suits her most. I am conscious of days lasting longer, preparing the mother-sun to shine upon her forehead when she arrives. I know she is coming – my heart has promised me that – although she never left. I can feel her close to my face, although winter has pushed her away, and facemasks walled up between our faces.

I have tried all the past eleven months, to remember her face and the fragrance of her breath. I glanced at every flower I encountered in my wanderings, to not let her memory slip my mind, and this is what I could afford to face the world taken over by cough, and fever.... and cold.

I have greeted her 36 times, in two countries and in two continents, but there is only one place that she left a mark – or I'd better say she left light – on my heart and that place is Lister Park. In Lister Park, where the sky and the lake meet, the mirror is big enough to see the details of her beauty. She never poses for any camera, confident she is in her appearance. But all eyes beg for her smile when she grows tall in flowers in Lister Park, when she climbs the trees in Lister Park, when she spreads her arms on the wings of birds that fly over your head.

Lockdown means locked, and down and in lockdown, I long for freedom, and for flight and it is only when she arrives in Lister Park I know that the winter is over, and the icy feeling of being alone is melting away.

They call her "Spring," but I know she is "our Spring," the world's Spring my very own Spring.

5.02.2021 Bradford



Well done Christmas Quizzers!

Seems a long time ago now, but we had a very fun Christmas Volunteer Zoom celebration in December. Thanks to all our volunteers and staff who joined in with sherry, whiskey, hats, glitter and even Christmas boxer shorts! Your knowledge of Bradford's culture, museums, service stations and cheese is phenomenal! Congratulations to the 4 quiz winners - Susan and David; Linda and Helen. They received some gorgeous Nadia Hussain ceramics from the **Cartwright Hall Art Gallery** shop.

Volunteer Coffee Mornings

If you are one of our current volunteers, join us on **Friday mornings**, 10.30am for a **Zoom Coffee Morning**, fortnightly. Next one **19 March**, chatting with Rosie Crook, Interim Museums Manager and Tony Carruthers, Visitor Services Development Officer. Very informal, just drop in and out at your leisure, with a cuppa.





Welcome to the Team!

Usman Mahmood, courtesy of the **Culture Recovery Fund, Department of Culture, Media and Sport**. As Volunteer Facilitator, Usman is creating a volunteer Young Ambassador team for **Cartwright Hall Art Gallery**. This volunteer model will be taken to our other museum sites and will see some young, fresh faces at our doors

to welcome you in! Thanks Tracey Stewart, Visitor Services Supervisor, for showing Usman around.

Our Street Gallery/Smile - Meet the Volunteers!



Look out for social media on Twitter and Instagram by Aamta and Niamh (seen here in the image, photographing the billboards outside Northcliffe Park in Shipley). Once we're allowed outside to work together, Samar and Chris will also be volunteering on the installation of the outdoor galleries - chatting to the public to interested visitors about this fantastic outdoor street gallery - all around the district, including outside Cartwright Hall Art Gallery in Lister Park.

Add your smile to the especially designed website camera on [Our Street Gallery - Smile](#) Let us know if your street or building wants to be an outdoor gallery!

Join the new Volunteer Book Club with BMG volunteer, Ingrid

Volunteering for **Bradford Museums and Galleries** brings with it many benefits. Even during the pandemic when many of our activities have been put on hold, we have been able to access other ways of engaging, including Sonja's wonderful Volunteer Coffee Mornings, which have enabled volunteers to meet each other, find out more about what they do as volunteers, and what other varied skills they have.

Following one of the coffee mornings, featuring a presentation from Libraries Development Officer, Dionne Hood, a few of us thought we could follow on from Sonja's coffee mornings

and set up a Volunteers' Book Group. This would have to be online initially, but once meeting in person is allowed again, we could use different venues, such as the museums!

Anyone interested in being part of this new venture should contact ingriddzerins@live.co.uk



As part of the Sparkling Bradford winter campaign, Visit Bradford wanted to shine a light on the people in our communities who have gone out of their way to spread a sprinkle of joy this year.

They asked us to nominate the People That Make Bradford Sparkle to thank them for their efforts in a most difficult year.



Helen Astin, Volunteer Head Gardener at Bradford Industrial Museum nominated by Sonja Kielty, Bradford Libraries, Museums and Galleries: “Bringing her own wheelbarrow and tools in winter and all weathers and throughout the pandemic, Helen has created a WWII garden, a cottage Victorian garden and gorgeous horse troughs at Bradford Industrial Museum. Thanks to Helen’s help, we now have plans for dyes, medicinal, folklore and community veg gardens at Bolling Hall Museum too.”

