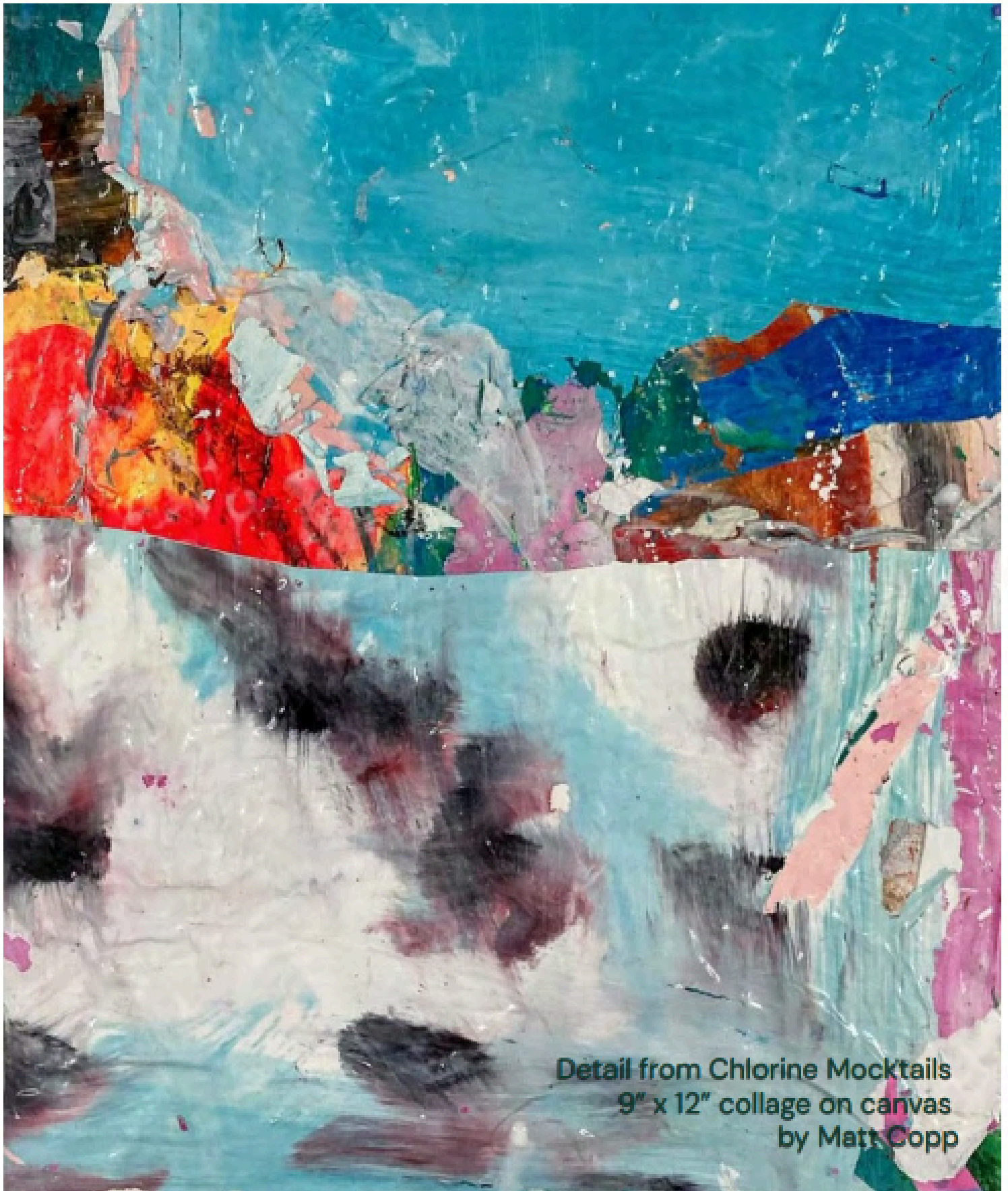


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HOTWELLS & CLIFTONWOOD
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Newsletter July 2025



Detail from Chlorine Mocktails
9" x 12" collage on canvas
by Matt Copp

Welcome to this BUMPER SUMMER edition.

This July we are doing things a little differently. You may well spot a printed version of our newsletter coming through your letterbox soon. We are using this opportunity to introduce ourselves to people who may not know us and to find out a bit more about the people who live and work in Hotwells and Cliftonwood. It was a joy to talk to Kaden about his experience working at Underfall Yard and I had a fascinating conversation with Matt Copp, a local artist.

