

friends' perspective



Boom Boom! Vase Attacks!

Michael Brennand-Wood donates sculpture to Friends for Gallery development auction - see page 4



Lars Tharp at Capesthorpe

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Reports from recent FOW Trips

France, Sweden, and more...



MUMA Interview Part 2

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Walk with Iron Men

A trip to 'Another Place'

Harry Moody tells us about plans for a fun fund-raising event – he organised the superb Morecambe Bay trip led by Cedric Robinson – this could be even better!

This year's sponsored walk will take place late morning on Sunday, 15th July. The venue is Crosby Beach, Liverpool and the Iron Men refers to the 100 statues by Antony Gormley, better known as 'Another Place'. Crosby Beach forms part of Liverpool Bay where the rivers Mersey and Alt flow into the bay. The River Alt is located at Hightown and there will be the opportunity to visit the estuary. The view from the promenade is extensive with Snowdonia visible on a clear day.

The Iron Men comprise 100 life-size figures distributed along three kilometres of shoreline. They face westwards and express feelings associated with emigration; the sadness of leaving with the hope of a better future in a new place. Crosby Beach is overlooked by a row of terraced houses, Marine Terrace, which will forever be associated with the Titanic. The founder of the White Star Line, the captain and several senior crew-members resided in the area. In April this year it will be 100 years since the sinking of the liner and the walk will include a visit to Marine Terrace.

There will be two organised walks on the day. Both walks will start from the Lakeside Adventure Centre which opened in 2009 at a cost of £10m. The shorter walk will be 4 miles long and visit the Iron Men and Marine Terrace. The longer walk will be 7 miles and include a visit to the River Alt estuary. Both walks are on level ground and when not on the beach there are excellent paths. It is possible to do the shorter walk without going on the beach. The Lakeside Adventure Centre provides a wide range of facilities including a café and a restaurant. We hope to hire two rooms and organise refreshments. Friends who prefer not to walk 4 miles are very welcome to join in on the day. The Iron Men are a 5 minute walk from the Centre and Marine Terrace is some 10 minutes away.



Further Afield...

Joan Gem reports on a trip to wondrous churches with David O'Connor

Three days of total immersion in the art and artistry of stained glass, with David O'Connor as your guide, is an experience to be remembered and treasured. David has guided us on several occasions already and his knowledge and passion has raised our interest and appreciation of church glass. From Malvern Priory and the great Cathedrals of Bristol, Gloucester and Wells to such gems as Bristol Lord Mayor's Chapel and the astonishing story of St Mary the Virgin, Meysey Hampton with its medieval stained glass and the part played by David in their eventual return from the Getty Museum in LA.

I have not visited all the great cathedrals of England, but I would not be surprised if the medieval sculpture galleries on the West Front of Wells Cathedral qualify it as the most magnificent of all. It must have been a startling sight when originally painted polychrome. The unique 'scissor arches' holding up the nave are not modern, but a medieval

solution to sinking tower foundations. Our visit to Gloucester was hurried as we were hustled through at great speed by fierce clerics practicing crowd control without the crowd.

It is in the churches where David was welcomed with delight that our memories will remain longest. Looking at the contemporary images of the 15th Century Royal Family in Little Malvern Priory, commissioned by Bishop Alcock in 1480, is a reminder of how church decoration was the only method of mass communication at the time. St Mary's Church in Fairford, Gloucester with its complete set of twenty eight windows of medieval glass is unequalled in any parish church in the land. The visit to All Saints, Selsey which was designed by Bodley in 1862 was a reminder that the art of stained and painted glass enjoyed a renaissance with the designs of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement.

Off to France...

Sandra Wild reports on another successful trip

A bright and early start on Bert's bus to St Pancras where we were met by Jane Brand our guide before boarding the Eurostar to Lille. No sooner had we arrived then we were off on our first visit to La Piscine in Roubaix. It is a stunning building which closed as a pool in 1985 and was remodelled by Jean Paul Phillipon. It is a delightful, sunny space with sunburst windows, beautiful tiling and elegant galleries.



