

THE FRIENDS OF YORK ART GALLERY

NEWSLETTER / SUMMER 2014

Curator's report

I'm pleased to report that we are now over half way through the construction phase of the gallery development and we have seen significant progress on site. The two new 1st floor galleries which will become home to the Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA) are now in place and we are getting a true sense of how incredible these spaces will be, with beautiful natural light and spectacular views into our new garden.

Lorna Sergeant, our gallery manager recently led a limited number of behind the scenes tours of the gallery site for FYAG members, but for those of you who could not attend, our newly launched website provides images of the development and the excellent blog, written by Lorna Sergeant, offers the most up to date information. For the first time, our new website also features online access to collections and offers the chance to search all of the collections managed by the Trust.



Whilst we are not yet able to announce a date for reopening, we are still looking to Spring/ Summer 2015, with a series of openings to thank each of the significant funders and partners involved in the project, especially the Friends of York Art Gallery. Although the contractors are making good progress on site, we still have a number of significant milestones to reach with the project before we are able to announce an official opening date. Once the construction and fitting out is complete and the building is handed back to us, we then need to deep clean; commission and monitor the air handling systems and building management systems; furnish our back of house spaces, return the fine art collections (at least ten truck loads) and organise them in our new FYAG Fine Art store; instal displays and train our new front of house team ready for reopening in addition to the simultaneous development of the gardens and exhibition square. We will endeavour to keep you abreast of progress through the website, newsletter and talks etc.

Whilst the development programme continues apace, our curatorial team is busy working on new displays, interpretation, commissions, funding applications, acquisitions and planning for our future programme. Thanks to external funding, our small team has grown recently and we have a section in the newsletter focussing on the York Art Gallery team.

We are grateful to FYAG for their continued support during the development, with FYAG volunteering to assist with our copyright project; testing our new audio tours; fundraising for our new store and providing funding for conservation, acquisitions, learning and access. Indeed, thanks to help from FYAG we have several exciting new acquisitions; 'NUD 4' 2009 by Sarah Lucas, a characteristic sculpture comprised of stuffed tights, reminiscent of entwined limbs and a Sixteenth Century portrait of a York Merchant's Wife, Mrs Brooke.

We hope you all have a wonderful summer and look forward to reporting on progress over the coming months.

LAURA TURNER
Senior Curator, York Art Gallery

Friends of York Art Gallery Legacies

From time to time FYAG is left money by the estate of former Friends for which we are extremely grateful and which goes to support the art gallery in its purchase and maintenance of paintings. The usual procedure is for the curatorial team to approach your committee with a request for funding, which is then considered in accordance with the wishes or conditions, if any, of the donor. One such recent request was to assist in the purchase of the 16th Century oil on oak panel portrait of Mrs Brooke, Wife of Robert Brooke, twice Lord Mayor of York (1582, 1595) and twice Governor of the Merchant Adventurers Hall (1575, 1577). It is likely that this was one of a pair, showing both husband and wife but to date the companion portrait has not been located. Luckily for the Friends, this work was spotted and purchased by Darrell Buttery in an auction held by Bonhams of works of art and furniture from Heslington Hall. The connection to the Hall comes through the couple's daughter, Jane, who married Thomas Hesketh of Heslington Hall and it seems likely that the painting either entered the collection on Jane's marriage to Thomas or the death of the sitter in 1604.

The purchase was made possible through the generosity of Maurice Pycraft, and we extend our grateful thanks to the estate which has enabled the art gallery to proceed with this important purchase.

Acquisition of half length portrait of Mrs Jane Brooke, Wife of Robert Brooke, 1567 by an Unknown artist ***(Oil on oak panel, 60.9 x 50.8cm x 24 x 20in)***

This intriguing portrait of Mrs Jane Brooke was purchased from auction at Bonhams in 2012 and has recently been acquired by York Art Gallery through generous grants from the Friends of York Art Gallery, York Civic Trust, The Terry Trust, Geoffrey Donald, Janet Hopton and Darrell Buttery.

