

## Herschel Museum 2019 report for WHS AGM, March 7th 2020

### Invisible light Exhibition

Last year's exhibition 'Invisible Light' celebrated William Herschel's discovery of Infrared Radiation in 1800, including its influence and use in present day astronomy and modern life. Shown in the exhibit were William Herschel's original notes and instruments that he used in his experiments for the discovery, models of the IRAS (Infrared Astronomy Satellite) and Herschel Infrared space observatory, including images taken by them, and infrared cameras. This was made possible with loans from the RAS, Science Museum and The Bath Mineral Hospital. Special thanks must be given to Dr Bob Fosbury who helped with presenting a video in the exhibition which further explained Herschel's discovery of infrared to visitors.

There was very positive feedback from visitors around the world about the museum and exhibition.

'A fantastic and interesting exhibition' E.H – UK

'A real treasure and pleasure to see a real glimpse of history made' D.S – France

'Lovely house and great exhibition' M.J – USA

'Interesting, amazing' M.C- Singapore

In early January there was a reinterpretation of displays and all new labelling by the curatorial team.

### Events

The Events programme was a collaborative effort with the William Herschel Society and Bath Astronomers, allowing the museum to put on a number observing sessions hosted at the museum throughout the year, including celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the moon landings in July and lectures held at the BRLS. These proved popular with the public.

The museum was also used as a venue for Bath astronomers meetings and talks throughout the year.

### Visitor Figures and Shop Sales

2019 was the most successful year for visitor figures in the museums history, surpassing last year's total. **13,522 (approx.) people visited in 2019 not** including schools and groups, compared to **10,692 people in 2018**, an increase of 25%. In 2018 admission sales were up to **£60,500** compared to **£48,000 (approx.)** in 2018. **Shops sales were £7,626.96 in 2019** which was a increase from **£6,532.99 in 2018**.

### Learning and Engagement in 2019

It was a positive year for education and outreach with a number of primary schools, home school and Brownie groups booking both the 'Amazing Astronomy' and 'Spectacular Space' workshops. We received positive feedback from teachers and students. In total there were **330 children** who took part in booked workshops.

There were a number of school holiday workshops organised throughout the year including Octobers 'Museums Week'. For example the 'Infrared light' workshop using a Flir infrared camera held on October was attended by 30 adults and children.

Dr Bob Fosbury also gave a talk 'Infrared Radiation: Seeing farther and deeper' to families in the May half-term, which was greatly enjoyed.

In February Bath Spa Conservation students worked towards their degree, drawing floor plans and interior details in the museum. In April, the museum working with Bath Spa University media students produced a short film documentary about the Herschel's and the museum.

The 'Starseekers' education project (funded by the Ernest Cook Trust) continued to develop in 2019, run by the Herschel/BPT learning team with support from the Bath Astronomers and Herschel volunteers. It will incorporate hands-on activities, talks and telescope observing sessions both at the museum and in schools. So far, both primary and secondary schools have been involved plus members of Age UK (B&NES).

In 2019 the Herschel was awarded a grant from the Science and Technologies Council, which formed the 'Sparks project', to upgrade the cinema for education and events, including the hiring of an inflatable Planetarium for future workshops for 2020.

### **Group visits 2019**

Booked group visits continued to be encouraging in 2019 with **307 booked visitors**, for tours, talks and observing sessions held at the museum. This included astronomy clubs, history societies, international universities, and European language academies.

### **Partnerships**

Bristol based infrared heating company 'Herschel Heaters' have sponsored the museum by gifting an infrared heater, which has an image of Uranus, which is used and displayed from the reception room.

In April we met with Cardiff University staff involved with the Herschel Infrared observatory project to talk of future collaboration, their declaration of support helped the museum be awarded the SPARKs grant. Dr Chris North from the university also for the WHS annual talk in March, gave a talk about the Herschel Infrared Space Observatory.

There were a few projects that the museum was marginally involved with but worth noting. The Bath UNESCO 'Great Spas of Europe' bid, Bath TEDex talks 2019 legacy app 'Echos of Bath', and the University De Valpararas (Chile) tribute to William Herschel.

CIE (International Council of Illumination) held an award ceremony at the museum to Nigel Pollard for his work on guidelines on light pollution.

### **Awards**

2019 was a great year for recognition from the Museum/Heritage/Business sectors for the museums work.

In May the museum was awarded 'Limited budget project of the year' from the Museums and Heritage Awards for the exhibition/programme for 2018's 'Wonder Women of Science'.

In November the museum won three awards, including Gold Medal for 'Small visitor attraction' from the Bristol, Bath and Somerset Tourism awards, a special commendation for 'Leisure and tourism award' from the Bath Chronicle Business awards, and a 'Sandford Award' for excellence in heritage education.

### **Building/General Maintenance**

In 2019 there was an upgrading of the entire CCTV system for the museum and house. There was also re-painting of the office space and basement area.

### **Opening hours in 2020**

In 2020 the museum will be open from February 1st 2020 till closing January 3rd 2021. We will also repeat extending weekday hours in July and August from 11am to 5pm, for the busier summer period.

### **Exhibition/Programme in 2020**

There will be two exhibitions held at the museum in 2020. A smaller exhibit in the music room will be titled "The Herschel's and music in Bath" and will be part of the BPT 2019 programme on the theme of Music. The main exhibition 'Sir John Herschel and the RAS' will be held in the Caroline Lucretia gallery, this will celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the RAS. This will run from February 29<sup>th</sup> 2020 to January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021. There also be half-term/school holiday workshops linked to the exhibitions throughout the year for families/children to participate in.

We will continue to collaborate with the WHS on joint lectures in 2020, and also put on a programme of observing sessions hosted at the museum over the year, including events for the National Astronomers Meeting in July.

The museum will also be the venue for Bath Astronomers committee meetings, talks and their 'Getting to grips with Astronomy' course.

### **New Acquisition**

In 2019 the museum received a model of the ESA's Herschel infrared space observatory, kindly gifted from Rebecca Gallo, then a 3<sup>rd</sup> year 3d model making student from the University of Bournemouth. The model was displayed as part of 2019's exhibition 'Invisible light' and is now part of the museum's permanent collection.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the Herschel volunteers/staff and support of the Herschel Society and Bath Astronomers for making 2019 an successful year for the Herschel Museum.