After a night in nearby Mouscron we headed for the Palais des Beaux Arts de Lille. This enormous gallery was opened by the municipality in 1892. There was so much to see that we had to choose between Goya (hidden it seemed in the basement), Delacroix, Rubens and a huge collection of art from 12th to 20th centuries. Then back on the TGV direct to sunny Avignon. (I think that there might have been a short rendition of 'Sur le pont' or 'sous' as we learned was more correct). Our hotel could not have been more central and on Sunday we were guided around the Palais des Papes. Highlights here were the frescoes by Giovannetti and Martini. The grandeur of the building is breathtaking but there is little in the way of furniture and artefacts that would give a clearer understanding of life during the time of the Popes. The afternoon was free to take in the city – the Rocher des Dames, 'Le Pont' and some galleries-the Angladon and the Collection Lambert.



Days 3 and 4 were no less hectic with visits to Nimes with its gardens, Tour Magne, La Maison Carrée and the newer (!) Norman Foster gallery then back on the bus to the Pont du Gard a truly amazing relic. Day 4 started with a walking tour of Arles where one highlight was the portico of the Cathedral de St Trophime. Then just time for a quick lunch before a memorable visit to Glanum - the impressive remains of a Roman Town just outside St Remy-de-Provence.

Altogether a tour crammed with interest and lots of reasons to visit again. Many thanks to our guide Jane Brand and to Jean Craske for her efficient organisation.



Photographs by Muriel Wilkinson

We face forward: a week in Bamako

Mary Griffiths, Curator of Modern Art

Fousseni was our driver in Bamako, and with his help Julie and I sped around Mali's capital city, from museum to gallery to studio and back to our hotel, sweeping along metalled highways and tumbling down red dust roads. He spoke French to Julie (and she translated to English for me) and Bambara to his friends who he called over to help him find the next gallery or studio in the flat sprawled city. We would clamber out of the precious chill of our air-conditioned car and into the heat of Bamako to see exhibitions of photographs across the city at Musée du District de Bamako, the Conservatoire, Memorial Modibo Keita, Institut Français, Galerie de l'Ina and the National Museum of Mali. There, Samuel Sidibé directed everything, the Museum itself and the Biennale of African photography, the ninth that he had brought together. The café thronged with any African photographer worth his (or her – though there were noticeably few women) salt, meeting with other artists and curators – mostly from across Africa, many from France and barely any from Britain. We were in the shadow of Empire – but this time it wasn't British. Portfolios were opened and shown, meetings arranged, hands firmly shaken, cards pressed on to each other, hawkers moving from table to table gently assuring each of us that we'd buy something eventually.

At night we'd retreat to our quiet hotel on the edge of the River Niger and through the high security fence would watch the unrelenting traffic stream across the bridge and local people quietly gathering grass for their animals at the edge of the water.

And what was the art like? It was mostly very good, but it took two weeks of being back in Manchester for it to really begin to sink in. Images floated back into my memory – the indistinct, slipping away shadows of Nii Obodai's Ghana; George Osodi's photograph of the damaged skin of the man living in the Niger Delta, oppressed by the oil fortresses that have taken over the area; Malick Sidibé's 1960s studio portraits of stylish young people in Bamako, dressed to impress.

In June, works by these photographers and many other West African artists will be shown as part of the city-wide exhibition, *We Face Forward*, which is being curated by the Whitworth and Manchester Art Gallery. And from these works, and our encounters with African places, artists and curators, we'll develop new ways of approaching how we think about art and how we exhibit it here at the Whitworth.

COMING VERY SOON!

Harlots and rakes at Capesthorne...

BBC Antiques Roadshow's Lars Tharp will entertain Friends at Capesthorne Hall

'Harlots, rakes and crashing china – an accidental introduction to ceramics – with a little nudge from William Hogarth' is the title of his talk, which he sums up as 'a piece of serious research with a high entertainment quotient.'



Lars is vice chairman of the Hogarth Trust, which recently restored Hogarth's house

in Chiswick. He is a leading expert on ceramics, particularly Chinese, is ambassador for the Foundling Museum, visiting Professor at De Montfort University and former Director, Ceramics and Oriental specialist at Sotheby's.