Jane Brooke, nee Maltby (c. 1535-1604), was the wife of Robert Brooke (1527–99), a Merchant in York who was made free in 1558. He was obviously of high standing in the community since he was twice the Lord Mayor of York, in 1582 and 1595 and twice governor of the Merchant Adventurers Hall in 1575/77 and 1587. It is clear from historical sources that Robert Brooke rose in status from the 1570s and in 1578 he was mentioned by name in an order from the Queen to the mayor and other notables of York concerning the identification and arrest of Roman priests. In January 1579 he was one of a deputation of six representing merchants of York, Newcastle and Hull who went to London to negotiate about 'freedom to traffic in the East parts'. Ten years later he was sent to London to obtain a copy of the York charter or the instrument itself 'if it can be gotten'.

Between 1574 and 1596 Brooke was steadily buying property, and eventually he became one of the richest men in York. The Earl of Leicester asked him for money in 1585 and he contributed £30 to the Queen's loan in 1590. He died in May 1599 and was buried, as he wished, in the church of All Saints Pavement, on 1 June, although sadly we have been unable to trace this burial. His 'loving, wise and discreet' wife was sole executrix, and there were various charitable legacies.

The portrait of Jane Brooke is likely to have been originally commissioned as one of a pair, although the companion portrait of her husband has not yet been identified. Wearing a rather demure and sober

dress, her social standing is clearly demonstrated by her gold chains, the jewel around her neck, the three rings she wears and the fur stole, or fur tipped gown. The gold chains she wears are identical to those which the current lady mayoress wears. These were purchased second hand in the 1670's, possibly from the Brooke family, but they are thought to date from the sixteenth century.

Jane and Robert Brooke had seven sons and five daughters and two of their sons rose in status. Christopher, the poet, sat in Parliament for York and Newport, Isle of Wight, and Samuel became chaplain to Prince Henry, James I and Charles I and was Master of Trinity College, Cambridge 1622-31.

Jane and Robert's daughter, Jane, married Thomas Hesketh of Heslington Hall and it seems likely that the portrait was at Heslington Hall from the time of the marriage, or her mother's death, until the sale at Bonhams in 2012. The portrait was included in the 1905 exhibition of 'Old York' at York Art Gallery, on loan from Lord Deramore, and appears in inventories of Heslington Hall in 1947 and 1962.



Whilst the artist has not been identified, there are suggestions that it may have been by a Netherlands based painter. There is still more research to be undertaken on the portrait and we hope that the imminent conservation will provide further information on the painting.

LAURA TURNER.

With thanks to the Merchant Adventurers Hall, Jill Murray and Louise Wheatley for information.

Introductions



I will be working with the Art Gallery team for one year in the run-up to the re-opening of the Art Gallery. Over the coming months I will work with the team to plan and communicate the timetable for installation and to ensure that all the necessary resources are in place. Next year, my role will be to oversee the installation of the new displays and the return of works to store, and to ensure that Health & Safety, security and environmental standards are achieved.

LISA GAUNT



I am a fairly new York resident having lived most of my life in or near Bristol. My very first job was as graduate secretary to the Director of Frost and Reed, the art dealers, who then had a gallery in central Bristol, and there I would clatter away on a typewriter in a corner of the lavishly carpeted, green-walled gallery surrounded by pictures - my first introduction to art!

In later life, after marriage and three children, I began to explore my vocation to ministry in the Church of England and was eventually ordained and served in parish ministry in Gloucester and in Bristol.

When I retired, we moved here to be closer to the two of our three children who live in Leeds. It was difficult to fit our many interests into such a demanding working life, so retirement has

been an opportunity to explore some of them afresh, including all forms of art but particularly painting and ceramics. We have been delighted to discover how lively the creative art scene is locally and how many wonderful galleries and exhibitions there are within easy reach of the city. We have relished our membership of the Friends and the opportunities it has given us to widen our knowledge and experience and have followed the closure of the Gallery and the re-building programme with great interest. I am thrilled to have joined the Committee at this exciting time in the life of the Gallery, and look forward making whatever contribution I can to its work.

