

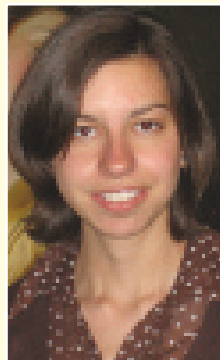
# THE FRIENDS OF YORK ART GALLERY



## NEWSLETTER / JUNE 2011

### *Curator's Corner May 2011*

We have had an incredible few months at the gallery with the display of David Hockney's *Bigger Trees Near Warter* proving to be a huge hit with visitors. We have even had a few surprise visits from the artist himself! Since the exhibition opened in February, we have attracted over 120,000 visitors, more than double the number of visitors who came to the gallery during the same period last year. The display of *Bigger Trees Near Warter* is part of a regional project, Art in Yorkshire, supported by Tate. Initiated by York Museums Trust, there are lots of events happening all across Yorkshire and I would encourage you to look at the Art in Yorkshire website or pick up a leaflet in the gallery. As part of this year long celebration, *Bigger Trees Near Warter* will be travelling to the Ferens Art Gallery, Hull and Cartwright Hall, Bradford where it will be shown slightly differently from York. Our newly refurbished Burton Gallery is also receiving positive comments and visitors are particularly enjoying the opportunity to touch some of the coated bronze busts and to add their own art works to our sketchbooks. Richard Jack's *Return to the Front* and William Etty's *Preparing for a Fancy Dress Ball* appear to be two of the paintings that most regularly appear in the sketchbooks and in comments. By the time this newsletter appears, our *William Etty: Art & Controversy* exhibition will be open to the public, with the accompanying exhibition catalogue also on sale. A huge thanks must go to the Friends for supporting the publication of the catalogue, which has been an enormous undertaking. The catalogue is available at the shop for £25



with the usual reduction for Friends. The exhibition is accompanied by a packed programme of talks and events including taster talks delivered by volunteers from the Friends of York Art Gallery. Thanks to everyone who has volunteered to be involved with this project and to Judith Bailey for organising it. Finally, I do hope you will have chance to visit our display of sculptures and drawings by *Austin Wright (1911-1997)* in the little gallery and our new installation at York St Mary's, Cornelia Parker's *Thirty Pieces of Silver*.

*Austin Wright Centenary 1911-2011*

York Art Gallery has recently acquired the following works of art: Simon Periton's *The Anonymous Rose* (The V&A/ MLA Purchase Grant Fund and The Art Fund have agreed to support the purchase. We negotiated the purchase price to £6000 and the grants are as follows: V&A £1500, Art Fund, £2250, FYAG £2250); 11 pieces of post war British Studio ceramics from a donor in Wilberfoss, with examples by John Maltby, Mick Casson, Takeshi Yasuda and Wally Keeler; *Conversation Jugs*, The acquisition, a collaborative work by Alex McErlain and Alice Kettle, comprises two jugs on an embroidered cloth



(these were donated by the artists and are now on display in *Honest Pots* in the Gallery of



*Pots*); *Teapot*, 2002 by Ben Arnup (a bequest); *Yellow Form* 2010 and a handling ceramic by Merette Rasmussen (purchased with the aid of a grant of £573.33 from the FYAG and grants from the MLA/ V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Art Fund).

A number of these newly acquired ceramics will go on display shortly in the Burton Gallery, including *Yellow Form*.

