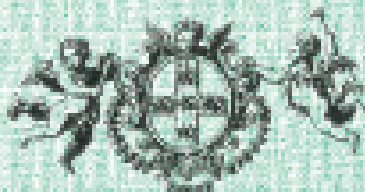


1948  
FYAG  
2008

# THE FRIENDS OF YORK ART GALLERY NEWSLETTER

1948  
FYAG  
2008

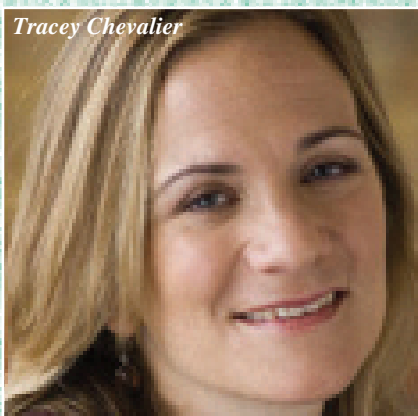


## DIAMOND JUBILEE EDITION

JANUARY 2008

### Chairman's Report

Although I am writing at the end of November, by the time you read this the Christmas and New Year festivities will be over and we will be in the year of our diamond jubilee.



*Tracey Chevalier*

The Friends of York Art Gallery (FYAG) is one of the oldest Friends organisations in the country and your Committee has been determined to mark the year with some style. Corita Myserscough and her team have put in an enormous amount of work preparing for 2008 and we are greatly in their debt. Among the highlights is an Anniversary Dinner in June at the Racecourse where **Tracey Chevalier** will be the guest speaker. In July the Summer Party will consist of a river trip with strawberries and fizz and in September there will be a reception for the Friends at the

Mansion House. A summary of these events accompanies this Newsletter.

The Outings Programme for 2008 has been ably coordinated by Susan Greenhow and she has not only planned some event for each month but also has in hand a 5-day trip to Picardy in September or October to be organised by Peter Smith. Details of the Outings Programme are enclosed.

Members are reminded of the monthly programme of talks at the Gallery organised by Gordon Hollingsworth. Details of these will appear on the Friends noticeboard at the Gallery and on the website. Not to be missed are the Morning Schools by Dick Reid, carver, on 2nd February and Professor Mark Hallett on Hogarth on 12th April.

The south wing of the Gallery is due to open in the spring of 2008 after repairs to the roof and general refurbishments, towards which the City of York Council have allocated £200,000. To mark this there will be a rehang of the South Gallery and it will feature works from the Dutch and Italian collections on the theme of sacrifice. A number of these pictures will never have been displayed before and at the 24th November meeting your Committee voted to support the restoration of five pictures for this rehang at a total cost of £11,645. This will be our major contribution to the Gallery in our Jubilee Year. We have been reviewing the present Constitution of The Friends. Dry work, but it needs to be done, not least because the Art Gallery is now administered by the Museums Trust. We hope to have some proposals to present to the AGM.

Finally, I would like to advise the membership that three new members for the Committee will be required at the forthcoming AGM. With membership of the Committee being limited to three years, this encourages new members with new ideas. If you would like to stand for the Committee, or know of someone who might be willing to stand, do write to our Secretary, Margaret Addyman, care of the Gallery.

I wish you all a very Happy New Year and hope you will enjoy the exciting programme which we have planned for 2008.

**Peter Miller**



## Curator's Corner

Firstly, I would like to offer my warm congratulations to you on this your Diamond Jubilee. What an achievement! I cannot emphasise how important the continued support of the Friends is to our work here at the Gallery.

For example, your committee recently approved a grant to enable Alastair Smith, shown here at work in the gallery, to complete the documentation of our works on paper collection – some 17,000 pieces in total. Alastair's swan-song is the delightful exhibition "**John Sell Cotman and his Contemporaries**" in the Little Gallery from 2 February.

It neatly brings together the results of his documentation and research project over the past two years, while showcasing the set of drawings by Cotman of the Cholmeley family which the Friends acquired for us.

The team has been as busy as ever since I last wrote – not least on managing loans from the gallery. This included 55 watercolours and prints lent to the "Images of York Minster" exhibition at York Minster Library in the autumn. We have planned an exciting programme of exhibitions and events for 2008 and look forward to celebrating with you throughout the year.