SUE RUSHTON



I was born in Surrey, but have now lived in York for 25 years and very much regard it as my home with very deep roots. When the children were babies I decided to embark upon an Open University degree. One of the modules was on the Italian Renaissance - and I was hooked!

I spent my working years in York at the Local Government Ombudsman's office in various administrative guises until I reached the Training Department. In this role I organised training events around the country and assisted in training large groups of people. On retirement I seized the opportunity to take a Masters Degree in the History of Art at York University.

I am very pleased to have been voted on to the Committee of the Friends of York Art Gallery where I am eager to learn more about the organisation and help in any way I can. I am currently assisting in organising events, one of which will be an art tour to Berlin next year which, hopefully, will be an enriching and rewarding trip for we lovers of art.

JACQUELINE DAVID

Houghton Revisted

In 1745, Walpole died in considerable debt and his already famous collection of 'old masters' had to be sold. Catherine the Great was quick to recognise an opportunity to enrich her palace in St Petersburg and as Parliament refused to find the funds to keep the collection in England, 204 paintings were lost to Russia. But, it turns out, not quite lost for ever ... Thanks to the soaring imagination and consummate diplomacy of a Frenchman, Thierry Morel (then Director of the Hermitage Foundation UK), about 70 of the paintings included in the original sale were cleaned or restored and shipped back to England for a six-month sojourn in their former home at Houghton Hall where, thanks to the recently discovered hanging plan, they could be placed in their original positions, and in a few cases into their original frames.

This modern-day Labour of Hercules required the resources, influence and dedication of a veritable army of experts, sponsors and patrons. The international publicity machine went into overdrive and heralded the exhibition as the most ambitious ever to be staged in a British country house. By the end of November when Houghton Hall closes its doors for the winter, it is estimated that approaching 100,000 art-lovers will have made the pilgrimage to Norfolk to participate in this grandest of all reconstructions. On 21 August, a party of 42 Friends of York Art Gallery made the not-inconsiderable journey to see for themselves. And to judge from the Friends' many subsequent expressions of enthusiasm, amazement and appreciation, the extraordinary enterprise has been thoroughly vindicated. Certainly, the experience proved stimulating and invigorating as the whole party arrived home, after a twelve-hour excursion, in fine form.

But amongst all the astonishment and awe, there was for me an undercurrent of disquiet. Houghton, even without Walpole's paintings, is a daunting place: an expression of power and control, where an excess of beauty is used to overwhelm. And here we crowded and jostled,

our heads nodding like mechanical dolls as we looked first at a painting and then at the booklet providing the labels. One sumptuous room followed another, the gilt and the grandeur unrelenting. Feeling increasingly uneasy, I searched for paintings that might humanise the experience and, as the clamour gradually subsided, I did find much consolation. In particular, I now gratefully recall three wonderful portraits: Rembrandt's Elderly Lady, with her air of calm resignation, Rubens's perplexingly worldly Franciscan Monk, and Kneller's portrait of John Locke in whose magnificent face and troubled expression I found a deeper reflection of my own disquiet.

SUSAN GREENHOW

A Blue Plaque for W. A. Ismay

The Wakefield Civic Society unveiled a plaque at a ceremony in The Hepworth Gallery to W. A. (Bill) Ismay, a lifetime resident, on the 15th January. Bill assembled an unprecedented collection of studio ceramics at his home, comprising more than 3500 'pots', exhibition catalogues and related publications which are now in York Art Gallery.

Kevin Trickett, President of the Society, introduced Bill to the audience, acknowledging that he was not well known locally prior to the Darbyshire-Ismay exhibition at The Hepworth. Kevin highlighted the role of Helen Walsh, Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts at York Art Gallery, in helping to create awareness for W.A. Ismay and for nominating him for the plaque.