As always with a printed edition, space was tight so we are using our online version to bring you expanded articles and more that didn't quite make it in. For the moment the printed edition is a one off, but if you would like to see more of them and more events such as our Big Golden Picnic - see pics below - please do consider supporting our work by joining our Community Lottery - that way we are all winners!

https://www.hotwellscliftonwood.org.uk/support_us

As always, Happy Reading!

Rachel McNally HCCA Chair



Sign up to receive our bi-monthly newsletter here

https://www.hotwellscliftonwood.org.uk/sign_up_to_receive_newsletters

Local Updates

HCCA AGM & Live MUSIC

9 July 7pm at Holy Trinity FREE

Join us for an evening of community, live music and celebration.



After the business of the AGM, we are delighted to be joined by pianist Rebecca Nash and saxophonist Alex Merritt: a dynamic and intimate duet where the worlds of jazz, impressionism, and contemporary classical music converge. Come to find out what's up in the 'hoods and stay for a truly remarkable performance. More info at https://www.hotwellscliftonwood.org.uk/hcca_agm_2025

Yard Fest 2025 - Underfall Yard

19-20 July

<https://underfallyard.co.uk/event/yard-fest-2025/>

Yard Fest sees Underfall Yard transform into a place of fantastic music, local creative traders and makers, and a showcase of maritime machinery and traditional skills. This year, we celebrate our 9th edition of this great weekend – and we are going bigger than ever!



Bristol Bridge Club

www.bristolbridgeclub.co.uk/home | secretary@bristolbridgeclub.co.uk

Non-members are welcome

Introduction to Bridge

4 weeks starting Wednesday 27th August 2025.

Beginners Bridge

10 Weeks starting Wednesday 24th September 2025.

Interested in gig rowing on the harbour?

Young Bristol runs weekly social rowing sessions on Wednesdays 10am to 12pm for over 50's at £8 per week. New members welcome. Meet at the club house near to the Grain Barge on Hotwell Road.

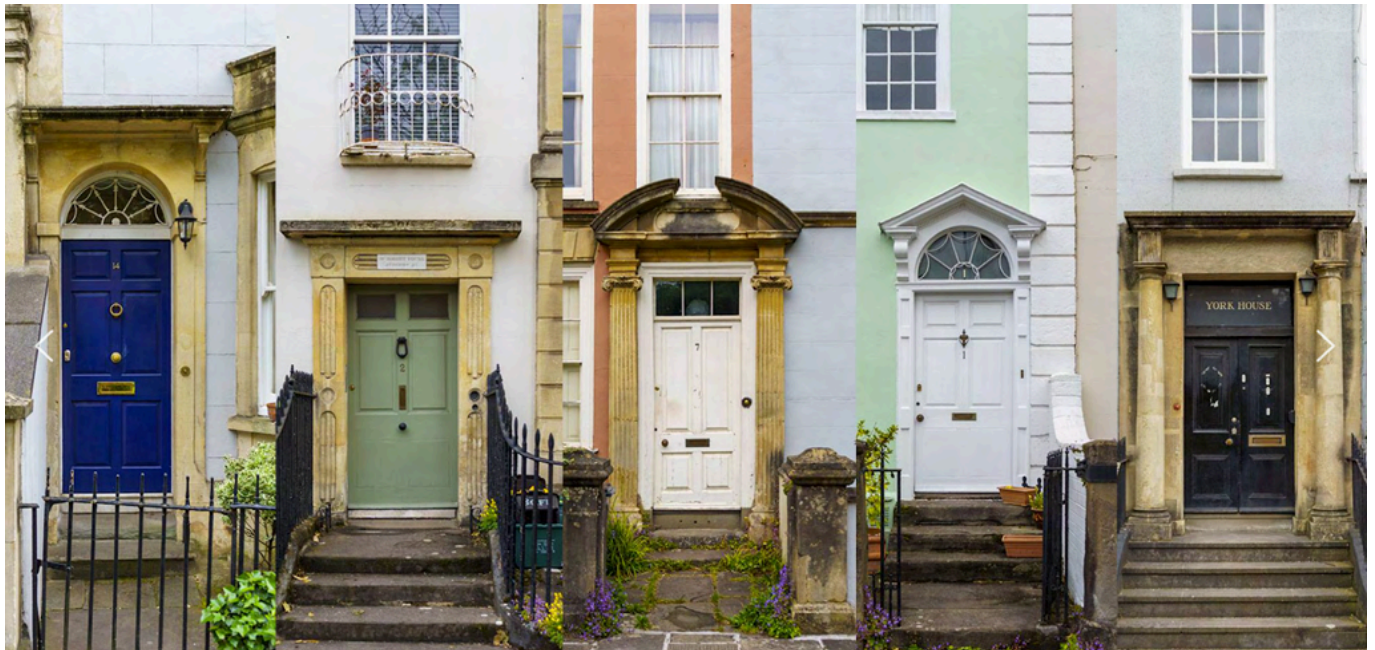
For details Phil : ph@youngbristol.com or