**Caroline Worthington**



## Summer Party

This year our summer party coincided with the peak of the monsoon period but thanks to the heroic efforts of Pauline and John Craven we were able to enjoy our wine and strawberries in great comfort and style in their spacious and splendid kitchen and the weather finally relented allowing us to wander round their enchanting garden. Very many thanks are due to Pauline and John and to the many Friends who worked so hard to make this such a happy occasion.

## Wednesday Lunchtime Talks

These go from strength to strength, are very well attended and are an extremely popular attraction at The Gallery. Anyone interested in joining the happy band of speakers should get in touch with the Talks Organiser,

**Gordon Hollingsworth** Tel 01904 789238



## Two Days Away With The Friends

On the 5th and 6th of September Sue Greenhow led us to Hampshire on a fascinating voyage of discovery. Setting off early on Wednesday we arrived at the Sandham Memorial Chapel at midday where after a pub or picnic lunch we were shown the fascinating Stanley Spencer paintings, the fulfilment of a design which he conceived while on active service 1914-18. Split into two groups we were shown this marvellous group of paintings which Spencer painted directly on to the canvas lined walls, drawing on his experience as a hospital orderly. For most of us this was a “first” and a revelation, the images seemed as fresh and as vibrant as the day they were completed in 1932.

Our next treat, a visit to The Vyne later that afternoon, took us back

to the 16th century. Built in the 16th century for Lord Sandys, Henry VIII's Lord Chamberlain, it then became the home of the Chute family for more than 300 years. It is unusual in that the furnishings and personal effects are indigenous to the House, given to the National trust in 1968. In the mid 17th century it acquired the classical portico on the north front and in the late 18th century a dramatic Palladian staircase hall shown here, designed by the owner, John Chute. A very beautiful house indeed.



## Stanley Spencer Gallery



We spent a pleasant and comfortable night at the Hilton Hotel at Newbury and set off the next morning for Cookham where we were met by the archivist, Anne Parks and then shown the newly refurbished Stanley Spencer gallery due to open officially two days after our visit! Then we had had a conducted tour “Spencer’s Cookham”, in which we saw his home and the very many local scenes he was so fond of painting, with all of our tour in glorious sunshine. The visit to Cookham was an unforgettable experience and the newly renovated Chapel Gallery a sheer delight.

We had one more treat in store, a visit to the magnificent Basildon Park, another National trust house of enormous charm and interest and one that contrasted very nicely with The Vyne.

All in all this was a splendid tour, organised and led by Sue with great charm and efficiency. These Gallery outings are preceded by months of research and painstaking organization and hard work and we are grateful to Sue and all the others who organize trips and holidays for all their efforts. Although hard work they are great fun and very rewarding to do. We need a few more helpers to organise excursions in 2008 so why not volunteer to lead a trip? If you are tempted, have a word with Sue (tel 410491) about what is involved.



Our 2008 programme will include a two-day trip organised by Dorothy and Ifan Williams to the Cotswolds to look at the Arts and Crafts treasures there and a 5-day trip in the autumn to Picardy and Northern France organised by Peter and Susannah Smith. So look out for further details in the mailings.

## Stop Press from Caroline

Work on the **South Gallery** begins in earnest now that we are into 2008. We are aiming to launch the new look to coincide with the opening of “Stubbs and Whistlejacket in York” this April

Best selling novelist and author of “Girl with a Pearl Earring”, Tracy Chevalier, will be the gallery’s **Writer In Residence** during 2008. We are delighted to be hosting Tracy who will work on a number of exciting projects with us. Look out for Tracy at the gallery throughout the year.

**Around the world** We receive many requests for our pictures to go on loan to museums and galleries around the world. Those of you on your travels during the next few months will spot Saint Agatha in Milan, Poussin's Portrait in Rome and Bellotto's Piazza San Martino in Turin. Closer to home the Tate is playing host to Soldi's Self Portrait and Balcony at the Alhambra by Spencer Frederick Gore.