As an expert on the works of William Hogarth (the Whitworth, as we know, has a fine collection) Lars will delve into Hogarth's interiors. 'England's greatest artist,' explains Lars, 'captures the emergence of Modern Britain through his depictions of interiors high and low. From the sleazy harlot's garret to milord's opulent palace of luxuries, Hogarth's images are punctuated with everyday and exotic ceramics. Some are innocent bystanders while others play a catastrophic role in the unfolding action.'

Information on how to book for this event on Tuesday, April 24, 2012 is in the Events programme. Look forward to seeing you there.



A Harlot's Progress: The Harlot deceiving her Jewish Protector (1732) - collection Whitworth Art Gallery

Boom Boom!

Michael Brennand-Wood sculpture

As ever another busy year for the Friends – look out for a big social event and auction of works by acclaimed artists – pictured is this wonderful work from renowned textile artist Michael Brennand-Wood donated to the Friends for the redevelopment appeal. It's aptly titled Boom Boom and is related to the installation 'Vase Attacks' first shown in San Francisco and later in Amsterdam. 'I realised that the vessel,' Michael explains 'and a floral bouquet, could and should exert an influence on each other. As the series progressed, the vessels became more disquieting and edgy.'

The imagery in 'Boom Boom' is initially beautiful, but on closer examination will reveal darker references to mines, military cap badges, uniform insignia, war games and flowers. The piece can be shown freestanding or projecting from the wall, in which case, the shadows become an integral part of the 'arrangement.'

Mim Butler admires the textile sculpture Boom, Boom (photo. Ed Watts)



Join us in the Shop!

Hazel Sullivan with shop / membership news

Visitors will shortly be able to buy membership of the Friends of the Whitworth directly through the shop. As well as full membership details and a pen, they will receive an attractive and sturdy canvas bag imprinted with a detail from 'Parkland' (1974), a furnishing fabric by renowned textile designer Lucienne Day. From the early 1950s onwards, Lucienne Day produced groundbreaking, contemporary pattern designs for curtains, carpets, glass towels and china. The Whitworth, which holds an extensive collection of her work, held a major exhibition in 1993, Lucienne Day: A Career in Design.

The designer's daughter, Paula Day, has kindly agreed to waive copyright charges for the image, in view of her mother's warm association with the Whitworth and we are very grateful for her interest and help. We hope that after enjoying the gallery exhibitions, visitors to the shop will be encouraged to join the Friends or purchase membership as a gift, enabling them to enjoy the events organised by the Tuesday Team of volunteers and to know that they are contributing to the exciting new developments at the gallery through the Friends' Gallery Development Appeal.



Visitor Services Assistant Tom Carpenter with a membership bag.

Fundraising & Pilkington updates

A number of Friends held social, fund-raising events for the Gallery development appeal – many lovely photos of these events are featured on the Friends' website – hope you have seen them on:

www.friendsofthewhitworth.org.uk

The 43rd Pilkington Lecture was a sell-out! Turner prize-winner Grayson Perry wowed a full house with his memorable, controversial, witty and stimulating lecture.



Before... taking another look at his pots in Manchester Art Gallery



and After - Grayson with Maria Balshaw before the sell out Pilkington lecture

Andrew Graham-Dixon is the next speaker – more details later in the year! Perhaps we'll have a Sicilian meal!

Thanks to the Friends...

Mary Griffiths, Curator of Modern Art, writes about the first face on TV - a ventriloquist's dummy

Tony Oursler is fascinated by early television and makes many references in his work to the medium's great pioneer in Britain, John Logie Baird. The painting (pictured) shows Baird with 'Stookey Bill,' a ventriloquist's dummy.

During his experiments, Baird had to use many lights to illuminate his subject – so many, in fact, that the heat produced made it impossible for a human to be televised. 'Stookey Bill' was drafted in as a stand-in, and it is that that was the first face ever to be transmitted by the power of television.

This work by Oursler and two others *Freq Zenith* (2003) and *Hairy Ball Theorem* (1999) – all acrylic on paper are now in the Whitworth collection thanks to the Cosmo Rodewald bequest.

American multi media artist Tony Oursler created *The Influence Machine son et lumiere* in Whitworth Park last summer.