You can see more on the Sparkling Bradford campaign [here](#)

Cliffe Castle Support Group (CCSG)

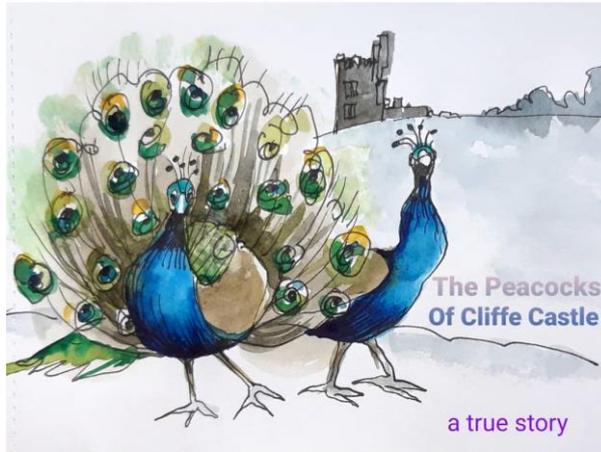
is a not-for-profit volunteer group supporting Cliffe Castle Museum and Park through events, fundraising and community outreach. We do not have a membership; we have **supporters**; and our aim is to have fun. Send an email to ccsgteam@gmail.com if you are interested in finding out more.

2021 remains in lock-down but CCSG hasn't been idle. It's sponsoring the development of **Wellness Walks** in Cliffe Castle Park and is about to launch its 2021 project **Pollinators of Cliffe Castle**. Trials of the walks have gone really well and as soon as Covid Guidance allows there'll be more walks, a training course for instructors, and an informative leaflet at the ready – watch this space! For the Pollinators project we've teamed up with a Hymenopterist who has volunteered to provide detailed information on which of the many pollinating insects are to be found at Cliffe Castle and how to attract many more through habitat creation. Also, Airedale Beekeepers are providing expertise on honeybees, and the Millennium Trust, as well as providing planting and seeds, will give guidance alongside our museum and park experts. There's preparation, planting, identifying and observing to do - fingers crossed we can hold these activities safely come summer and display everyone's efforts on **Apple Day** in October.

Lock-down has meant our volunteers 'getting going' on **social media** (just search for Cliffe Castle Support Group) and we've a full programme keeping our followers interested. Connecting to national events and images of the park are the most popular postings.

We supported the RSPB's **Big Garden Bird Watch** in January. Not being able to encourage bird watching in the Park or visits to the birds in the Natural History Collection, CCSG volunteers instead drew birds, made bird mobiles, and shared their papier-mâché birds and singing robins.

February started with **National Story Telling Week** and Val shared the tale of one of the Cliffe Castle peacocks who escaped to her dad's farm and stayed ... its descendants are still there! And Deborah, our adopted Cliffe Castle artist, turned the story into an entertaining cartoon.



Cliffe Castle Sketch Book is a regular posting covering a wide variety of activities inspired by Cliffe Castle; from expressing your feelings in cartoon form to patchwork pictures and creating poetry. Jess from Jess Kidd Art is temporarily steering Sketch Book. We are lucky to have such talented volunteers.

Friends of Bradford Art Galleries and Museums

The Friends of Bradford Art Galleries and Museums has a varied programme of activities throughout the year which is available to both members and non-members. One of the most successful elements of this is our Trips Programme. We have a small but perfectly formed group of volunteers who design, organise and manage the annual programme of trips to places of interest locally and nationally. Examples of these over the past few years are visits to the Victoria and Albert Museum Dundee; The Terracotta Warriors at Liverpool Museum; Castle Howard; Kensington Palace; the Bradford Textile Archive; Leeds Textile Collection, and many many more.

Obviously during lockdown, we have been unable to visit museums and galleries, but the group has been very active in keeping members informed of the many tours, lectures and events that are available online. Examples of these are

Shibden Hall at museums.calderdale.gov.uk

Leeds University Art Galleries at library.leeds.ac.uk

Bradford Textile Archive at textilearchive.bradfordcollege.ac.uk

Plus www.hepworthwakefield.org.uk, www.victoriansociety, www.artuk.org, www.stellagracyons.co.uk to name but a few, and all the major galleries such as the Tate, the Royal Academy and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Not forgetting our own bradfordmuseums.org

The group has also drawn attention to some excellent tv programmes such as Portrait Artist of the Year (Sky Arts), Secrets of a Museum (BBC), and of course Grayson Perry's Art Club on Channel 4.

A recent innovation is an exclusive tour for the Friends, of the home of Elizabeth Gaskell, where she wrote most of her famous novels. This will take place **live** via Zoom. A tour guide will take us around the house giving us a 360degree tour of the rooms and we will be able to ask questions and discuss the life and works of this great woman.

Online events as a way of viewing works of art and historic places may become a more accessible way of engaging in places of interest for many people and it is a fabulous opportunity. The burgeoning of the global online offer gives us all access to places around the world that may have previously been impossible to visit. A silver lining in the cloud of Covid maybe!

You can join us in the Friends by going to fobagams.wordpress.com

Best wishes

Christine Halsall

Chair of the Friends of Bradford Art Galleries and Museums.



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