

Beryl Smith Basket Making Demonstrations and Willow Weaving Workshops
Monday 28th to Wednesday 30th September 2009 (3 days)

Memorial Gallery, Yale College, Wrexham

The gallery invited Beryl Smith to exhibit her work as part of the themed exhibition 'Made in Wales' which ran from 14th September 2009 to the 12th February 2010. It brought together and celebrated the engaging diversity of contemporary and historical Welsh visual culture. A range of informative activities were organised to complement the exhibition and enhance student participation and project work.

Beryl led three days of exciting and engaging willow weaving workshops in the gallery space, allowing students the opportunity to have a go at weaving and view a wide range of her willow baskets, sculptures and projects.

Beryl worked with a variety of different students within the art department including Introductory and First Diploma, National Diploma, Textiles, Craft and WJEC Foundation. All were fully engaged with learning about the sustainability of willow, how it can be used as an artistic material and had the opportunity to learn weaving skills.

These introductory sessions were enhanced by a final drop in afternoon where students came along and worked with Beryl to improve their skills. This resulted in the creation of willow stars, flowers and fish.

Introductory and First Diploma students have used their experience to great effect and have gone on to create willow plant supports which they later sold at the student market as part of their enterprise project.

Beryl was excellent with the students, who had a range of abilities, and created an exciting atmosphere within the gallery. The workshops brought together notions of teamwork, gaining traditional craft skills, sustainability and the opportunity for students to work with a professional maker.

J Creed - Gallery Officer
Memorial Gallery, Yale College, Wrexham