

September 2026 at the Willis Museum

Talks

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

17 Sep, 7.30pm: “Wolsey’s Wife” by Nicola Turton

Local historian Nicola Turton inspired by the time she spent researching the Tudor ruins of Basing House tells the story of Joan Larke who “married” Thomas Wolsey, Cardinal, and Lord Chancellor to King Henry VIII, using the ancient, informal “Handfasting” ceremony and what is known about Joan’s life.

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:

Oct 15: AGM with “Victorian Refreshments”

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

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.

In 2023 John published a biography of Ralph Dutton.

£7 (£6 for Friends) including tea, coffee and cake. If able, please book online at:

<https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/event/sunday-tea-talk-ralph-dutton-hinton-ampner-john-holden>

Looking Ahead:

Oct 25: Medieval & Tudor Food by Jenny Stevens

Special Exhibitions

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

Sainsbury Gallery (ground floor)

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.

Following the success of "Basingstoke in the 90s" over the summer holidays elements of that exhibition have been introduced to give a local angle on the decade, covering memories, videos, photos and events – these can be found in the hive within "I Grew up Nineties".

I GREW UP IN THE 90s: Review by Shelagh le Marechal

Not being a child/teenager of the 90s I know very little about the decade as my children were almost grown up and I was very busy so most of the exhibition was a revelation to me!

The initial information reminded us that the 90s fell between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and before the War on Terror and made it an era of peace and prosperity and it has become known as a Golden Age for Britain's youth. The exhibition concentrates on a young person's view of the decade.

The toys children played with included Polly Pocket, Beanie Babies, Rugrats, Spiromania and Jenga. Children could also collect pictures of Pop Stars and there were Spice Girl dolls and Toy Story figures.

Fashion included cargo pants, bomber jackets and chunky shoes.

Blockbuster Video Rental allowed us all to see the films of the 90s such as The Shawshank Redemption, True Lies, Notting Hill, The Borrowers, Pulp Fiction, Pretty Woman, The Full Monty, Trainspotting, Four Weddings and a Funeral, Independence Day and Austen Powers.

There were lots of the original adverts for these films at the exhibition.

On Television there were programmes like Friends, Beavis and Butthead, South Park, The Simpsons, Gladiators and Teletubbies.

The 90s also saw different types of stories for children and young people being written: Tracy Beaker, The Gruffalo, Harry Potter and Horrible Histories.

The 90s was the era of Britpop- Suede and Blur, Oasis, West Life and The Spice Girls among others. Mobile phones were in their infancy as were Play Stations, Game Boy and Virgin Media. It was an exciting and colourful exhibition which has been put together well and, if you're the right age, full of nostalgia. Personally, I preferred the exhibition in the Basingstoke Gallery about Basingstoke in the 90s because that sparked memories for me!

Open Call for Hampshire Artists

For the first time in years, the Sainsbury Gallery will host an exhibition (14 Nov 2026 – 7 Mar 2027) that invites artists living and working in Hampshire to be part of it. Share work inspired by the wonder of the night and exhibit alongside objects from our collections. Submissions close 25 October 2026.

Wonders of the Night will bring together curious objects from Hampshire Cultural Trust's collections, from an eighteenth-century painting of astronomers marvelling through a telescope, to an Anglo-Saxon brooch etched with crescent moons and an antique celestial globe mapping the constellations, each capturing our age-old fascination with the skies above.

Themes you might explore...

- **The night sky:** The moon, stars, constellations, planets and the cosmos.
- **Wonder and curiosity:** Astronomy, astrology, exploration and our place in the universe.
- **Nature after dark:** The changing light of dusk, twilight skies, nocturnal wildlife, moonlit landscapes, campfires and the glow of towns and cities after dark.
- **Stories of the night:** Dreams, imagination, folklore, mythology, grief, or even artwork created after dark.

Your interpretation is entirely your own. We welcome all mediums, including painting, drawing, pastels, photography, printmaking, textiles, sculpture, mixed media and film. Work does not need to have been created specifically for the exhibition but must not have previously been exhibited at the Willis Museum & Sainsbury Gallery.

The open call is for artists living or working in Hampshire. For a modest charge of £3 per item, you can submit your artwork to a judging panel for possible inclusion in this exhibition. Young people up to the age of 17 can submit their artwork free of charge. For further details please see: <https://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/event/wonders-night-open-call-artists>

Basingstoke Community Gallery (first floor)

29 Aug – 4 Oct: Art for Wellbeing – Projects developed with the Arts Society Basingstoke

A collection of artwork produced by schools working with the Arts Society Basingstoke:

Printing Like William Morris - St Bede's Catholic School

This project promoted an understanding of how the natural world can inspire product design. It encouraged students to look closely at the natural world. Students, aged 8-9, at St Bede's Catholic School began by studying repeating designs by William Morris and used this knowledge to develop designs of their own, based on natural forms. Textile Artist, Vanessa Rolf and volunteers from the Arts Society, helped students to create their own printing blocks to print their designs onto tote bags.

Soft Sculptures – Winklebury Junior School

This project encouraged children to express themselves through artistic experiences that build basic skills in drawing, printing, and working with fabric to create three-dimensional sculptures. This project was also led by Vanessa Rolf and supported by volunteers from The Arts Society.

Sewing – Winklebury School

Members of the Arts Society helped children to develop their sewing skills – year 3 created bookmarks and year 5 cushions.

Art @ The Station

A selection of artwork from some of the schools and colleges who exhibit their work at the waiting rooms and subway at Basingstoke Railway Station. These exhibitions have been provided by The Arts Society for the past 3 years and provide a pleasant environment for passengers together with an opportunity to celebrate the work of young artists.

Art For Wellbeing: Review by Jenny Fairweather

These are projects developed with the Arts Society Basingstoke, and they show that there is a lot of artistic talent in Basingstoke, with dedicated Arts Society volunteers, school and college staff.

From Winklebury Federation, children aged 8-9 years produced soft sculptures some of which are being displayed in the cabinet. Many children did not wish to temporarily part with the sculptures having made them. I'm not surprised as they look very cuddly. There are photos of the sculptures from the different classes. These sculptures explore the expression of feelings, and the making process is explained step by step.

St Bede's Catholic Primary School's year 4 (9-10) were learning to print like William Morris and have produced some colourful, repeating prints with nature at their heart.

There is information about the Arts Society Basingstoke, what they do and how people can join. The volunteers are highlighted who went into the schools and colleges to help with these exciting projects. The resulting artworks and presentations provide an inspiring exhibition of which all the children and young people, staff and volunteers should be extremely proud. I would encourage you to go to see this and to also look at the works at the railway station if you are travelling.