**LAURA TURNER**

---

## *William Etty Update*

After two years of research, writing and preparation, the opening of the *William Etty: Art & Controversy* exhibition is almost upon us. The last few weeks have been incredibly busy and exciting. As well as writing all the labels and introductory panels to accompany the displayed paintings, I have just finished filming a promotional video for the exhibition, which you can find on York Art Gallery's website – [www.yorkartgallery.org.uk](http://www.yorkartgallery.org.uk). There is also a podcast you can listen to on the Art in Yorkshire website <http://art.yorkshire.com/artists/william-etty> which again will tell you a little bit more about Etty's controversial status and the forthcoming exhibition. To date we have had a tremendous amount of interest in the exhibition. Alongside using new media, I've been very busy being interviewed by various newspapers and journals. I have also had a small piece published in *Tate Etc* magazine (Summer 2011), which has a worldwide readership, so news of our exhibition will hopefully reach international audiences. We hope that visitors will engage with the idea of Etty's controversial status when they visit the exhibition. Indeed, we have got a fantastic array of interactives planned to run alongside the show – from the *Etty Express* (a mock nineteenth newspaper which visitors can take away with them), to a section entitled *Letters to the Editor* where visitors can record their own opinions about Etty's art. There will also be the opportunity to draw and study the human body, as Etty would have done, in the section of the exhibition which focuses on Etty's studies in the life class. We have a busy programme of events planned to accompany the exhibition; including tours of Etty's York, life drawing classes, adult education courses, as well as the unique and entertaining opportunity to visit

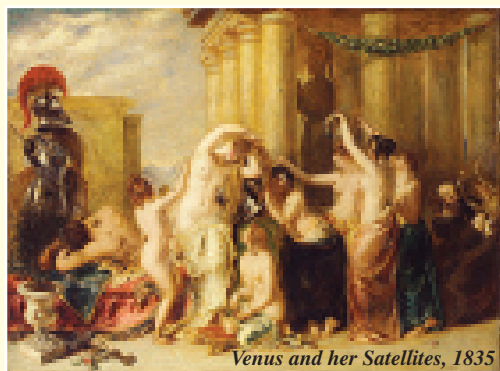
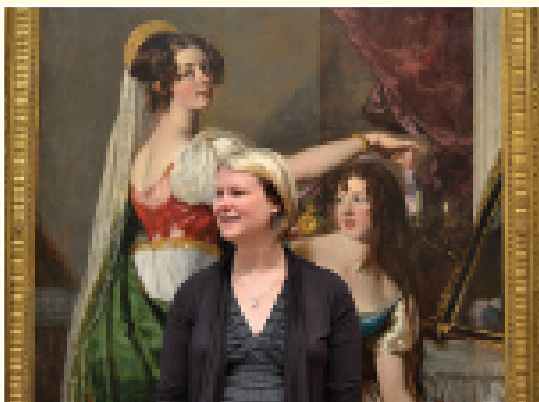
the exhibition in the company of two actors, who will be playing the characters of Etty's outraged critics. These events will run alongside our normal schedule of curators' talks and family Saturdays (for more information visit our website).

My two years at York Art Gallery has flown by and I will be very sorry to be leaving in June. However, I do hope you will all enjoy the exhibition and find the catalogue interesting and that my efforts will result in continued interest in Etty and his art. On a personal note, I just want to take the opportunity to say what an absolute pleasure it has been to work on this project. From beginning to end it has been a thoroughly enjoyable process. It has been an immense privilege to work with the curatorial team at the Gallery, especially with Laura Turner who has co-edited the catalogue and co-curated the exhibition. It has also been wonderful to see stronger links formed with the University of York; from our successes with the AHRC in securing funding for a collaborative PhD student, working alongside Professor Mark Hallett on the catalogue and exhibition, through to the forthcoming conference *Beyond Landscape Painting: British Art 1810-1840* which will be jointly hosted by York Art Gallery and the History of Art department at the University of York. It has also been wonderful to get to know the Friends, whose enthusiasm and passion for the Gallery and Etty have been a genuine inspiration and a real source of encouragement and support.

The end of the Etty project will mark a new chapter in my life as a mum (Baby Burnage is expected to make an arrival sometime in mid-June). However, I am planning to be around to give a few curatorial talks in the summer, run a course with the Centre for Life Long Learning on Etty in October, as well as speaking at and organising the *Beyond Landscape Painting: British Art 1810-1840* conference. I look forward to seeing you all at some or even all of these events!

