



Friends of York Art Gallery

NEWSLETTER - AUTUMN 2017

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

1st September 2017

You will be aware from the high profile coverage in the York and Leeds press, and on local television that the Friends have supported the Gallery's campaign to acquire 'A Reverie' by Albert Moore. Our pledge of £180,000 is comprised of legacies from Dr. Michael Bearpark, which dates from 2008, and the Malden-Owen bequest received in June of this year. Our support will be of critical importance to the Gallery's applications for funding from national bodies. The painting travels to London at the close of the current exhibition to be available to the decision-makers. YMT should know of the outcome before year end, so fingers crossed that 'A Reverie' is back on display in York for the New Year!



The Friends of York Art Gallery dates from April 1948. With the assistance of the Curators we will be celebrating this charity's 70th anniversary in 2018 with an exhibition in the Gallery, May through September, of a selection of the paintings, ceramics, works on paper and film that the Friends have contributed to, either to acquire or to conserve. Hopefully with this mailing or shortly thereafter we will be circulating a comprehensive list of these works to you, arranged by date, detailing the value of the Friends contribution and where possible the cost of the individual item.

To compliment this event, beginning in January 2018 your Committee is scheduling Lunch Time talks, held weekly in the Gallery and talks at the ever-popular Gallery Dines Out luncheons. We need more speakers, so if you have an enthusiasm for one of the artists or works represented, please do get in touch. Personally, I had no background in art, aside from enjoying visits to Galleries, and I have given three thirty-minute talks this year. There are lots of research sources readily available, including the Gallery team, and the audiences participate too. It can become addictive.

In terms of numbers attending and financial contributions through ticket sales, the Friends have had a very positive year to date. Almost all of the visits away from York have been over-subscribed, the Gallery Dines Out lunches operate at near capacity, and the Lectures and Private Views are similarly well subscribed.

Before closing this view from the Chair, I do wish to bring to your attention that we face a threat to the future of this charity, and that is a declining membership. For a variety of reasons, encompassing mobility, mortality and relocation we have lost about 100 members in the last year or so. New members joining from 1st October 2017 will enjoy membership through 2018, so if you could assist with recruitment or give the gift of membership in the Friends of York Art Gallery this year, that would help! Application forms are available in York Art Gallery at any of the Reception Desks, at the Friends 'wall space' on the first floor opposite the lockers, or contact me by telephone on 07802 216079 or email petergibbard@btinternet.com.

PETER GIBBARD

Chairman

CURATOR'S REPORT

I'm delighted to be now a part of York Art Gallery and welcome the visitors of the gallery as the new Senior Curator.

The year 2017 has been a very successful year for the gallery so far. We are very proud that in May York Art Gallery was awarded a Certificate of Special Commendation at the European Museum of the Year Awards – one of only 5 awarded. As there were 46 nominated museums from 24 countries (and we were the only UK museum), this is a really prestigious achievement for us.

Another achievement that I'd like to mention is that York Art Gallery has been named Visitor Attraction of the Year (over 50,000 visitors) at the Visit York Tourism Awards for the second year running. We were also finalists for the Family Friendly Attraction award.

The curatorial team keeps working hard. We have delivered a number of major exhibitions this year, (with more planned before the end of the year), including "Albert Moore: Of Beauty and Aesthetics", "Leisure Land Golf", "Picasso: Ceramics from the Attenborough Collection", "Paul Nash and the Uncanny Landscape: An Exhibition Curated by John Stezaker" and others.



The exhibition programme for 2018 and 2019 will be even more intensive and diverse, offering the residents and visitors of York a great artistic experience. In particular, I'm happy to announce that early next year we are planning to organize an exhibition of the works from our collection, which will celebrate the 70th anniversary of Friends of York Art Gallery.

I hope to see you all at the forthcoming events and exhibitions of the gallery.

VERA PAVLOVA
Senior Curator

INTRODUCING SUE SMALLPAGE

Born in London and having obtained a History degree from Exeter University I moved to York in 1976 on getting married.

Together with my husband I ran a retail business until 2006 when I took a job with York Museums Trust for 10 years, working mainly at the Yorkshire Museum.

When I retired in 2015 I became a Friend of York Art Gallery with the intention of increasing my knowledge of art and contributing to the future of the Art Gallery. Having enjoyed trips, lectures and social events I was very pleased to be asked to join the Committee.



INTRODUCING JUDITH GLOVER

Judith Glover is our new Secretary, taking over from Peter Gibbard in July when he became chair. Judith joined FYAG when she retired to York from academic work in London in 2010. She is vice-chair of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society and was YPS lecture secretary for three years. She is particularly interested in twentieth century European painting but also has a weakness for 17th century Dutch still lives. She is a practising amateur potter, next exhibiting at the Kunsthuis Gallery, Crayke, in November. Her most admired potter is James Tower and she is often to be found staring longingly at his work in the CoCA gallery.



INTRODUCING CHARLES MARTINDALE

Charles Martindale has retired to York after 40 years in academia, first at the University of Sussex and then at the University of Bristol, where he ended his career as Professor of Latin and Dean of Arts. He has written widely on Latin poetry, on the Classical tradition, and on English/Latin literary relations. Since his teenage years, he has been seriously interested in art and architecture (he considered reading History of Art, but eventually decided for Classics), and has always been a regular visitor to museums, galleries, and country houses. He is married to art historian and curator of exhibitions, Elizabeth Prettejohn, Professor of History of Art at the University of York, and accordingly has good knowledge of the workings of the sector. He is passionate about the positive role that museums and galleries can and should play in the life and well-being of the nation.