Tel 0117 929 2513

Hotwells Primary School

Many of you will already know of the proposal to amalgamate Hotwells and Cathedral Primary Schools. The Cathedral Schools Trust has now stated that they are extending the consultation period to Friday 8th August and looking at ways to revise the proposal. Local parents have also launched a campaign to save Hotwells Primary School. All information can be found below.

https://www.hotwellscliftonwood.org.uk/hotwells_primary_school



Dowry Square launches new website <https://www.dowrysquare.uk/>

Initially set up to introduce the square to an external audience, the intention is that it also becomes a resource for the community. On the recent Open Gardens weekend, we ran Dowry Square History Tours: looking at the Square's association with the Hotwells Spa, the medical adventuring at the Pneumatic Institution, the Clifton Dispensary and the huge changes to the area in the 19th and 20th centuries.



Connected Actions, Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Community Climate Action Plan for our communities

HCCA is delighted to be launching our Nature & Climate Action Plan at the AGM. The plan has been put together with and by local people and is full of brilliant ideas on a range of themes to help us take effective action together. We will be organising some social monthly meet up events, beginning this autumn, we will be applying for more funding to tackle some of the bigger challenges and we welcome your involvement. The project connects us with communities throughout the city and was funded by the National Lottery and supported by the Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership.

Find out more here https://www.hotwellscliftonwood.org.uk/community_nature_and_climate_action

Underfall Yard Interview with Kaden Gardener Marketing & Events Assistant



Yardfest @ Underfall Yard

So, tell me a bit more about your role?

I'm the only marketer on the team, so a lot of that is around social media, talking to different traders about Underfall Market, basically trying to drum up new business, new people coming to the yard and making ourselves known in the wider Bristol community.

Part of the Events Assistant role is helping with running the market on market days, event enquiries. helping during the events. I've been doing this role for a few months now, as part of an apprenticeship and it's been really good to learn on the job and in such an amazing place. Personally I had never heard about it before I even started so I'm a prime example of "this being a hidden gem" and in the short amount of time I've loved it.

What was your first impression when you started?

The site itself - impressive that it's here and you can see how people used to work in maritime businesses hundreds of years ago. I'm from east Bristol and this is a part of Bristol that I never really come to. I didn't know this was here and it's amazing. Then when I started the role the whole team was super inviting and super nice, as well as meeting all the different boat builders and businesses here.

Is there a typical day in Underfall Yard?

There are some typical elements to the day. There can be days when everything goes a bit crazy. A typical day will be opening up the visitor centre - the cafe. We open at 9am with all the exhibits here: the big map table as well activities. For me it's a lot of replying to emails from people who are interested

in coming into the yard, whether that's events, market traders, people who want to hire for private functions. We had a birthday party here two weeks ago. It can be updating the social media pages. Anything interesting that is happening on site that day I'll run and get a picture of it as well as planning posts for upcoming events. Now and again we have people working on the slipway here, we have narrow boats on the slipway at the moment. But sometimes we have Bristol icons such as The Mayflower or The Matthew. On these more special days, the boatworkers bringing and taking the boats back out is always a spectacle. We had a few people ringing us last month asking when The Matthew was going back in the water. They were travelling hundreds of miles to come and see. People love it and we're so glad we can give them that information.

More unusual days - we have Underfall Market - all the traders setting up their wares, everything from jewellery to ceramics to photography. These are very intense days for us in the best way possible. The one thing I know about the yard, there may be typical elements but anything can happen in a moment.

Can you tell me a bit more about the range of businesses here?

