

# PRESS RELEASE

Members of Chideock WI have made a dressing up costume for use by school children at the newly refurbished Bridport Museum to help bring alive the history of Bridport and items found within the Museum. It is designed to enable children to take it on and off easily.

The costume chosen was a representation of the “Spirit of Bridport” as portrayed in the famous painting by Francis (Fra) Newbery (1855-1946) (<http://www.bridporttownhall.org/history/fra-newbery>). The tunic and underskirt are made of a heavy wool-like fabric in blue, to represent the flax flower and trimmed with gold borders, celebrating the rope-making traditions of the town. The Bridport town crest is hand-stitched felted wool featuring an appliquéd lion passant and fleur de lys and took many hours of concentrated work as it involved a lot of hand-stitching to get the right effect.

“We are delighted with this addition to our educational wardrobe which will assist us to teach children about Bridport’s heritage through play.” Said Bryony Tidball from the Museum’s Learning Service.

Chideock WI has a very active Craft Group and the members’ many skills include sewing, knitting, decoupage, pottery and art.

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The portrait “The Spirit of Bridport” forms the central panel of the Town Hall mural which was unveiled in 1925 and East Cliff at West Bay and a China tea clipper can be seen in the background. The lady holds a distaff illustrating the twine spinning carried out in the town. We understand that the model for the painting was Kathleen Reynolds, daughter of the then Mayor of Bridport, E S Reynolds, who knew Fra Newbery during his days here in Dorset. Fra Newbery was Director of the Glasgow School of Art during the period 1885-1917, but spent most of his life here in Dorset.

At 10am on Saturday 27 May Bridport Museum will welcome its first visitors after its major redevelopment. Since its doors shut for the renovations in September many exciting changes have taken place. The centrepiece of the new rope and net gallery will be a working ropewalk, which will be demonstrated regularly, and there are lots of interactives to entertain children of all ages. Entrance to the Museum will still be free, and it will be open Monday-Friday, 10am-5pm, and Saturdays 10am-4pm.