INTRODUCING AZIZAH CLAYTON

I am Malaysian by birth; studied in Australia (Economics & Maths degree), York University (M.Phil in Economics) and the Institute of Optimum Nutrition in London (qualified clinical Nutritionist). I was an Economics teacher for 26 years at Queen Margaret's School, Escrick, while bringing up two children, and latterly a freelance lecturer in Nutrition in the UK and abroad.

My academic historian Australian husband introduced me to Western culture and over 50 years of our married life I acquired a love of architecture, music, painting, literature, opera, theatre and reading. We have travelled extensively – especially to Italy (with Italian friends), in pursuit of these interests and we intend to continue to do so.

I also love gardening, films, bridge, cycling and racket sports. In our retirement we have decided to devote part of our time, on top of grandparenting, to charities and local causes. I am delighted to be able to contribute, as Treasurer, to the FYAG, of which we have been members for a number of years. I look forward to being a more active member.



THE COLLECTION FUND

A year ago the Friends established the Collection Fund with the objective of providing continuing support for acquisitions for the Gallery's collections. To achieve this, Friends were invited to make a monthly subscription by standing order of a minimum of £5 to the Fund. The initial target was to achieve 100 Friends giving an average of £10 a month to produce a monthly income for the Fund of £1000.

One year on we have a total of 21 subscribers between them subscribing £210 a month, well short of our initial target. The present value of the Fund is £5611 (which includes one legacy received and some one-off donations (which are always welcome) and transfers from the former Patrons' Premium Fund. This is being held mostly on deposit (at the current pitiful interest rate available) until a suitable acquisition is available.

The problem of funding acquisitions for the Gallery remains and the cost of works of art is such that a continuous and substantial flow of funds is required if the Gallery is to be successful in continuing to grow and enhance its collection.

May I appeal to Friends who have not yet subscribed to the Collection Fund to help us achieve our objective by signing a standing order for however much you feel able to spare. If you wish to do this, please contact me, the administrator of the Fund, and I will send you the necessary form:

Richard Bailey, 2 Dalton Terrace, York YO24 4DA, 01904 643943
e-mail: richard.c.bailey@btinternet.com

A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR “THE MAGDALENE” PAINTING FROM YORK ART GALLERY

Some of the paintings in York Art Gallery examined in the project National Inventory of Continental European Paintings are not very well-known art pieces. Many of them are not on permanent display; nevertheless, the research resulted in new conclusions also in those cases and they are worth presenting now when the project is completed. Therefore I would like to share some information I collected on the 19th century picture of Penitent Saint Magdalene (YORAG 381).

Saint Mary Magdalene was present at Jesus' crucifixion and she was the one who told the Apostles that Lord has risen. In fact, there several women described in the Gospels that merged into the person called “Mary Magdalene” – as a result according to the tradition Mary Magdalene became known as a sinner (prostitute), from whom Christ chased away seven demons and who later stayed by him and was the first one to meet him after Resurrection. In the Medieval art she was usually depicted nicely dressed and holding a jar of ointment, but her iconography changed in the Early Modern times. According to her legend, after Christ's Ascension Mary Magdalene decided to live in the desert as a hermit. She spent rest of her life repenting for the sins of her youth and she did that for so many years that her clothes turned to dust. In the Early Modern and Modern art she was usually depicted as beautiful, half-naked woman praying in the wildness. Images of the penitent Mary Magdalene (often with the book and the crucifix) became popular after the Council of Trent and her earlier attribute, the jar, was by then replaced by the skull. The painting YORAG 381 was one of the 127 pictures of The Burton Bequest, which founded the York Art Gallery's permanent collection in 1882.

At first it seemed that the York painting may have been a copy after the picture completed in 1842 by Władysław Niewiarowicz, who used the pseudonym Jan Tysiewicz. That painting by Jan Tysiewicz, signed and dated, is now kept in the private collection in USA (sold at Christie's New York, 31st January 2013). However, further research revealed that Tysiewicz's “Penitent Magdalene” is not an original composition; but to discover that you need to have a researcher that understands Polish.

Apparently, the painting by Tysiewicz is mentioned in the 9th volume of the periodic of National Ossoliński Institute in Lviv, published in 1844 (in Polish). It seems that the “Penitent Magdalene” may have been Tysiewicz's master work, and it was described as ‘widely admired’. It also turned out to be a copy after the famous depiction of St Mary Magdalene by Jan Baptiste Lodewijk Maes (Belgian artist, 1794-1856)! Maes achieved a golden medal in The Hague in 1841 for that painting; the painting was later kept in the Rosenstein Castle near Stuttgart, and probably was destroyed in 1944, when the castle



was gutted by fire. It is possible that Maes was inspired to create that composition either by the depiction of Penitent Saint Magdalene by Domenico Tintoretto, or by one of its 17th century copies.

The traditional attribution of YORAG 381 to “Dubufe” cannot be sustained, as the painting does not fit the style of either Claude-Marie Dubufe (French painter, ca. 1790-1864) or Edouard Louise Dubufe (French painter, 1819-1883), and as painted prior to 1860 (when purchased by John Burton) it could not have been completed by Edouard-Marie-Guillaume Dubufe (French painter, 1853-1909). Most probably it is a piece of some serial production and not a copy after Tysiewicz’s version, but rather after original Maes’ picture; almost identical painting, also on copper and of the same size, was sold at Sotheby’s in London (26th April 2001, lot 496), also a gouache or a print version, signed ‘H. Siebert 1851’, was sold at Sotheby’s 10.09.1980 lot 362. Anyway, it is an interesting proof of popularity of the “Magdalene” by Maes, even more valuable now considering the fact that the original painting did not survive.

MAGDALENA ŁANUSZKA

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