## A Personal view

On the outbreak of war in 1939 the trustees of the National Gallery decided that to protect the collection it would be moved to Canada. In no uncertain terms Kenneth Clark, the director of the gallery, was told by the Prime-minister, Winston Churchill, that this was not to happen. "Bury them in caves or in cellars but not a picture shall leave these islands." Nor did they! The pictures were sent to slate mines in Wales. But concern about the collection did not end there. In the face of public pressure exemplified by a letter in the Times saying, "Because London's face is scarred and bruised these days, we need more than ever to see beautiful things. Like many another one hungry for aesthetic refreshment, I would welcome the opportunity of seeing a few of the hundreds of the nation's masterpieces now stored in a safe place. Would the trustees of the National Gallery consider whether it were not wise and well to risk one picture for exhibition each week ... at a time when such beauty is most potent for good? I know the risk, but believe it would be worth it."

Action was taken and monthly a picture was taken from the mines and hung in the National Gallery throughout the war. At the sound of an air raid siren the painting was taken to the basement until the all clear was given.

Soundings were taken as to the picture most people wanted to see. What would it be, a Renaissance portrait, perhaps, showing fortitude, a Dutch landscape offering calm, contemplative reassurance, or maybe a British masterpiece. None of these was the nation's favourite. What was chosen was Titian's "Noli Me Tangere".

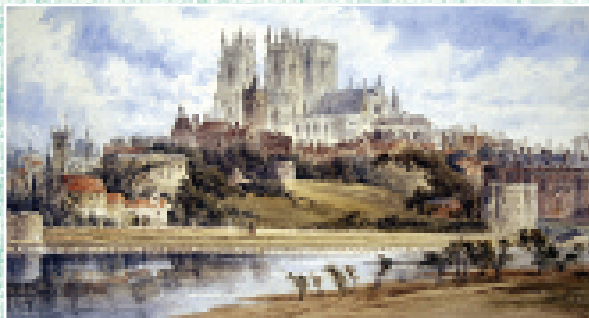
This story illustrates one function a public gallery performs and although we are not faced with the ravages of world war few of us have not had an experience of personal tragedy and I believe our gallery with its collection can offer solace in some small way in times of adversity.

**John Staples**

## New Look for The Newsletter

The striking new anniversary logo was designed by Rikki Scalway and is a vital part of our new front page designed to reflect the ethos of The Friends in 2008. The editor is always hoping for comments, critical or complementary, and welcomes all suggestions. What do **you** think?

## Art Exhibition and Auction in aid of York Minster



An auction of paintings will be held in York Minster on Friday 18th April 2008. The 17 contributing artists are all associated in some direct way with the Minster and include Lord Habgood, Jake Attree, and Richard Carr-Archer. The auction will be in the Minster at 7:30pm following a 45 minute talk by Jake Attree with a wine reception.

The event provides an opportunity to acquire original work by local artists who have generously donated the entire proceeds to 'York Minster Revealed', the charity responsible for the restoration and development of the Minster.

Tickets for the event will be £5 For further details, please email [concerts@yorkminster.org](mailto:concerts@yorkminster.org) or phone 01904 557200.

## The Friends of York Art Gallery Website

Our website at <http://www.friendsofyorkartgallery.co.uk> has now been up and running for three months. After an initial flurry of tweaking and adjusting, it is proving to be a useful and easy way for us to communicate with Friends and others with an interest in what we do.

Visits to our site are modest but growing Predictably we get a number of irrelevant and sometimes unwanted visits, but looking beyond these it's pleasing to note that our Newsletter, Events, and Membership pages are the pages most regularly visited, which is what we had hoped for when we decided to set up the site.

If you are a user of our site, or if this article encourages you to have a look, we would be most interested to hear your views – what works for you, and what could be improved.

**Peter Lumley Website Editor**

**Subscriptions for 2008** were due on the 1st January 2008. The rates are £12 for a single member and £18 for a couple. If you pay by cheque, please send your subscription to the Hon. Treasurer c/o FYAG, York Art Gallery, York YO1 7EW as soon as possible.

*This Newsletter is printed and subsidised by the Max Design & Print co. and edited by David Lethem.*

*Please send items for the next newsletter to him c/o the Art Gallery  
or e-mail to [davidlethem@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:davidlethem@tiscali.co.uk)*

*FYAG is a Registered Charity, no:510659*

*ISSN 172-0237*