All the businesses onsite are maritime adjacent. That doesn't mean that they are all boatbuilders but that is a large part of what we have. There is one company that we have onsite that is called Omni - a video production company - so they helped us with recording of media for our recovery and reinstatement project and they focus a lot on local Bristol businesses. We also have Bristol Maritime Academy who help with safety training on the water. The harbourmaster is based here, so if you need any boat related form you will come here for it, so everything to do with the water.

Are there any particular traditions or stories associated with the yard that you have heard?

Absolutely - personal favourite fun fact. If you go into the workshops we have this huge Victorian era machinery and you think how did this get in here in the first place. The building was actually built around the machinery - there is no way to get it out. You would need to take it apart, which we obviously don't want to do! There are lots of stories about how the Underfall Yard came to be and there is always something new to uncover.

Do you have any interactions with the wildlife living in and around the harbour?

By the Cottage there are dozens and dozens of fish and we see the cormorants drying their wings.

What's one of the stranger, more surprising things that has happened since you started?

We've had a few birds fly into the workshops - always a bit of race to get them out before they build a nest. It happens more than I would expect, but so far no pigeons in residence.

How is the Yard recovering from the fire?

We've had such great support from Bristol as a whole. We're still fundraising for the recovery and people are keen to be part of that: rebuilding of Bristol's heritage.

Do you personally have a favourite spot in the Yard that others might not know about?

Not really, but I really love opening up in the morning when it's dead silent. That first walk when no one is coming by and you don't really hear the cars coming by, it's this quiet spot by the harbour, absolutely silent and it's kinda beautiful.

We were then going to have a chat with Star Yachts but as Underfall Yard is a working boatyard as well as a heritage attraction. the slipway was in use and our time was up.

Thanks Kaden!

You can find out more about the yard - including Yardfest 19-20 July and Underfall Market via their website <https://underfallyard.co.uk/>

An Update on Jacobs Wells Baths Restoration

by Jude Hutchen



South Wing Roof - Jacobs Wells Baths

Things have been moving forward steadily on the Jacobs Wells Baths restoration project managed by Trinity Community Arts. Our priority is to halt the deterioration of the building and work towards making it safe and secure to once again house dance and arts activities and performance alongside local community and youth activities. The value of the project has been recognised by Heritage Minister Baroness Twycross:

The Heritage Revival Fund is rejuvenating abandoned treasures up and down the country. I'm delighted that we have been able to support this through our Arts Everywhere Fund and I look forward to seeing the results of these first fantastic projects, including Jacobs Wells Baths being transformed into a community hub for arts, music and education. By restoring these loved buildings, we're ensuring these local assets can thrive for future generations

<https://ahfund.org.uk/news/latest/supporting-the-revival-of-jacobs-wells-baths/>

In January this year Trinity secured a Development Grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund, providing us with the funding to work collaboratively with local residents and key interest groups to vision the future building design and activities. National Lottery Heritage Fund are interested in protecting both the physical structure as well as recognising Jacobs Wells Baths' rich social history, its importance to the local community as well as Bristol's cultural heritage.

In March Nicola Dyer was appointed as a new site Project Manager to lead the capital works bringing with her plenty of high profile heritage project management experience including working with English Heritage and the National Trust. And she's hit the ground running! You may have noticed scaffolding outside the building as our contractor Carrek are working on the South Studio roof, ensuring that it is watertight, and restoring sections of the fine original masonry and terracotta elements. Specialist decontamination of the whole site from asbestos has also started. Asbestos, with its fire-retardant properties, was used extensively in machinery parts, particularly in the boiler room, but now needs removing before further restoration work can take place internally. The daunting challenge of emptying the huge water tanks on the north side of the building has also started – which is no mean feat as they also contained thick sludge. Once these are empty further assessment of works required for the building below can start. Slowly but surely the work is progressing.

At the end of May Jude Hutchen joined the team as the Heritage Project Manager to lead on community engagement, supporting the consultation process as well as developing exciting arts and heritage activities. She brings a particular range of skills from managing Circomeda Centre for Contemporary Circus and Physical Theatre's training and performance venue in St. Paul's. This is also a grade II listed building with a significant change of use from church to training and performance space. Since then, she has been employed by Wellspring Settlement in Barton Hill to co-design and deliver in partnership with University of Bristol research projects through creative workshops. These have been focused on engaging with and amplifying residents' voices around key social issues, experience she hopes to bring to this role.