Helen gave a most interesting illustrated talk about her 10 year association with the Ismay collection and archive. Lastly, Dr. Lackey, Curator at The Hepworth, spoke of the appeal and the success of the exhibition and expressed appreciation for the support of the Northern Potters and York Art Gallery.

Jim Malone travelled from Cumbria to unveil the plaque. He is the most represented potter in the Ismay collection by number of pots, and he knew Bill personally. Jim gave a heartfelt talk about Bill in the context of the decades that they discussed aesthetics and technical matters relating to ceramics when visiting one another's homes, Jim's studio or attending sales. The evening concluded with a visit to the exhibition, and drinks and snacks were served.



The Gallery Dines Out

Following the gallery's closure, the new venture of the Gallery Dines Out started. Initially this was a little tentative, as we wondered whether this would appeal to Friends, but it was not long before we had outgrown our first venue of No 68 Gillygate and moved to the more spacious surroundings of Bedern Hall. We have had talks by many of the Friends, including John Staples, Alan Hitchcock, Linda Downey, Anne Petherick and our MA student Simon Spier who spoke on the Moore family as part of his research into the York School of Art. They have all been most enjoyable and have been accompanied by delicious food, wine and good company. We are considering whether to continue this once the gallery re-opens. Currently, opinion seems to be in favour, and we extend a warm welcome to those who have not yet sampled this extension to our lunchtime talks.



Simon Spier in action on 5 June 2014, with a little help from Louise Wheatley when the screen went missing.

DOROTHY NOTT

A Journey of Discovery - 20-21 May 2014

A visit by the Friends to Pallant House, Chichester, had long been under consideration but the discovery that the spectacular Henry Pearlman collection from Princeton University was to be shown in Europe for the first time at the Ashmolean, Oxford, clinched my resolve: here was available the perfect exhibition with which to break the long journey south to Sussex. But then it got better! It was announced that Pallant House was to give a temporary home to the irresistible Stanley Spencer 'murals' from Sandham Memorial Chapel while it was undergoing restoration. And that meant we should definitely call in at Cookham's little gallery on the way home. And thus the objectives and the pace of our journey were defined – and that is what we did.



Oskar Kokoschka's benign portrait of Henry Pearlman smiles at us as we cross the threshold to his display of treasures – a host of Cézanne drawings, watercolours and oils, comfortably familiar, but then, in succeeding rooms, amazing Soutines, two wonderful Modigliani portraits, and – for me, the first face-to-face meeting with Jacques Lipchitz. There was ample time to mull over such wonders as our coach whisked us to supper and comfy beds in Winchester. How wonderful to know that a marine refrigeration office harboured such riches! Many thanks, Mr Pearlman.

Up early the next day for a hearty breakfast and the short journey to Pallant House where we were greeted by coffee and biscuits amidst a choice selection from their permanent collection, and a meeting with their Friends' representative, Gillian Thompson. An introductory talk on Spencer was given by one of the gallery's volunteer guides, and, thus armed, we moved on to the main business of the tour: firstly, an immersion in Spencer (how wonderful to be able to get so close to something usually so dim and distant) and then a lovely long ramble through the elegant rooms of the former town house with its amazing breadth of modern British art. There was a lot of 'did you see?' and 'what about ...?' so I felt reassured that everyone had found much to their tastes. Lunch in Pallant's friendly café and a quick dash for some to the Cathedral to sneak a look at the Chagall window, and we were northwards bound.

We were actually early at Cookham where we picked up the thread of Stanley Spencer's story and even had time for tea at the local tea-shop with giant teapots that Stanley would have loved. And – thanks to brilliant navigation by Driver John - we were even home on time!

SUSAN GREENHOW

June 2014

Alan Measles at the Yorkshire Museum Thursday 15 May 2014

For this year's national Museums at Night festival, the Yorkshire Museum invited Alan Measles (Grayson Perry's teddy bear) to meet the bears from York Museums Trust's collections, including toys from the Castle Museum and ceramics from the Art Gallery, for a game of hide-and-seek. This proposal beat off stiff opposition (including from the Courtauld Gallery, London) to win a public poll with the highest number of votes ever received in the Connect10 competition.

