

July 2026 at the Willis Museum

Talks

Hosted by the Friends of the Willis Museum (Archaeology Gallery, second floor)

16 July, 7.30pm: A History of Army Medical Science by David Wiggins

David takes us from the early history of army medicine through to the present day. The impact of weapons technology on combat injuries forced the evolution of military medicine technology. Such changes occurred over the centuries, but it was during the English Civil War when Oliver Cromwell with the Model Army repurposed a building to create the Savoy Hospital in 1642.

Doors open 7.10pm, raffle and refreshments available. Free to members, visitors £5 at the door. Some "first come, first served" seats have been reserved for non-members, booking essential. Call in to the Museum or phone 01256 465902.

Looking Ahead:

Sept 17: "Wolsey's Wife" by Nicola Turton

Hosted by the Museum Management (Archaeology Gallery, second floor)

The next Sunday Tea and Talk is in September:

27 Sep, 2pm: Hinton Ampner & Ralph Dutton by John Holden

John Holden, cultural historian, traces the life of Ralph Dutton, 8th and last Baron Sherborne, who created the gardens at Hinton Ampner and on his death bequeathed the house and gardens to the National Trust.

Further details and online booking will appear on the website shortly. Bookings can be made in person or by telephone at the Museum café and shop (Tel: 01256 465902).

Special Exhibitions

Weds to Sats, 1000 – 1700, Suns 1000-1600

Sainsbury Gallery (ground floor)

Until 5 Jul: Bees! Hampshire's Hive of History & Nature

Bees are extraordinary creatures. From buzzing gardens to golden honey, they connect us to the natural world in remarkable ways. This exhibition explores their world, how they live, work and communicate, sometimes even through dance! Discover the power of pollination and why our future depends on theirs.

At the heart of the story is local man Charles Butler of Wootton St Lawrence, a seventeenth-century vicar, musician and pioneering observer of bees. His groundbreaking 1623 book 'The Feminine Monarchie' transformed beekeeping in England, popularising the idea of the queen bee and capturing the sounds, habits and hierarchy of the hive with extraordinary insight.

Step inside an immersive hive installation, see a newly commissioned mural by fine artist Dan Wilson, and take part in hands-on activities and bee-themed games.

This exhibition has been created with the support of the Charles Butler Foundation.

18 Jul – 1 Nov: I Grew up Nineties

The Willis Museum & Sainsbury Gallery brings together more than 200 objects and artworks to take visitors on a journey back to the decade of Britpop, Cool Britannia, Pokémon, Power Rangers and dial-up internet. The Nineties are back to life - as if!

From Teletubbies to Trainspotting, Lara Croft to The Spice Girls, "I Grew Up 90s" celebrates a decade defined by creativity, optimism and unforgettable pop culture moments. Visitors can revisit toys, games, fashion, films, music and television shows that shaped a generation, and even test their skills on a retro arcade machine featuring classics like Tetris, Tekken, Street Fighter, and Sonic the Hedgehog.

The exhibition is curated by cultural historian and curator Matt Fox, capturing the sights, sounds and spirit of the 1990s.

Basingstoke Community Gallery (first floor)

20 Jun – 12 Jul: Inclusion School Bee Exhibition

The pupils of the Inclusion School have used “Bees! Hampshire's Hive of History & Nature” exhibition as a starting point to inspire their work within their art classes.

Inclusion School students and teachers have been working hard to display a variety of their artworks focusing on Bees. These include drawing, painting, collage, embroidery and clay work.



18 Jul – 23 Aug: Basingstoke in the 90s

The 1990s was a time of transformation. The mobile phone became mainstream, and Britpop was taking over the radio. It was the era of Cool Britannia, New Labour and Spice Girl Mania. But what was going on in Basingstoke?

Basingstoke in the 90s is a nostalgic look over the decade through the eyes of our town. From dancing the night away at Martines, to mornings spent shopping in New Market Square, this exhibition interweaves stories and photographs from people living and working within the area.

Journey through the decade that saw the opening of the Anvil, the final years of the Basingstoke Carnival, and Tour de France tearing through the town. Let us take you down memory lane to relive the Basingstoke of the (not too distant) past.

This exhibition was co-curated by Willis Museum staff and created with support from the Newbury Building Society.