**Dr SARAH BURNAGE**

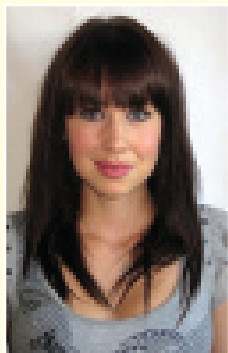
**Paul Mellon Funded William Etty Research Curator at University of York.**



*Venus and her Satellites, 1835*

## *And Introducing...*

As part of my PhD studies on William Etty R.A., I have been lucky enough to be involved with Laura and Sarah in setting up the *William Etty: Art & Controversy* exhibition. This has meant that I have been given access to primary material such as the artist's letters and sketchbooks, which will enhance my own research. During this exciting run-up period at the gallery, we have been busy finalising the display, completing the catalogue, writing a fun



guide to the mythological stories behind Etty's history paintings, and creating the *Etty York Walk*. The Friends have been a great help in trialling and timing the route! I'm also hoping that you will come to our series of lunchtime talks, of which I am giving two. Currently, I am collating material for a chapter of my thesis concentrating on a selection of Etty's large-scale historical canvases, and am very much looking forward to seeing some of these on display in the gallery next month. I've been amazed by the dissemination of Etty's pictures and have made curatorial contacts from Dundee to Bournemouth, and from Australia to Puerto Rico! I do hope to meet you all properly, either at coming gallery events, or at the exhibition itself.

**BEATRICE BERTRAM**

**Collaborative Doctoral Award Student at the University of York/York Art Gallery**

---

## ***AUSTIN WRIGHT CENTENARY 1911-2011***

### ***Dr James Hamilton on Austin Wright "The Force That Drives The Flower" An illustrated talk 12 May 2011***

Surely soon there will be a major retrospective of the work of Austin Wright. The lecture organised by the Friends to mark the Centenary of Wright's birth, alongside the small but perfectly formed exhibition at the City Art Gallery, is perhaps one small step in the right direction. Over a hundred people gathered at the Tempest Anderson Hall to hear James Hamilton, author of the only monograph on Austin Wright, reveal the magic of his drawings and sculptures.

Although in the 50s Wright exhibited alongside Reg Butler, Lynn Chadwick, William Turnbull and others, won the Sao Paulo Biennale Purchase Prize and then was awarded the Gregory Fellowship in 1961, to date he has not received the same national acclaim as his contemporaries, including his two major Yorkshire contemporaries Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. Hamilton conveyed the quiet, studious and grounded ways in which Wright, inspired by landscape and plant forms, pursued his projects largely from his home, garden and studio at Upper Poppleton.

I was left torn between wanting to keep Wright's lovely drawings and stunning sculptures a York secret and wanting to shout out; why is his work not better known? On balance James Hamilton's closing words that Wright's work arguably equals that of Moore and Hepworth leaves me to think maybe we should opt for shouting very loud until there is a major retrospective for Austin Wright.

*Austin Wright's Sculpture and Drawings* continues at York Art Gallery until October 2. A 25-minute Arts Council film about Austin Wright, made by Hull student Harry Duffin in 1971, is being shown in the Gallery, courtesy of the Yorkshire Film Archive.

**JANETTE RAY**



***Austin Wright Centenary 1911-2011***

## Austin Wright – an appreciation

This spring saw the York Art Gallery open its doors to the works of the eminent, yet overlooked artist, Austin Wright. It was in 1937 that Wright moved to York and began teaching at Bootham School, whilst at the same time pursuing his dream of being a sculptor. Allegedly, he approached Henry Moore for inspirational advice and instead was hit back with a mere, *Just get on with it*. And he did. Wright was always seen as an abstract artist, and indeed he was; but what should be more apparent is his lack of fear when it came to experimenting with different materials and ideas. Whether you look at his sketches or his sculptures, the free-flowing forms are most certainly elements taken from the nature he was surrounded by, in the many different places he was accustomed to during his life. It's hard to put Wright in a box, with a single label attached to it. The way he saw form, even on paper in 2D, was incredible. He had a mind which overlapped the boundaries of imagination, sculpturally-visualising even the simplest drawings he had sketched quickly in a way that ensured the immensity of his mesmerising life-sized pieces around us. Displaying Wright's works from the 1940s to the 1980s, the York Art Gallery presents us with an insight into his evolving taste and process of his rough sketches turning into the beautiful sculptures that we see today. Fortunately, art students are blessed with Wright's righteous forms being proudly displayed on the campus of the University of York. Works such as *Untitled* and *Dryad* catch the eyes of many constantly galloping around the premises. The exhibition, running until the 2nd October, ensures plenty of time for all of you art-, and more specifically, Austin Wright-enthusiasts, to go and see this captivating selection of works.