Thank you to everyone who voted, and who encouraged others to support us.

When the day of Alan's visit arrived we were blessed with glorious sunshine, which was excellent because craft activities and games to keep children and families entertained, spilled out of the

museum into marquees on the lawns. As the afternoon progressed people of all ages arrived, clutching their teddy bears, many of them also carrying a picnic to enjoy in the gardens.

Alan was accompanied by Grayson Perry, the artist, dressed as his alter ego, Claire in a bright patterned frock and fabulous green platform shoes. They declared the Yorkshire Museum open after hours with a ribbon cutting ceremony and an amusing speech. Those lucky enough to have booked a ticket were then able to hear Grayson in conversation with Valerie Sinason (the psychoanalyst) in the Tempest Anderson Hall. It was a super talk which explored Grayson's relationship with Alan and how all our childhoods are supported and comforted by the characters we invent (for our toys and ourselves) through play.



A recording of a previous 'in conversation' event with Grayson Perry and Valerie Sinason is available on line here: <http://www.connectingconversations.org>

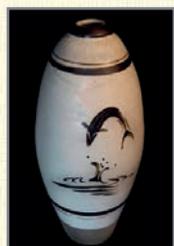
Local art students from York College had also been invited to make bears inspired by the event for Grayson to choose from and add to the game of hide and seek. All 90 of the bears the students made were positioned around the Museum and Museum Gardens and visitors were invited to find them all. Other activities included: storytelling, music, making costumes and togas for your bear and making bears out of lego and clay.

The event attracted over 1000 visitors.

The trail of collection and student-made bears stayed in the Museum through to the end of May so that families could continue to enjoy them during the half term holiday. We were also able to borrow a Louis Vuitton trunk, designed by Grayson Perry as a shrine to Alan Measles, which was also on display in the Museum throughout May.



Ceramics Conservation



The 'Leaping Salmon' vase is one of York Art Gallery's most important pots. Widely thought to be Bernard Leach's masterpiece, it was made in 1931 and acquired by Eric Milner-White for his collection. It was Milner-White's favourite pot, but tragically the top was damaged in 1959 when another pot was dropped on top of it. It was repaired rather crudely and has been disfigured by raised and discoloured joints ever since. Thanks to a grant from the Friends, the vase will undergo conservation work to realign the broken sections, so that when it goes on display in the new Centre of Ceramic Art, it will look its best. The grant from the Friends will also allow us to conserve a number of other ceramics, including a Bernard Leach 'Panel of Small tiles' which is suffering from deteriorating grouting and a warping frame.

Volunteering with the Ceramics Archives

Later this year we will be appealing for volunteers to help us with the cataloguing and digitisation of the archives relating to our studio ceramics collections. This will be a major

project involving making around 80,000 archival items accessible to search through our online collections portal. Watch out for further announcements.

The Annual CoCA Lecture.

We have joined together with the Friends and the Northern Potters Association to present an annual ceramics lecture. The 2014 lecture will be presented in the Autumn by Clare Twomey, the UK's leading ceramic installation artist who has worked widely in the UK, USA and Japan. Clare is a lively and entertaining speaker and will be talking about her previous work and a significant installation she is producing for the opening of York Art Gallery. Further details will follow and I hope to see you there.

HELEN WALSH

Curator of Ceramics

Researching the Lycett Green Collection - Connections with the National Gallery

Since joining the team here in April as the National Gallery Curatorial Trainee I've been researching the Lycett Green collection of Old Masters that was given to York Art Gallery in 1955. The collection includes paintings spanning over 400 years, from intricately crafted gold ground panels through to sweeping views of Lucca and Venice. It's a fascinating subject for study, not least because of the story of how the collection came to be assembled.

