

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Literary and
Scientific
Institute

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LSi in 2023-4

- Gillinghams gave notice in January 2024 and vacated September 2024
- Crowdfunder and their associates in occupation
- December 2023 - major flood
- Other Building challenges:
 - Increasing costs especially utilities
 - internet
 - climate change;
- Activities in LSi

Community engagement at the LSi

Community access to the LSi was a fundamental principle behind the restoration of the historic Georgian Grade II* listed building, and the top priority of the BADT team behind the project as well as all the stakeholders without whose support the plan would not have succeeded. We are pleased that individuals and groups continue to use the unique facilities offered by this Bridport landmark. Here is an overview of the activities hosted at the LSi, which maintain it as a vibrant hub at the heart of the town.



LSi users 2024

There are 13 members renting permanent desks at the LSi, with three larger users supported by a range of small businesses and individuals:

Leading tech company **Crowdfunder** has six employees operating from the building, with other team members visiting frequently. Over £100,000 has been raised for local projects within DT6 and surrounding areas from crowdfunding projects since October 2023. This year it has hosted one work experience student from The Sir John Colfox Academy, Bridport.



1835

Why was the LSI built?

Industrialisation, the growth of a large Empire and the intensification in manufacturing and trade saw an increased need for a more literate and numerate workforce that could read, write and account.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw a transition to new methods and machines, unimagined by the men of the 16th and 17th centuries. The economic recession of 1830-45 left all who remained in poverty and hardships that threatened the established order.

Local philanthropists and benefactors saw the advantage of funding educational opportunities which acted as a stimulus of self-improvement, as did the working men themselves who saw the significant role education had for advancement.

Mechanics Institutes were a national response to meet this need.



1835 - 1855

Construction complete

In 1835 the Institute building was constructed and opened as a Mechanics Institute.

By 1855 it was reconstructed in accordance with the Literary and Scientific Institute Act passed in 1854 with the objective: 'To encourage the improvement and moral improvement of all classes and the cultivation of literature, science and art.'



The Bank of Dreams and Nightmares is a creative writing charity for young people. It has three employees, 40-50 volunteers at training sessions, and 70-75 workshop participants. It has hosted two Sir John Colfox Academy work experience students.

1865 - 1939

Bridport School of Art

Greater cultural awareness was prompted nationally by the Great Exhibition of Crystal Palace in 1851. A museum and library in town came to be seen as a stimulus of the intelligence and public spirit manifested in that town. The Great Exhibition also highlighted the need to improve standards in Art and Design education.

1865 - The Bridport School of Art was established and worked complete the Institute becoming the new organisation.

1880 - The upstairs room was divided to provide permanent studios for the Art school with additional rooms for classes and lectures added to the back of the building. Francis Reardon became assistant master before becoming Director of Bridport School of Art.

1920 - 29 - 1945 the outbreak of war in 1939, the building provided accommodation for a Men's club.



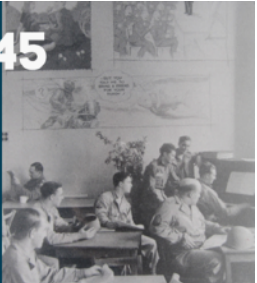
1939 - 1945

During the war

During the Second World War at least part of the Institute building was requisitioned for war purposes.

The building was temporarily used by American troops stationed in Bridport before the Normandy landing in 1944.

The reading room was used as a Red Cross recreational centre and the first floor was for a time, used as a Bureau of War Service for the Borough Evacuation Scheme.



The Justice League is a Community Interest Company that engages with young people to provide hands-on experience in the field of human rights. It has hosted a total of 12 university students for work experience this year, plus secondary school students from Beaminster (3), Bridport (6), Lyme Regis (4) and Dorchester (2), plus three from Axminster and Exeter. Over the summer the League, founded by human rights lawyer Clive Stafford Smith, hosted 35 students (33 university and 2 secondary). In terms of outreach the programme has involved Beaminster School, The Sir John Colfox Academy, The Woodroffe School, The Thomas Hardye School and Reach Academy Exeter.