**Egle Achmadijevaitė (Second year student,  
History of Art Dept., The University of York) SAASY**

---



## Austin Wright – a form and a feeling

Austin Wright has become one of the most familiar, but still unknown, artists for me. There is a sculpture many pass by each day, resembling a flame in form, but sharing a nature of invisibility with an old, unobtrusive tree. There for as long as one can remember it is easy to take for granted, though with a hint that it is utterly distinct from the surrounding. *Untitled*, on the library walkway ramp experiences the ambiguous status of being both a postmodernist object, like most of the architecture around it, and a projection of something- ideological, mental and psychic- that cannot be ascribed to a certain time.

Reading the abstract of the exhibition and encountering the word 'centenary' brings the thought that those who creatively found themselves in the middle of postmodernism were already here a hundred years ago. Long ago as it sounds, but seemingly still not enough time to make appreciating artworks like *Two Rings* easy for everyone. The need of recognition, representation, not to say illusion is deeply rooted, but what unaccustomed eyes would treat as a base, Austin Wright treats as a barrier to get rid of. Reaching artistic maturity, he distinguished himself from the verbalized in a way that might seem uncomfortable. Those who have mode of viewing based on being informed will always take more pleasure when a parallel can be drawn. To label the figure as a human body and then study the form by the name's rules means to involve mind and evoke words. It seems to be a way to comprehension. But if you just turn down the noise of



À la recherche du temps perdu that incessantly fills up your head with many words, it soon becomes obvious that feelings do not come in a form that can be immediately described. When deeply moved, it might be more natural to bend into shapes or dance, make a noise, maybe sing in an unknown language, but the necessity to be ready for the talk, for reports, for discussions, provokes words. Expressing it without words bends it inwards- towards the margin of feelings with no appropriate description. A description of Wright's sculptures can only be attempted by piling up adjectives with a hope that overlapping meanings will result in something accurate. The other option is to exercise the emotional abilities in interacting, rather than designation. Austin Wright explores the difference of purity as opposed to clarity in spite of such a common custom to join those two ideas with 'and'. Maybe the hundredth anniversary of Austin Wright's birth is an opportunity, to look again at his work before time places him and his oeuvre in a context to which he never really belonged.

**Karolina Szuchnik. (First year student, History of Art Dept., The University of York) SAASY**

---

## ***NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS***

### ***Dorothy Nott***

Unlike most of my fellow members, not only am I new to the committee, I am still learning about all the benefits of membership as a newcomer to the Friends. However, easing into retirement via an MA in History of Art at York rekindled an interest in the gallery and I am delighted to be more actively involved. A recent trip to St Petersburg with the Friends brought with it both a wonderful opportunity to see some of the artistic treasures of the Hermitage and the Russian Museum and the added advantage of a truly sociable holiday. So far I have no particular portfolio, but I rather gather that will come and I look forward to putting my energies into the on-going development of the Friends, which I see very much as a dynamic two-way process.



### ***Susan Parker***

I am delighted to again join the Friends' committee as I have continued to enjoy organizing various evening talks and outings with Jean Drysdale over the last year. This involvement is a great change from my previous 30 year career in social work and provides the opportunity, as I am both an Australian and a more recent York resident, to learn about and share in the many artistic endeavours that exist in this area of Yorkshire. My interests have always included a great love for literature and art history particularly of Modernism and the Early Italian Renaissance. I look forward to an enjoyable new term on the Friends' committee.