F.D. Lycett Green built up his collection during the 1920s and 1930s, advised by some of the most eminent art historians of the day. He was keen to develop a comprehensive collection that reflected all the major schools and periods of European Art. His model was that of the National Gallery, but recognising his rather more modest means, he concentrated his purchases on less popular artists who nevertheless had played an important part in the story of the history of art. He often commented on those areas neglected by the National Gallery, voicing his surprise in 1957 that 'the National Gallery has bought yet another Poussin at a high price, when there are so many gaps that need filling' and expressing pride at acquiring works by artists ignored by the national collection, such as Snyder and Magnasco.

His links with the National Gallery extended beyond this underlying influence to more concrete relationships. Thirty years before his gift to York, when his collection was still in its embryonic stages, Lycett Green gave a selection of works of art to the national collection. In addition to Italian oil paintings from the 17th and 18th Century, he donated a pastel portrait by Jean-Baptiste Perroneau.

Interestingly, several paintings in the Lycett Green collection also have direct connections with works now hanging in the National Gallery. One such example is *The Way to Calvary*, a painting Lycett Green acquired in 1935. It was attributed to Jacopo Bassano, and thought to have been painted in Venice in 1544, where it was bought by the Dutch merchant Jan Reynst and taken to Amsterdam. The painting was later acquired by the Dutch government, who sent it to England as a gift to King Charles II in 1660. In 1950, however, another version of the painting was seen in the collection of the Earl of Bradford. It became apparent that Lycett Green's painting was not the original version, but a copy made in Amsterdam before the original was sent to Charles II. Earl Bradford's painting acquired by the National Gallery in 1983, where it can now be seen in Gallery 9.



Although Lycett Green's version is a copy, it marks an important moment in the painting's fascinating journey across Europe, travelling from church, to mansion, to royal palace, to public gallery. As such, it perfectly fulfils Lycett Green's ambition that his collection contributes to the knowledge and understanding of the history of painting.

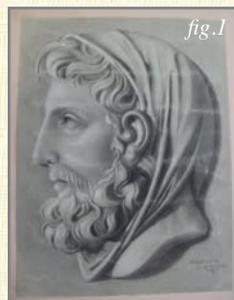
ELOISE DONNELLY

National Gallery Curatorial Trainee.

Mark Hessey

During my research into the York School of Art I have encountered many prolific artists who at the time contributed much to the cultural life of York, yet now their names are unfamiliar and all but meaningless. One such case is the sculptor and stonemason Mark Hessey.

Born in 1828, Hessey was one of the first students to enrol at the School of Art when it opened its doors in 1842, and immediately came to the foreground as a talented pupil who could work in a variety of media to a high standard. From 1844 to 1848 Hessey was a consistent prizewinner in the twice-yearly student exhibitions, in which considerable gifts – usually in the form of instructive books and manuals, though sometimes monetary – were awarded to students who showed accomplishment in a selection of separate of artistic disciplines. Hessey's achievements included best improvement in outline drawing and best coloured drawing from the windows of the Minster, but it was always in modelling in clay and marble that he was clearly adept, winning six prizes in a four year period and displaying promise for a successful career as a sculptor.



York Art Gallery's collection holds a single drawing executed by Hessey (fig.1). Signed and dated February 1846, this work is certainly an exercise in drawing from a cast that students would have been engaged in at the York School of Art at this time. Hessey's proficiency in delineating the strong contrasts of light and shade betray his disposition for modelling and sculpting – the profile of the head emerges from the paper in three dimensions, and he has even chosen to render the shadow that the plaster head casts on the flat surface on which it rests. Though apparently not a prizewinning piece, this drawing definitely provides an insight into the working process of the School's star sculptor.

One of the most fruitful areas of my research is discovering how the talented artists at the York School of Art bore impress on the city's civic aesthetics. There was a close relationship between the committee of the School and the industrial artisans of the surrounding community, and quite often promising young students received the patronage of local artists, artisans and tradesmen. In 1847, James Piggott Pritchett, an architect whose business was also involved in designing monuments, gravestones and architectural features, and who also featured on the committee of the School of Art, employed Hessey to undertake design and modelling work for his company. The extant state of York Cemetery is largely due to the architectural and monumental output of Pritchett, and some work is attributable to the chisel and mallet of Hessey (fig.2). There also exists a pattern book of designs that Pritchett's company kept for reference that bears a remarkable resemblance to the type of outline drawing Hessey would have been executing whilst a student at the School of Art (fig.3). It is hard to assign a specific hand to these imaginative drawings but it is more than likely that Pritchett would have had his apprentices copying them down just as they would have done in the classroom.

