

Pulteney Art House

A regional art museum at the edge of Bath

Established 1908 **Address** 17 Great Pulteney Street, Bath BA2 4QY **Contact**

hello@pulteneyarthouse.example · +44 1225 000 000 **Open** Tuesday–Sunday, 10:00–17:00 · Closed Mondays · Closed 24–26 December and 1 January



A small museum with a long memory. The collection was founded in the early twentieth century by Elenor Caversham, a Bath-born textile merchant's daughter who began acquiring European paintings and decorative arts after a year of study in Florence. She left the collection to the city in 1907 along with the house she had bought to display it in, and we opened to visitors the following spring. We aren't a national institution. What we offer instead is a few hours in rooms where you can stand close to the work, ask questions, and leave knowing more than you came in with.

What we offer

We're open six days a week, with five permanent collection galleries, one temporary exhibition wing, a small reading room on the upper floor with a view of the canal, a café, and a shop that mostly sells books and prints. A full visit takes most people about two hours; longer if you like to linger.

Permanent collection. Paintings from the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries — strong on Dutch and Italian works, with a particularly well-loved room of British eighteenth-century portraits. Decorative

arts include English and continental porcelain, silver, miniatures, and a small group of Renaissance bronzes that travel rarely.

Temporary exhibitions. We run two or three major exhibitions a year, usually drawing connections between our own collection and works on loan from public and private collections across the UK and Europe. See [Current Exhibitions](#) for what's on now.

Talks, tours, and events. Curator-led tours every Wednesday and Saturday at 11:30. Evening lectures roughly monthly. School holiday programmes for families. A full events calendar is published each season on our website.

Tickets and admission

Ticket type	Price	Notes
Adult	£12.50	Full access to permanent collection and current exhibitions
Concession	£10.00	Students, jobseekers, over-65s, disabled visitors
Young person (18–25)	£7.00	With valid ID
Child (under 18)	Free	Accompanied by an adult
Family (2 adults + up to 3 children)	£25.00	
Member	Free	Unlimited visits, see Membership below

Booking. Tickets are available at the door or in advance via our website. Advance booking is recommended for weekends and for the first two weeks of a new exhibition opening; otherwise walk-ins are fine.

Free first Sunday. The first Sunday of every month is free for all visitors. The museum is busier than usual on these days — if you'd prefer a quieter visit, weekday mornings are best.

Local residents. If you live in Bath or North East Somerset (postcode BA1, BA2, BA3) you're entitled to half-price tickets at the door — please bring proof of address.

Membership

Our annual membership pays for itself in three visits. Members also get early access to exhibition openings, an invitation to our annual lecture, and 10% off in the shop and café.

Membership tier	Annual	Includes
Individual	£45	Unlimited admission for one named member
Joint	£75	Unlimited admission for two named members

Membership tier	Annual	Includes
Family	£95	Two adults + up to 4 children under 18 at the same address
Patron	£250	Joint membership + two guest passes per visit + invitation to private curator's tours

Memberships can be purchased online, at the front desk, or as a gift (we'll post a printed card to the recipient).

Getting here



Address. 17 Great Pulteney Street, Bath BA2 4QY. We sit on the south side of Great Pulteney Street, a short walk from the river and the canal.

By train. Bath Spa station is a fifteen-minute walk. Cross the river by Pulteney Bridge and walk along Great Pulteney Street — the entrance is on the left, marked by a brass plaque.

By bus. Several routes stop on Bathwick Hill or near the canal — check the [Bath Bus Company](#) website for current timetables.

By car. We have no car park of our own. The nearest public car parks are at Manvers Street, Charlotte Street, and the SouthGate shopping centre. On-street parking on Great Pulteney Street is metered and limited.

By bicycle. Cycle racks are available at the side of the museum. The Bristol-to-Bath cycle path runs along the canal a five-minute walk away.

Accessibility

We've tried to make the museum welcoming to as many visitors as possible, and we'd rather you tell us when we fall short than not visit.

Step-free access. A ramped entrance is on the right of the main façade. All public galleries on the ground and first floors are accessible by lift. The second-floor reading room is also lift-accessible. Accessible toilets are on the ground floor and first floor.

Wheelchairs and seating. A manual wheelchair is available to borrow at the front desk on a first-come, first-served basis. Folding stools can be borrowed for the duration of your visit if you'd prefer to sit while looking at the work.

Hearing. A hearing loop is installed at the ticket desk and in the lecture theatre. Guided tours can be booked with a BSL interpreter — please give us at least two weeks' notice.

Sight. Large-print labels and a magnifier are available at the desk. Audio descriptions of key works can be downloaded as MP3 files from our website. Touch tours of selected sculptures and decorative objects can be arranged by appointment.

Sensory-friendly hours. The first Sunday morning of every month, 10:00–11:30, is reserved for visitors who prefer a quieter, lower-stimulation environment. Lighting in selected galleries is dimmed slightly, ambient music is turned off, and capacity is reduced.

Assistance dogs. Welcome everywhere in the museum.

Companion tickets. A companion accompanying a disabled visitor is admitted free.

If there's something we haven't mentioned that would affect your visit, please email accessibility@pulteneyarthouse.example or call ahead and we'll do what we can.

Café and shop



The Courtyard Café is on the ground floor, looking out onto a small interior courtyard. Open the same hours as the museum (10:00–17:00, Tuesday–Sunday), last orders at 16:30. We serve a short menu of homemade soups, sandwiches on bread from a local bakery, salads, cakes, and proper coffee. Vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options are always available. There's no need to buy a museum ticket to use the café — it has its own street entrance.