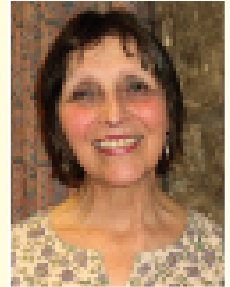


### *Richard Bailey*

I am a classicist by education and was a solicitor by profession (specialising in personal tax, trusts and wills as well as looking after the finances of a leading law firm) in the days when I lived in Oxford and commuted to London, before opting out of the rat race and taking up archaeology. Judith and I had a holiday home in York for 15 years before we decided to retire to York five years ago and as you do at that stage took on a five storey Victorian house which we gutted and converted into something more modern in sympathy with our taste for Modern and Contemporary Art (both fine and applied).

### *Louise Wheatley*

I am originally from Colorado, emigrated to the UK, married and lived in Scotland until moving to York in the 80's when my husband took up the clerkship of the Company of Merchant Adventurers. I helped develop the education programme for the company and learned new skills concerning the care and management of the Company's mediaeval archives and museum collections. Subsequently I used the archives as the basis for two research degrees; and now use this knowledge in teaching at the University of York's Centre for Life Long Learning. Years of working with dry and dusty documents has prompted renewed interest (and relief) in the colourful, exciting world of art and art history which has drawn me to the Friends of York Art Gallery.



### *Membership*

The Committee would like to welcome all those who have joined the Friends recently.

Lynne Adamson, Jane Austin, Geoffrey & Sylvia Bailey, Rosemary Bailey, Isabel Bamford, Ann Bishop, Mrs J. C. Clampit, Julie Coggon, Beth Cooper, L.M. Dale, Mr & Mrs R. De La Warr, Linda Downey, Louise Elliott, Jenny Fanthorpe, Rosalind & Alistair Fitter, Scott Forsyth, Grant McKee, Andrew Monk, Mrs Ruth Orr, Sandra Pinner, Jacki & Zap Proctor, Patricia Ruddle, Mr & Mrs C. A. Sandig, David & Pamela Sangwin, Mrs Linda Sergeant, Ian Sharp, Miss Ruth Sillar, Elizabeth Smith, David Sowden, Jack Sterrett, John & Helen Turner, Jill Turton, Mrs J. M. Varey, Mrs G.Wake, Rita Ward, Jenny Wilman, Elizabeth & Brendan Wright, Debbie Wood, Dorothy Godfrey, Jennifer Johnson, Phyllis & Philip Johnson, Mrs Margaret Jones, Mrs Sue Jones, Adrian & Claire King, John & Dorianne Latimer, Mr & Mrs Philip Mackley, Mr & Mrs A.D. May, Linda Maynard, Susan & James McGregor.

**I am currently updating the membership records. Please would all those with email addresses confirm them by sending a short email to me? Just your name(s) and address(es) for identification will do. Thank you.**

**Tony Baker – my email: [tony.baker7@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.baker7@btinternet.com)**

## **SAASY Report**

It is a pleasure to report from the SAASY camp after a brief period consolidating our forces and resources after the last remnants of the original committee (somewhat reluctantly) graduated, leaving us to scour the campus for fresh minds and keen hands in order to build a new committee. This was a resounding success and our new committee have been busy cooking up a myriad scholarly surprises for the Friends, students and people of York to enjoy in the near future. Our first offering to York's cultural calendar comes in the form of a series of exciting talks in which four handpicked undergraduate and postgraduate speakers will unpack a range of works on topics that range from Modernist film, John Stezaker's *Mask, Human Rights in Art* and the *Jesse* window, in the Undercroft of York Minster. Absolutely everyone is welcome and it will be great to have your support for these short, free and fascinating talks. Our second is a fantastic new blog on 'Tumblr', which can be found at [www.saasy.tumblr.com](http://www.saasy.tumblr.com). The blog has a good concept and its subjects range from areas of art, fashion, theatre, architecture and a whole host of other alluringly delicious, arts-related topics for you to dip in to at your pleasure! Our third is our much awaited summer party. It is being meticulously planned by our team of esteemed socialites as I write and I am told it will attract both glitterati and literati to one of York's finest Inns for, well, scholarly debate. We are also in the midst of organising a spree of film screenings for the autumn term but the location and format have yet to be meted out, so in the meantime, dust down your old volumes of Kubrick and Tarantino and get excited. Just a final note, on behalf of the committee I would like to thank the out-going Chairman of the Friends of York Art Gallery, John Staples, for setting us up under his watch and for all his kind support for our activities over the past year and a half.