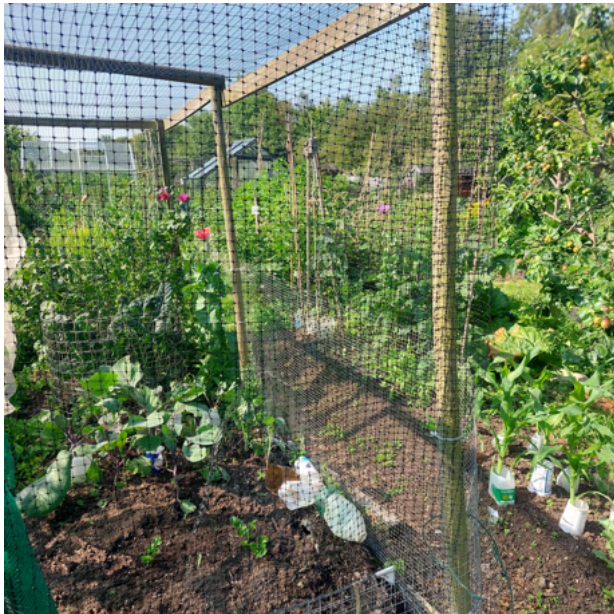
Jude met with Rachel McNally, HCCA Chair at the end of June to hear about previous community use and enjoyment of Jacobs Wells Baths as well as needs and ideas for activities that are bubbling up for members. Jude is currently meeting with stakeholders and residents to develop ideas for heritage activities which explore the importance of the building in the past, such as reminiscence events gathering memories, as well as ideas for its use in the future in the form of community consultations alongside the architects. There will also be opportunities for creative activities celebrating the story and importance of the building: from bath house and wash rooms for the dock's work force to public swimming pool to inclusive and dynamic dance space for learning and international performance, to its current process returning Jacobs Wells Baths to public use through the committed action of local residents and activists.

While the building is currently inaccessible due to the decontamination work, Trinity hopes that it will be possible to offer site tours for Heritage Doors Open Day in September. As there is a great deal of work yet to be undertaken and funds to be raised, regular activities in the building are some way off so we will be meeting in other spaces. However Jude, on behalf of Trinity, is very excited to start the journey of imagining the new space with you and is looking forward to opportunities to meet you – including the July AGM. Watch this space to get involved with reminiscence events, arts activities as well as consultation events. We look forward to hearing from you!

To join the mailing list and receive updates and invitations for events – or to express your interest in getting involved in community consultations please contact Jude on jude@trinitybristol.org.uk or 07352616234.

Allotment Life: The Good, The Bad and The Slugs!

By Carol Walton



I have been an allotment holder for nearly 20 years, lucky enough to have a plot in White City site run by Hotwells and District Allotments Association (HwDDA). The Bristol International Exhibition opened to the public on this site in May 1914 on Ashton Meadow and became known as “The White City” because it was housed in enormous temporary white timber buildings. HwDDA took over the land as an allotment site in 1926.

It is fair to say that the life of an allotmenteer has many ups and some downs. For a start, we all complain about the weather: a cold wet spring is bad news as plants don't get off to a good start in life; too much hot weather and we all complain that the ground is too dry and requires so much watering.

Then there's the enemies. Rabbits, foxes, badgers and birds are all after our produce. If fruit bushes are not neatly surrounded by a netted cage, birds can gobble up the lot. Badgers are reported to be rather fond of strawberries. And worse of all, the dreaded slugs and snails can decimate a whole row of freshly planted lettuces overnight!

Despite the challenges, allotment holders are a friendly bunch. Always ready with a few words of encouragement and advice to newcomers and often happy to donate excess seeds and plants.

And nothing can beat the pride of bringing home the first early potatoes, broad beans, spinach, beetroot, apples and strawberries, and enjoying the fresh taste – “much better than the supermarkets”. The annual glut of courgettes and blackcurrants brings a challenge to find new recipes for jams, chutney etc.

Gardening, although hard work at times, it also brings the advantage of a “green gym” with plenty of fresh air and exercise. And when the weeding and watering gets too much, an allotment is a pleasant relaxing place to sit and enjoy a cup of tea and listen to the birds.



Arts & Culture

No round up of arts and culture in our neighbourhoods would be complete without Hotwells Panto - a legend in its own encore. I caught up with panto people Julian Brown (JB) and Rosie Duvall (RD) to find out why it's so special.

Hotwells Panto

How did you first hear about Hotwells Panto & how long have you been involved?