JLB Relationship (2001)
Tony Oursler

MUMA Interview Part 2

Continuing the conversation with Stuart McKnight of MUMA - McInnes Usher McKnight Architects - on the new 'bespoke' development at the gallery

How different would your building have been if there hadn't been a park?

Completely and utterly different. We would have looked at ways of getting daylight into the building. That would matter to us, but other than that as our designs are totally informed by the context we would have designed something totally different. It's a good question because some architects deliberately employ a style that they apply to a number of different projects – their signature. Our approach is quite the opposite.

Do you find environmental/energy efficiency issues are of greater concern to clients now than when MUMA was formed in 2000?

There has been a massive change in the past 5-7 years. It is more about the clients' priorities changing. At the V&A the original brief in 2003 was to have air conditioning, but during that project we found a way to remove the air conditioning with the full support of the client. Like the Whitworth, the V & A is very progressive in this respect.

We see within museums and galleries now a willingness to think differently about the environment for the collection. We are able to discuss alternatives to air conditioning and humidity control. Those alternatives have always been there, but are routes that have not been selected because, I guess, of the consequences. The visitor will find the experience to be a little bit different. What we are going to do here at the Whitworth is control humidity through changing temperature so if we raise and lower the temperature of a gallery we can adjust the humidity level of a gallery so in the winter the visitor might come in and find the galleries colder than they are used to, but they might just keep their coat on to walk around and see the art. By doing this we make sure the object is safe from fluctuations of humidity and in the summer they will find the galleries hotter than they are used to, but again hopefully they will be wearing T shirts or shorts and will be able to be used to it.

So Gallery and architects are going to have to find a way to help the public understand that galleries in the future will feel different if a client has a sustainable approach to the environment. You will find with the collection stores that they will be very cold in winter, but they will be very stable. We will let the temperature drop significantly because people will not be in there all the time working.

In what other way is the development sustainable?

What we have done at the Whitworth, where we have asked the client to consider changing aspects of the brief has been informed by sustainability. For example the brief

asked for the lecture theatre to be located in the basement and the collection to stay on the top floor. The top floor has to deal with sunshine on the Victorian slate roof, it has single glazing and lots of daylight. It has relatively speaking a thin construction so its environment will change very quickly and collections do not like quick changes of humidity and temperature so it has currently air conditioning. If you put a lecture theatre in a basement you need a high ceiling, but a collection does not need high ceilings.

What we asked for in the competition was to turn the brief upside down and put the collection in the basement and the people in the beautiful high ceilinged space of the grand hall (where the lecture theatre used to be). The Victorians knew what they were doing. There are many other moves we are making for example we are also going to bring in the air through earth tubes buried in the ground that take heat from the ground in winter and cooling in summer. The Whitworth has been fabulous at being willing to listen as it is sometimes quite difficult for a client to listen to someone suggesting something different. The Whitworth has been really dynamic in their approach.

Lighting is key-we want a light, airy space, but works of art need to be cosseted. What is your approach?

We have said we would like the changing exhibition galleries to be daylight galleries that can be controlled as opposed to the other way round which is to make a black box and never have daylight.

The system at the Whitworth is very similar to that at the V&A where when the gallery closes, the blinds at the windows will automatically close. So if you think about the year round lux hours a painting is allowed to have and the sun rises at 5am in summer and sets at 9-10 the picture is getting light, but if the visitor doesn't arrive until 10 it is 5 hours in the morning the picture has unnecessary light. Our galleries will be dark until the Gallery opens at 10 then the blinds will open. By doing that we can make the visitor experience more pleasant, because you can look at a work of art at 50 lux or ask what its year round exposure

is allowed to be and, by excluding unnecessary exposure, consider lifting the light level a little further when the visitor is in.

We prefer the second option. Curators are willing to discuss art in this way with us and that's a good experience we are bringing here.

How difficult is it when working on an art gallery to create a strong architectural statement, yet allowing the gallery exhibits to steal the show?