**Elliot Davies / SAASY**

---

## **NOTES FROM ST PETERSBURG APRIL 2011**

At the end of April some 28 Friends enjoyed nearly a week of warm, cloudless, Spring weather in this city, the Venice of the North. The day after our arrival, fortified by a breakfast of blinis, porridge, coffee and much more on offer, we toured the city by coach, giving us a sense of place and a feel for its size and layout. A stop at the Yusupov palace, amazingly untouched by the devastation of the revolution and the war years, gave us an insight into the wonders ahead. The rococo decoration in gilt and gold was a marvel and an added delight was the small theatre within. Our excellent Russian guide explained that his father had played there. Beneath this opulent palace was the darkened room in which Rasputin was slain.

Out of the city the next day we went to Catherine the Great's palace at Tsarskoe Selo, combining contrasting styles of baroque and neo-classical. The palace was undergoing restoration, as was much of the historic heritage of the city, which was being done with great care and faithfulness to the original. The German government has contributed substantial resources and it is they who have financed the spectacular restoration of the Amber room in the palace. We were struck by how much natural light entered the state rooms and yet the decoration was heavy with gold and massive chandeliers. In contrast to the sumptuousness of this palace we stopped on our return at the memorial to the siege of Leningrad, a circular structure in stone with bronze figures not designed to exude power but to invite our understanding of the suffering endured by the people of what was then Leningrad during

the 900 day siege. The bronze figures included the *Pieta*, surprising in a regime avowedly atheistic but the image is so expressive it transcends all. Our guide showed us the spot where his grandfather had defended the city.

The afternoon was spent in the Hermitage amongst the splendid collection of French impressionists and post-impressionists. So many we had seen as prints or book illustrations, but that did not compare with the joy of seeing the originals. Matisse's dancers leapt about before our very eyes and *Mont Sainte Victoire* shimmered in the afternoon light, and all this in the stunning palatial architecture of the Winter Palace. We were dragged away only on the promise of a second visit the following day, when we saw some wonderful paintings on loan from the Prado, including a charming Goya.

Another foray to the outskirts of St Petersburg brought us to Peterhof where we were fortunate to be present when the magnificent display of fountains in the grounds was turned on in time for the Mayday celebrations. All but destroyed in the war, the palace has been meticulously reconstructed. In the afternoon some viewed the Peter and Paul fortress on Hare Island and others visited the Russian Museum. The latter houses Russian art from icons to socialist realism, providing a thematic presentation in an environment designed to show off the art. Surprisingly no Chagall, but there were some pleasing portraits by an underrated artist, Repin, and familiar works by Kandinsky and Malevich. The Hermitage is magnificent and the collection extraordinary but the Russian Museum does not attempt to overwhelm the art and its chronological display adds interest.

We attended a service on Sunday morning. People thronged there of all ages. The place was alive with activity in every corner. Some were being blessed, others lighting candles, everyone bowing and kissing the images. A choir of monks sang and others read out loud or led a procession. Devotion and prayer was what it was about, not merely a social occasion. We could have seen more but we returned to York satisfied, with a programme that was comprehensive and informed by a guide, Timofei, a local man, whose knowledge, openness and humour made it a very special experience.

## JOHN STAPLES

*Photographs by  
David Griffith*



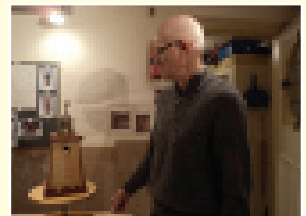
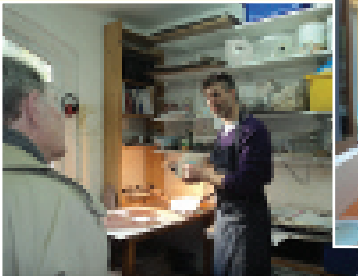
## **ARTISTS' STUDIO VISITS JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011**