When we moved to the area six years ago, we were welcomed by neighbours who let us know about lots of things that were going on in the area, including the Hotwells Panto. We had to wait a few months before the next readthrough, which was in January 2020. That was my first year and I've been very happy to be part of each panto since. (JB)

Three years ago I saw my friend Felix perform in an altogether unhinged rendition of Cinderella featuring a humping dog and some questionable costumes - after a few tipsy conversations, it was a done deal. I nervously dragged myself to the first rehearsal when Panto season started up again! It's since been two enlightening years of laughs, terror and joy! (RD)

What is your role in the Panto - e.g. performer, backstage?

As a member of the chorus and for named parts. This year, I was trusted to put on a dress as Nanny (JB)

I played Robin Hood this year, and the Principle Girl in last year's Treasure Island. I've also designed the performance programmes these last two years as I think I have more free time than I actually do... (RD)

How would you describe Hotwells Panto to someone who's never heard of it?

The whole process, from the group script reading at New Year to the week of the performances, is about a group of people having a great time putting on a show. Everyone wants to give the audiences a great experience, but it is, throughout, a community experience, all about joining in together. (JB)

Bizarre, infamous, wonderful - you've really got to see it to believe it... (RD)

Do you have a favourite Panto?

I really enjoyed The Mardyke Mermaid (2020), but being visited by aliens on Treasure Island (2024) takes some beating. (JB)

I can't say I'm particularly well-versed in Panto culture, but I'm sure whichever is chosen for 2026 will become a firm favourite. (RD)

What's the best thing about being a part of Hotwells Panto?

Being part of something so much bigger than the sum of its parts! I love the rehearsals at least as much as the performances - probably more, since there is such a strong sense of doing this remarkable, wonderful and slightly crazy thing together. It's been a lovely way to make new friends. I'd recommend it to anyone who is interested, or even just panto-curious! (JB)

The annual cast after party and dancing (if you can call it that?) is the stuff of legends, but in all seriousness - the people involved, and the huge confidence boost for me personally makes it the most exciting time of the year. (RD)

Interview with Matt Copp Abstract Artist

By Rachel McNally

Have you always been an artist?

It's something I've wanted to do since I was a kid. After college I fell into the typical thing, lots of bar jobs and art was on the backburner. I tried to give it up a few times because making things all the time is quite an expensive monkey to have on your back. It's really in the last 5 years that my art making practice has come back. I've now got a studio space in State of the Art on Winterstoke Road. That changed my practice a lot, having a space to go to to make art as opposed to going into the spare room. Now, if I have two hours in the evening, I will get over there and justify that space's existence. It has made me more prolific and more a part of the Bristol art community.

How would you describe your process?

Quite intuitive, more reflective than inspired by stuff. So I wouldn't necessarily say that my work is inspired by landscape and Bristol but it does end up reflecting those things. When I make something, intellectually I'm thinking that I'm making a non-objective painting. Then when it's hung on the wall for a bit, it will start to look more landscape-y to me and I realise I've done another one - where nature hits the manmade! There is a landscape element which has gotten harder and harder to deny.

Where I live, it's got that door to trail thing going for it. I can walk 5 minutes in one direction and I'm in the middle of the city or 5 minutes in the other direction and I'm in the middle of the gorge surrounded by nature. I think my work reflects that: the way that natural forms clash with more architectural forms.

What kind of work do you make?

Mixed Media -The stuff I'm making at the moment is collages of acrylic paint. I'll paint lots of plastic trays, peel up the paint, cut and paste and then collage with them. It comes from years of peeling layers of paint off palettes and thinking I really like the way the underside looks. It's really satisfying.

When I moved into the studio space I gave myself a year of experimenting with ideas that I couldn't do in my spare room, things with oil paint, but my studio is really cold so I can't dry oil paint! Then I revisited the collage idea in my first session of 2024 and I was off to the races. Sometimes I'm surprised by it and sometimes it's deeply frustrating but I've really enjoyed it and I've built up a good body of work. The next step is to show it to people. With this more recent work I really *want* to show it to people and West Bristol Arts Trail is good for that.

The Arts Trail last year was a really positive experience. It's the first time I opened up our flat and I really enjoyed it. The flats in Hillsborough are lovely, they have a cottage-y feel, especially on the top floor. I was worried as it's a big ask to get people to come up 3 flights of stairs. But when people started to trickle up it felt good. The positive thing is that people will not come up if they are not interested, so I was really getting people who knew I was making abstract art and were interested.