The Museum Shop is by the main entrance. We stock exhibition catalogues, art-history books, prints of works from the permanent collection, postcards, notebooks, and a small selection of jewellery and gifts from local makers. Members get 10% off.

Visiting with children

We like children visiting the museum. Most galleries have at least one drawer, hidden door, or set of activity cards designed to give younger visitors something to find or do — ask at the desk for a Family Trail. Under-18s are free with an accompanying adult.

Family workshops run during school holidays — usually two or three sessions a week, suited to ages 5–11. Booking essential; sessions cost £8 per child and include all materials. Adults stay for free.

Buggy and pram access. Buggies and prams are welcome in all galleries. Lifts are buggy-accessible. A small parking area for buggies is available near the front desk if you'd rather not push one around the galleries.

Baby changing. Facilities are on the ground floor near the café and on the first floor near the toilets.

Schools and groups

School visits. We welcome school groups from Reception through Sixth Form. Self-guided visits are free for any state-funded school in Bath, North East Somerset, and surrounding districts; otherwise £3 per pupil. Curator-led sessions are £6 per pupil and include a 90-minute focused tour matched to your curriculum (KS1–KS3 art, history, classics, and English). Book at least three weeks in advance through schools@pulteneyarthouse.example.

Higher and further education. Free entry for students with a valid student ID. Group visits for HE/FE groups can be arranged with a curator — typically £75 for the session for groups up to 25.

Adult and community groups. Group rates for parties of 10 or more: £9.50 per person (adult), £7.50 (concession). Private out-of-hours tours can be arranged — please get in touch with details and we'll quote.

Private tours. Available for groups of 6–20 outside opening hours, led by a curator. From £300 for a 90-minute session, including a glass of wine in the reading room afterwards. Booking required at least four weeks in advance.

House rules

A few things to know before you visit. None of these are surprises but it's helpful to say them up front.

Photography. Permitted in the permanent collection galleries for personal use only — no flash, no tripods. Some objects in temporary exhibitions are loaned to us on the condition that they're not photographed; these are clearly marked. Commercial photography requires written permission — please email comms@pulteneyarthouse.example.

Bags and coats. Small bags are welcome in the galleries. Larger bags (anything over A3 in size, or any rucksack worn on the back) need to be left in the free cloakroom by the entrance.

Food and drink. Only in the café, please.

Sketching. Encouraged. Bring a pencil; we ask that you don't use pen or paint in the galleries (sketching is fine in the café and the reading room).

Touching the work. Please don't. We have a small number of objects in the touch-collection that are explicitly there to be handled — these are marked.

Quiet. We're a fairly quiet museum by nature. The galleries aren't silent, but we ask that you keep voices low so others can spend time with the work.

What we can help you with

Our website and the assistant on our website can answer questions about:

- Opening hours, closures, and how to get here
- Ticket prices, concessions, and free-admission days
- Membership options and benefits
- Current and upcoming exhibitions
- Access information for visitors with disabilities or specific needs

- Family visits, children's activities, and school programmes
- Group bookings, private tours, and out-of-hours hire
- Café and shop information
- Talks, lectures, and other events on the museum's calendar
- General questions about the collection, including artists and works in our care
- Background questions about art, artists, and art history — we look these up for you from public sources at the time you ask

What we can't help you with directly

- **We can't process payments through the assistant.** Tickets and memberships are bought on our website or at the door; the assistant can guide you to the right page and your details can be forwarded to our team for follow-up.
- **We can't confirm whether a specific work is currently on display.** Temporary exhibitions change every few months, and some works in the permanent collection rotate or travel on loan. For specific works, please email collection@pulteneyarthouse.example before your visit.
- **We can't provide formal valuations or authentication.** If you're seeking advice on a work of art you own or have inherited, we can suggest reputable professional services in the region — please get in touch.
- **We can't reserve specific time slots in the café.** The café is first-come, first-served. For lunch at busy times (weekend opening of a new exhibition, school holidays) we'd suggest arriving before 12:30.

If you're asking about something outside the above, please get in touch directly:

- **Visitor enquiries.** hello@pulteneyarthouse.example · +44 1225 000 000
- **Schools.** schools@pulteneyarthouse.example
- **Press and image rights.** comms@pulteneyarthouse.example
- **Accessibility.** accessibility@pulteneyarthouse.example
- **Curatorial questions about the collection.** collection@pulteneyarthouse.example
- **Donations and patronage.** development@pulteneyarthouse.example

A brief history

The museum is named for the street it stands on, but the collection is named for its founder, Elenor Caversham (1851–1932). Born in Bath into a family of textile merchants, she travelled to Florence in her early twenties and spent a year studying with the painter Anselmo Vellini. She returned to Bath without becoming a painter herself but with a settled and unusual conviction: that the most interesting work in Europe wasn't in the great national collections but in the rooms of private houses, where pictures could be lived with rather than admired through a rope barrier.

She bought her first painting — a small Dutch winter scene now in Room II — in 1879. By the early 1890s she had filled the upper floors of her family's house on Henrietta Street. In 1903 she purchased the property at 17 Great Pulteney Street, originally built as a private residence in 1796 and used as a small school for the previous forty years, with the intention of opening her collection to the public. She died of pneumonia in 1907 before the opening, leaving the collection, the building, and an endowment to a charitable trust she had established the year before.

The museum opened on 14 March 1908. The building has been extended once, in 1962, when the back of the property was rebuilt to create the present temporary exhibition wing and the courtyard café. We've kept the original front rooms largely as Elenor arranged them.

We remain a charitable trust. The museum receives no regular government funding and depends on ticket revenue, memberships, donations, and the generosity of our patrons.

Image credits

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This guide last updated 2026. Prices, opening hours, and policies may change — please check the website for current information, or contact us directly.

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