The first of these terrific visits was to Sally Arnup in Holtby. Sally greeted us in her display rooms, full of wonderfully tactile, life size bronzes of dogs, cats, birds and a trotting pony. We squeezed into her studio (shared with a pair of squeaking guinea pigs) where she explained to us in depth the lengthy and complex procedure of producing cast bronze. Sally likes to work from life not from photographs, and has had horses in the studio. Her enthusiasm and sheer enjoyment belie her 80 years. The second visit was to the York home of Loretta Braganza, an exuberant ceramicist. We were shown examples of her earlier work, in interesting and varied styles, given an express account of her formative years in the medium, then taken through the garden full of intriguing objects to her tiny studio. Here Loretta was working on a series of quirky pieces based loosely on exotic fruits. These items were soon to be seen at an exhibition in London, where she was going later that day to finalise arrangements, but still made time for us! The third visit was to Andrew Barningham and Marianne von Tucka. Off their courtyard garden Andrew has built a compact and airy pottery studio which Marianne keeps spotless. Here she produces her beautiful and delicate work. Her palette is currently aqua-hued with touches of deep purple and amber. In a tiny converted cellar Andrew, using only recycled wood and found/given objects makes the most astounding bird houses, some based on classic buildings, others totally imaginative. Other items include wonderful shelving units, mirror frames and a hall table constructed mainly from gymnasium wall bars – amazing!

### **PAT AINGER**

The final visit was to Ben Arnup's studio. His house and garden is a visual delight of plants, objets trouve and pots to stimulate the eye and senses. Ben trained as a landscape gardener, but later moved on to become a potter, after a collection of pots he made and fired in his father Mick's kiln sold very successfully in a gallery in Beverly. Early work used trompe l'oeil (deception of the eye) in various forms- spheres, boxes, jugs, chairs, teapots. In 2008 he was awarded an Arts Council Grant which gave him the opportunity to experiment with new ways of working and to explore the properties of clay, when subject to destructive forces. He stretches the clay and adds colour producing a fissured and textured finish, which he demonstrated to us. The new shapes are abstract ceramist forms, the pots being usually decorative rather than of practical use. It was a fascinating visit for us all.

### **MARGARET COOPER**



## OLIVER WORSLEY – AN APPRECIATION



Oliver Worsley, who died on 30 November 2010, aged 83, was an extremely popular President of the Friends of York Art Gallery for twelve years from 1984-1996. He succeeded Sir Martyn Beckett and Malise Forbes Adam, our current President, took over from him when he retired due to ill-health.

Oliver was born at Hovingham Hall in 1927, the second son of Sir William Worsley Bt and grew up with his elder brother, Marcus, and younger brother, John, and sister, Katherine, later to become the Duchess of Kent. After school at Eton, he served in Italy for the last few months of the war with the 60th Rifles. After the war he studied agriculture at Trinity College, Oxford before returning to Hovingham. He subsequently farmed at Great Givendale and Bishop Wilton and in 1966 won a Nuffield Scholarship to study beef farming in America. He was an enthusiastic horseman, riding regularly with the Sinnington and Middleton Hunts, as well as enjoying point-to-point racing. In 1966 he married Penelope Fuller from Wiltshire and they had four children, Georgina, David, Richard and Anne. Oliver was a great champion of the arts in York and Yorkshire and was an early supporter of the York Four from their inception in 1963. This group, consisting of John Langton, David Lloyd-Jones, Russell Platt and Reg Williams, enjoyed wide success exhibiting together in the sixties, and were also guided by Hans Hess, the Curator of York Art Gallery for nearly twenty years after the war. Oliver worked closely with Hans Hess on the York Festival, then one of the main arts festivals in the country, and he became its President in 1966. He welcomed the establishment of the University of York and became founder President of the York Arts Centre in Micklegate when it was set up in the mid-sixties, seeing it as a vehicle for artistic contact between the university and the city. He served as a Director of the Theatre Royal in York, was on the Board of Opera North, a patron of the Bach Choir and Director of Tyne Tees Television and Granada Television. On his retirement from farming, Oliver moved to Heslington with his family and set up the Grape Lane Gallery in York to foster interest in the work of living artists. When it opened in 1984, The Grape Lane Gallery and the Stonegate Gallery, run by Diana and Alan Hitchcock, were the only two galleries in York showing contemporary work. Both helped to encourage the development of the thriving contemporary art scene that York has today. In the last twelve years of his life, Oliver fought bravely with the effects of Huntington's disease. He bore this with extraordinary courage, grace and good humour and was supported and cared for at home throughout by his wife, Penelope. Any donations to the Huntington's Disease Association would be welcome and cheques should be sent to Penelope Worsley, Midgely House, Heslington, York YO10 5DX (Tel 01904 411891) made out to the 'Huntington's Disease Association'.