What does it mean to you to be an artist, what makes you get up and go "yes"?

It's a different kind of thinking. It's not verbal. I can sit down and disappear into it for two hours and be engaged with the materials in front of me trying to coax this thing into being whatever it wants to be. It can be really frustrating and the majority of my time is spent frowning at something willing it to tell me what to do next, but it is always the thing that has lit me up.

Any plans to show elsewhere?

I'm on the Trail and I want to enter a couple of things in the RWA Open.

You can find Matt Copp at West Bristol Arts Trail 11-12 October at Hillsborough Flats
westbristolartstrail.co.uk He is on Instagram @ mattcoppart

Poetry Corner

Along the Waterfront by Jo Eades

*Amid the aroma of espresso,
Vermeer's girl looks coyly round the clock tower,
in her refashioned jewellery, poised to sound the alarm
at the sight of hooded figures, skulking in the shadows,
armed with anarchic intentions and paint cans.*

*The clashing colours of Cliftonwood
smile down on hopeful anglers.
A cox shouts sharp commands
above splashing blades.
The Harbour Master waves at a passing ferry,
seagulls squawk overhead.*

*The intoxicating smell of woodwork
lures amblers to The Underfall Yard
to wonder at its hydraulic power house.*

*The café is buzzing.
Sweating cyclists pour in
for well-earned refreshment;
Paddle boarders regroup for calorie-heavy cake.
A middle-aged couple sit opposite one another,
Gaze fixated across their latte.
"You haven't changed a bit" he says,
their calves brushing lightly under the table.*

From "Walking Words", a collection of poems, to accompany an audio trail for Bristol Lyra Poetry Festival 2023.

A few copies are still available. Email chair@hotwellscliftonwood.org.uk

Rhubarb

by Robert Walton

*Broad fans of plumage plucked
from some mythic bird the hunters trekked
the snow-capped hills to track,*

*the leathery crinkled leaves you snapped
from the stems. Fresh from the plot, stalks
of emerald sheen and ruby veins*

*lie on the kitchen-table like tribal
instruments set out for the priest
to let the ceremonial blood.*

*They wait for the knife to trim and chop
across the grooves, prepare them
for the sugar coating and the hob.*

*In dynastic China it was used to cure
the plague. Along the Silk Road,
valued with diamonds, musk and pearls.*

*Bringing your harvest home from the allotment,
you told me how as a child you'd tie
the leaves to your arms and try to fly.*

from *Sax Burglar Blues* (Seren Books).

In Memory of David 'Syd' Lawrence, Legend of Hotwells

by Robert Walton



Thousands of people across the city, tens of thousands across the UK and abroad, have been deeply saddened by the loss of David 'Syd' Lawrence who died peacefully at his Hotwells home on 21 June, a victim of Motor Neurone Disease.

Back in September 2023, an audience of 60/70 people was lucky enough to enjoy a memorable event in what was probably David's final public appearance before MND was diagnosed. At Trinity Church Community Room, I was privileged to interview David for an enthralling hour of entertaining storytelling in Hotwells Festival. Suffering from complications after a replacement knee operation. David was not one to let you down. He was in his element, chuckling heartily as he told a stream of tales about the triumphs, challenges and racism he'd experienced in his sporting life. He was philosophical and truly passionate, too, about social justice and diversity. Furthermore, he and Gaynor were

on tenterhooks waiting to hear of the birth of their first grand-daughter at any moment! The room fell silent when Gaynor's phone rang. Would they have to dash? Not yet. It was a joy to share their excitement and expectation as well as David's wonderful anecdotes, literally capped when he donned one of his England cricket caps and posed for photographs – especially this portrait taken by Hotwells resident Rupert Martin.

For many, David was one of life's rare characters who make a profound, lasting impression on you for their humanity, commitment, kindness and, in David's case, the most infectious laugh imaginable. He was a loving, proud family man. We send our thoughts and sympathy to his wonderful wife Gaynor, and to Buster and his partner Alice, who gave birth to beautiful baby Maya, I believe, the day after our unforgettable afternoon in the company of a local and international legend.

Photo by Hotwells Resident, Rupert Martin

If you would like to receive our bi-monthly e-newsletter (every other month) you can sign up here.
https://www.hotwellscliftonwood.org.uk/sign_up_to_receive_newsletters