1851 marked a significant year for Hessey as the Yorkshire Gazette recounts the shortlist of contributions to the Great Exhibition from the city of York – Hessey being one of only two students representing the School of Art and with nothing less than a model in clay. It was also this year that, owing to the sudden death of the School of Art's Master, Hessey was asked to stand in and



fig.2

superintend as a temporary replacement. This is telling of the status that Hessey had earned within the cultural circles of York, as well as his reputable competency in the fine and applied arts, and all the more impressive when considering the fact that he was only twenty-three years of age.

If I were to speculate on why such a promising young artist never achieved a national, or even local, level of recognition, it would probably be due to the fact that Hessey's natural talents were sufficient for his modest ambition. Most gifted pupils following the nineteenth century art school curriculum found themselves down in the bustling metropolis of London, working for the most fashionable artists of the time. However in Hessey's case, he decided a career in York was more than adequate for his needs. To reinforce this, we are able to derive a sense of Hessey's view of 'success' as an artist in this poignant passage, written by avid chronicler of York's artistic scene, John Ward Knowles:

Towards the last years of his life he had relinquished his art altogether. The world had been hard upon him and his temperament was totally at variance with its commercial aims. His gentle soul was not suited to the rough handling of worldly schemes, therefore he was content to shrink into oblivion as an artist and as years passed over his head he shut himself up with the works of great writers and thinkers and at last left the scene of his conflicts.

This is not to say Hessey disappeared entirely, his works are still very much present in and around York. For more information on Hessey's work, or extra images please do drop me a line at ss1610@york.ac.uk.

SIMON SPIER



fig.3

Copyright Volunteer Project update

After our call for volunteers in the last newsletter, we received a terrific response and we now have a team of 11 people working on our copyright project, including Friends and students from the University of York. We are currently working on the first phase of the project, which is to find out the birth and death dates of each and every artist in the fine art collection. This is no mean feat, as there are around 3,000 names to research, and many are quite obscure names, but our fantastic team of volunteers is doing a wonderful job. They found dates for a third of the artists in just over one month, and now we're well over half way.

We're now getting ready to move into phase two, which is to double check all the information they've found, as well as checking the existing information on the artists. This is extremely important as the volunteers' research will feed into our collections database, which will in turn, appear on our new website so we need to ensure it is accurate. Phase three will happen later in the year, and that will involve the potentially onerous task of finding out who owns the copyright for the modern and contemporary works in the collection, after which we'll request permission to be able to publish images of the works freely in leaflets, press articles and of course, the website.

Although we're still in the relatively early stages of this copyright audit, it has already proved extremely valuable, with much more accurate information captured about the artists represented in our collection, and by the end of the project, we will be able to celebrate and access the collection much more easily.

The York Museums Trust website launched in June, thanks to the hard work of Mike Linstead, our E-Communications Co-ordinator, and for the first time, it is now possible to search the collections

online. As the copyright project develops, we will be able to include more and more images. Visit www.yorkmuseumstrust.org.uk/collections/ to see for yourself! May I take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers for all their fabulous efforts with this project.

JENNY ALEXANDER

Curator of Fine Art

Art Tour to Berlin

20-25 April 2015 – 5 nights/ 6days from £989

We are pleased to announce that Friends of York Art Gallery are organising an art tour to Berlin in 2015.

Our tour will include:

- 4* central Berlin hotel on a B&B basis
- Welcome dinner
- All excursions, entrance fees and guided tours
- Return UK airport coach transfers
- Direct scheduled flights to Berlin
- Professional guide
- Executive coach throughout
- Local city tax

Extras to tour will be:

- Single room supplement £124
- All other meals
- Insurance
- Gratuities



The itinerary for the week is outlined in the leaflet enclosed with this mailing.