Oliver will be remembered with great affection by all who knew him. He made friends wherever he went with his winning smile, wry sense of humour and generous interest in the lives of other people. At his thanksgiving service at Hovingham on 13 December last year there were so many people in attendance that a special marquee extension had to be erected at the back of the church.

York Art Gallery and the Friends have lost a great supporter. Oliver was very pleased with recent development at the Gallery and with the establishment of the York Museums Trust. He would have been delighted with the current display of David Hockney's work *Bigger Trees Near Warter*, combining as it does his great love of Yorkshire and his life-long support of living artists.

**PETER MILLER** – with grateful thanks to Penelope Worsley, Malise Forbes Adam and Alan Hitchcock for their help.

## *View from the Chair*

The 2011 AGM welcomed Dorothy Nott, Susan Parker and Louise Wheatley to the committee replacing Judith Bailey, Tony Baker and John Staples, who join those unsung heroes who continue to work for us as speakers, guides, advisers, hosts, waiters etc. Richard Bailey was also welcomed as treasurer replacing Carol Butterill whose full time career has unfortunately made it impractical for her to continue. A priority for Richard is improving the return on our substantial capital. I succeeded John as chairman and will attempt to maintain his high standard.

We constantly seek new committee members. Some misconceptions are that members have to be invited or are required to be a longstanding Friend. Any Friend can be nominated although the duties do require some time and skill. If you are interested, do get in touch before the next committee changes in March 2012.

The May mailing included the minutes of the AGM. In the past these were sent the following year with the notice to attend. Also, to minimise costs, we are trimming the reports accompanying the notice to attend but are including the accounts, so that every member, not just attendees, has all the necessary information at the time it is relevant. Those of you not at the AGM will find that subscriptions were increased but on the positive side we continue to make significant grants to the Gallery and to sponsor activities related to art appreciation. In September we will partly fund the Friends of York Art Gallery Research Scholarship. The selected MA student will study for a History of Art degree working one day a week on a research project agreed with the Curator of Art and the Friends. The Gallery has little time available for research so we hope that it will benefit greatly from this initiative. You will also see from the minutes that Janet Barnes, Chief Executive of the YMT, alerted us to major plans for the Gallery involving its temporary closure if all the funding is secured.

I have recently returned from the brilliant Friends' visit to St Petersburg where I learned amongst other things that the French term "bistro" allegedly derives from the Russian Cossack command meaning "quickly", though this seems to cut little ice with waiters currently "serving" in St Petersburg restaurants. Thanks to Jean Drysdale for organising the adventure. I not sure how she managed to synchronize the visit with the Radio 4 daily broadcast the following week on *The Wild East – 1,000 years of Russian History* but it was a neat bonus.

**MARGARET ADDYMAN**



---

*The images are produced with kind permission of the York Museums Trust (York Art Gallery), NewArtCentre Roche Court, and Susan Wright.*

*This Newsletter is printed and subsidised by the Max Design & Print co. and edited by Sally Hebron. Please send items for the next newsletter to her c/o York Art Gallery, Exhibition Square, York, YO1 7EW, or e-mail to [sehebron@hotmail.com](mailto:sehebron@hotmail.com)*

*FYAG is a registered Charity, no: 510659 · ISSN 2045-1113*