



George Biles photograph album with kind permission of Ken Allen

Retrospective for master sign painter

A major retrospective art exhibition celebrating the remarkable talents of Bridport's Master Sign Painter, George Biles will take place during August across different venues in Bridport.

George Biles (b.1900 / d.1987) was a highly talented signwriter and pictorial painter who lived in Bridport throughout his life. For many years George painted the pub signs for Palmers Brewery as well as for a number of other independent breweries in the south west.

Writing in this magazine in June 2022, the late Cecil Amor highlighted the 'attractive, colourful and artistic' nature of George Biles' work.

With background information supplied by Mr Ken Allen from Yeovil, Cecil recalled how a small company was established at 71 East Street in Bridport in 1924, as sign writers and pictorial artists. It was called Bridport Signs Service Studios. The leader of the group was F G Biles, who had been apprenticed himself in 1914. Biles employed two assistants, after five years or so, whom he trained up to his own standard. One of these was another local man, James (Jimmy) Hallett.

'The company prospered' said Cecil, 'producing

signs of all types and sizes for establishments throughout the south west of England.' To read the full article follow this link.

The Bridport exhibition is in three venues which will be open from 1-29 August 2024 between 10 am and 4 pm (closed Sunday and Monday).

They are the Royal British Legion Hall, Victoria Grove which will display a recreation of George's studio with a selection of pictorial pub signs and other images of George at work in Bridport.

Bridport Arts Centre will be showing a display of Pantomime screens and backdrops painted by George Biles.

Bridport Museum is offering a display of the original *Spirit of Bridport* town sign and the Lord Nelson Skittle Alley where visitors can see more of Palmers pub signs. It will be open during the pubs hours. Visit www.lordnelsonbridport.co.uk for times.

The George Biles Project has been delivered by the Town Council working with Palmers Brewery and local signwriter Jemma Thompson. Work to research, record and exhibit the works by George Biles was made possible with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.