1945 - 2022

After the war

1945 - 50 Post war the Red Cross used the upstairs as a depot. The ground floor consisted of a meeting room, a small room and a library. However, local interest had declined and the Institute was running into financial difficulties. Responsibility for the building was handed over to Dorset County Council.

1952 - 1957 - The building served as the town's public library, until the library service relocated to new premises.

2002 - The building was derelict, empty and falling in 'at risk'.



2008 - 2018

An iconic building

The architecture of the LSI building in the mid 1850s. In the small central tower of Bridport, there is a distinctive clock tower and building for representing formal architectural motifs reminiscent with the classical world. The clock tower was designed to enhance the culture and learning that would take place within, and improve and inspire the town's people of Bridport.

The main floor is raised up half a level from the street, forming a subtle elevated entrance that indicates the public prominence of the building. A wide flight of steps from the entrance hall to the first floor, form the transition between the world of the street outside, and the higher floor of art and learning within.

A statue of Minerva Goddess of handicrafts, the professions and the Arts, is installed in a niche on the top of the stairs.



2008 - 2018

A timeline of events

2008 - Concern within the Bridport community about the neglect of the building prompted a first expression of interest from the newly formed Bridport Arts Development Trust.

2010 - Richardson family court case was settled and the Bridport Arts Development Trust were given time to develop a proposal to take on the building.

2010 - Heritage Lottery Fund application towards the capital cost of restoration was successful, and matched funding secured.

2014 - A successful second Heritage Lottery Fund application was made.

2016 - Restoration work starts.

2018 - The restoration project that has drawn on modern innovations in architectural design and building materials is completed and the restored and evergreen building is re-opened.



2021 - now

What's going on now?

Crowdfunder and 3DCentre are now operating on the ground and lower ground floors of the LSI. They have been selected to ensure that the building, which has been publicly funded, remains open and accessible to the community, including with the support of the funding.

They are joined by localities, charities and businesses including The Bank of Dreams and Nightmares, a charity's charity inspiring the minds of young people in Dorset. Their programmes and work are a charity and are primarily designed to support marginalised groups of people and disadvantaged youth. Rex Berger from 3DCentre is often working on education levels in the classroom for Sir John Colfox Academy.

Since 2021 they have had the pleasure of meeting some amazing businesses, both locally and from afar who have become part of the LSI community.

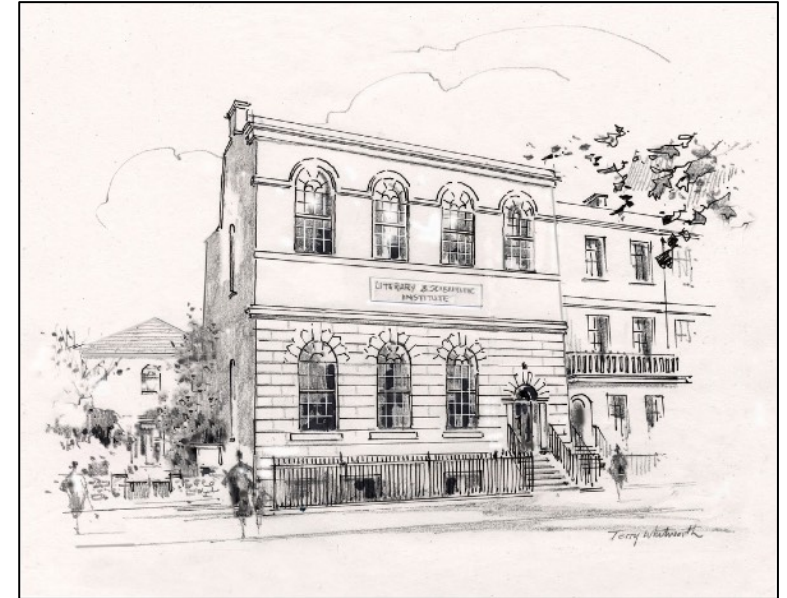
Find out more at www.lsi-bridport.co.uk



LSi open day celebrates Dorset Architectural Heritage Week 2024

The LSi is an architectural highlight that began life almost 200 years ago as a Mechanics' Institute, part of a movement to provide practical education for working men. Its public opening in September, attracted a stream of visitors who were enthusiastic about the restoration of the building and impressed by the charitable-commercial collaboration designed by Bridport Area Development Trust to secure its future.