Expressions of interest are now invited and should be sent to Jackie David. Places on the tour are limited and booking forms will be sent in due course only to those who have indicated their interest. Once received, you are urged to complete the booking form as soon as possible and return as instructed with £100 non-returnable deposit. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. If there is more demand than spaces a waiting list will be created in the event of any cancellations.

If you have any queries please contact Jackie David on **01904 767740** or jacquelinepdavid@gmail.com

View from the Chair

We are now almost on the homeward run to the opening of the refurbished art gallery, and this time next year shall know how such a momentous event is to be celebrated. Those of you who were able to tour round the building under construction—by a local York firm—will appreciate just what a big project this is. The good news is that it is on time and on budget, which is certainly something to celebrate.

In the meantime, the Friends continue to meet regularly at the Yorkshire Museum, Fairfax House, the Mansion House, Bedern and St.Mary's for



talks and social interaction thanks to the energy of your talks organiser Louise Wheatley, who has been known to step in at the last minute when the arranged speaker has been unable to attend. We are fortunate indeed in having a supportive curatorial team supplementing contributions from Friends, members of the History of Art Department at the University of York and Aesthetica Prize finalists. Simon Spier has already given two lunchtime talks and we look forward to his contribution for our archives at the end of his MA year in September. The research which is being done by the MA students is extremely valuable, throwing new light on many of the gallery's collections and history. Simon is looking at the York School of Art up to 1900, and it is hoped that a future student will be able to carry this research forward so a complete picture of this important topic can be documented.

As well as talks, trips have continued, with a day's outing in March to Compton Verney to view the Moore/Rodin exhibition, a nice follow up to our previous visit to Moore's home at Perry Green, a guided tour round Turner and the Sea by co-curator, Richard Johns from the University of York. Most spectacular was the trip organised by Sue Greenhow in May to the Ashmolean to view the Cezanne exhibition, followed by a tour round the Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, where we were able to see the Stanley Spencer panels temporarily removed from the Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burghclere. There was even time to look round Chichester Cathedral before moving off to the Stanley Spencer Gallery at Cookham. As I write this, we are due to visit the Mondrian exhibition at Tate Liverpool with a talk by the curator, our own committee member, Michael White. Watch this space for future events and in particular, next April's trip to Berlin organised by Jackie David.

In the last newsletter Ruth Elder of the University Library advised of her intention to update the Friends as to how we can access the art gallery's book collection. I can report that there will be the opportunity for Friends to obtain a reader's ticket and full details as to how will be circulated. It is intended there will be a special reception to mark the occasion in early November. Again, full details will be circulated.

I was surprised and delighted that even during the gallery's closure we had an election for the committee at our AGM in March. I offer my congratulations and a warm welcome to both Sue Rushton and Jackie David, whose profiles are elsewhere in this newsletter. I am also grateful to those who have joined in the focus group which has met twice and has plans to help publicise the gallery in advance of its opening. My thanks too go to Susan Parker, who left the committee in March, to my hard-working colleagues, to the art gallery team led by Laura Turner (and to wish her and her new family all the best) and to Gary Bateson who is due to retire for the Yorkshire Museums Trust in August.

As before, I end with an update on the stores appeal. We are now up to £58,880.08 which is just under 83.6% of the total. There is still a way to go and it would be nice to think this can be filled before the grand opening. Just think, that if all those Friends who have not yet contributed could possibly manage £15 (£12 with Gift Aid), then we shall have reached our total. Anyone who would like to help with this is encouraged to contact our treasurer, Richard Bailey. Please help us end this appeal in style. As a final push we shall also be holding an art exhibition in May 2015, full details of which will be sent out in our next newsletter. Contributions are most welcome.

Finally, my thanks go to all the Friends for your continued support especially during the gallery's closure.

DOROTHY NOTT

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