Dorset Architectural Heritage Week has run for more than 30 years. Organised during that time by East Dorset Heritage Trust, it now operates under the auspices of Heritage Open Days, a countrywide event run by the National Trust. It is a celebration of the historic and contemporary architecture of Dorset. All Architectural Heritage Week events are free and run by volunteers.



MR. BUCKINGHAM
HAVING BEEN INVITED TO DELIVER IN BRIDPORT A COURSE OF
SIX POPULAR LECTURES,
DESCRIPTIVE OF HIS TRAVELS IN
**Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia,
Babylonia, & Assyria,**
WILL DESCRIBE THE OBJECTS AND PLACES NAMED BELOW, IN THE
LECTURE ROOM OF THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTION,
ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS OF NOVEMBER, 1884.

THURSDAY, 10th.—Egypt—the Nile, its Sources & Mouths—the Delta—the Cataracts—Inundation—Climate & Productions.
FRIDAY, - 20th.—Alexandria—Canopus—Memphis—the Sphinx—the Pyramids—Thebes—Mémnon—Tombs of the Pharaohs.
MONDAY, - 23rd.—Palestine—Lebanon—Hermes—Tabor—Carmel—Mount Zion—the River Jordan—Tiberias & the Dead Sea.
TUESDAY, - 24th.—Gaza—Joppa—Caesarea—Tyre & Sidon—Nazareth—Bethlehem—Jerusalem—Calvary—the Tomb of Christ.
THURSDAY, 26th.—Mash—Ammon—Heshbon—Basan—Gilead—the Decapolis—the Land of Us—Dannoura—Palmyra.
FRIDAY, - 27th.—Mesopotamia—Ur of the Chaldees—Ruins of Nineveh & Babylon—and Remains of the Tower of Babel.

Single Lecture, Gentlemen, 2s. 6d.—Ladies, 1s.—Youths under Fifteen, 1s. 6d.
ADMISSION TO THE BACK SEATS, ONE SHILLING.

To the Original Subscribers to the whole Course, whose names may be entered on the Lists now at the Booksellers, in Bridport before Monday the 10th of November, Tickets for the SIX Lectures will be supplied at the following reduced rates.—Gentlemen, 10s. 6d.—Ladies, 7s. 6d.—Youths, 5s. But after that date the price will be—Gentlemen, 12s. 6d.—Ladies, 10s.—Youths, 7s. 6d.

Each Lecture will commence at half-past seven o'clock to a minute and conclude about nine.

Printed, Printed, East Street, Bridport.

Facilities available for hire at the LSi

There are **hot desks** in the friendly atmosphere of the The Hub above the Courtyard, and more offering flexible co-working for up to four people in the Courtyard itself, a workplace that allows users to connect with others. The **meeting room** is ideal for training, gatherings, presentations or creative brainstorming sessions.

Arguably a unique space, the **courtyard** is suitable for talks, performances, pop-up events and more. The adjacent **podcast and editing suite** offers basic editing and podcast facilities. The fully equipped **kitchen** is available for hire.



Bookings in the year to date 2024

Facility	Bookings
Hot Desks	288
Meeting Room	86
Courtyard	65
Podcast Room	2

Wide range of regular and one-off events

Women Together in Business and social media content provider extraordinaire **Joey Clarkson** held a networking session for an incredible community of women who are excelling in their businesses.

Battens Solicitors celebrated the first birthday of their office with a networking party in our courtyard, inviting local businesses to join them and remember their beginnings at their drop-in clinics at the LSi.

Crowdfunder Drop-in Sessions help communities and businesses get their ideas funded.

Networking breakfast and lunch sessions have connected local makers, creators, innovators and change makers while enjoying good local food.

The Bridport Prize hosted an inspiring evening for authors at every stage of their careers.

The Europe-wide **Herewear** research project explored the future of textile production through workshops and talks, in collaboration with **Sustainable Bridport** and **Bridport Fashion Revolution**.

Local wellbeing coach **Sheera King** held her first workshop.

Crowdfunder is now in its fourth year managing the community facilities. In 2023/24, they welcomed nearly 1,000 new users and hosted over 400 bookings for the meeting room and courtyard.