I think it is possible without fighting with the exhibits. In this case the architectural statement is about creating an outdoor gallery and connection with the park. It is not a statement of look at us. It is more a statement saying 'look at the park'. We are not a practice that goes about trying to create big architectural statements. We are about releasing potential and understanding context, but we do like pattern and we do like light and we do like materials and sometimes we play with a combination of those patterns and light and materials-patterns through structure rather than applied patterns typically.

A fanciful question-does the Scottish background of you and your team have relevance?

Two of the partners are Scottish and the third's background is Northumbrian and he was educated together with us at the Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art. This common background has a huge amount of relevance. We see eye to eye and may have a certain sensibility. I am proud of being Scottish, and would like to think that has a bearing on our Architecture. Studying at the Mackintosh School of Architecture in the 1980s made us strong. The work was logical and challenging and as students you hang up your work for crits – and at the Mac crits were a most terrifying experience, but it made you quite well set up for the future. We do enjoy a challenge.

What does the experience of working on so many prestigious designs mean for you and do you have a favourite?

The chance to make a difference is something to relish. The chance to make a difference to the community, to contribute to our cultural life. All of our projects are equally good-we do not have a favourite-all of them are exciting and we wouldn't aim to repeat it elsewhere. It is bespoke. We had a real sense of what Maria is trying to do at the Whitworth.

The first part of this interview by Gill Crook, editor of 'friends' perspective' was in the summer 2011 edition.



Dressed to Courier!

Life as Gallery and Museum Registrar

Gillian Smithson, Registrar, The Whitworth Art Gallery & The Manchester Museum

The Whitworth has lent four fabulous William Blakes to Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow. I went along as courier to oversee unpacking, condition checking and installation. More Blakes are due to go to Japan on tour with 156 other stars from our historic art collection in April.

As Registrar at the Whitworth and the Museum I can be liaising with contemporary artists' studios or Parisian auction houses one day and sending Egyptian Mummies to Venezuela, bricks from the wall of China or Ming vases to Sheffield the next. Studying part time on the University's Art Gallery and Museum Studies MA, I am learning more about our rich collections. This term I'll be focusing on Post War Art and Architecture, of which the Whitworth itself is a great source. Crossing the threshold between the Victorian red brick exterior and Bickerdike designed interior never fails to please me. Amongst my favourites from the collections is Project by Peter McCulloch designed for Heals in 1968.

Widening our reach, globally and city-wise, my next challenge is organizing delivery of works for We Face Forward, an exhibition focusing on art from West Africa. Including textiles, ambitious installations, photography and painting, the show spans the Whitworth, Manchester City Galleries and Museum venues - now what shall I wear for that?!



Volunteering at the Gallery Study Rooms

One of the most exciting elements of the Gallery's capital development will be the way in which visitors will be able to access objects from the collection in the new study rooms. The Gallery is looking for volunteers who would be interested in helping out in the study rooms, working closely with some of the wonderful artworks from the collection and helping visitors to enjoy them.

Volunteers will undergo a series of training sessions where they will learn more about the collections and the most popular objects, how to handle them and ways to interpret them for different audiences. The curatorial, collection access and learning teams at the Gallery will deliver this training – a fantastic way to learn more about the collections we all love and help others to enjoy them!

The study rooms will open in 2014, during the next couple of years the Gallery will begin to recruit and train the volunteers for this role. In the first instance they'd like a sense of how many people would be interested and are really keen to involve you as they move forward with the development of the training programme. If you think this is something you'd like to be involved in please contact Kate Glynn at the Gallery on **07557319126** or kate.glynn@manchester.ac.uk.

January Snapshot

Loans Returning

- *Dark Matters* will be delivered back to lenders in New York, North Carolina, London, Manchester, Switzerland, and Korea.
- Darbshire Hall textile loans to be returned to UK lenders.

Loans Arriving

- *Cotton: Global Threads*, Loans are flying in from the UK, Africa, Holland, USA and Paris.
- Idris Khan's, *Devil's Wall* is coming from Paris and London.

Loans Departing:

- Lucian Freud's *Man's Head (Self Portrait)* to the National Portrait Gallery and then touring to the Modern Art Museum in Fort Worth.
- Picasso's *The Frugal Meal and Two Dancers* are going to Tate Britain.
- *The Poachers Alarmed* by Alfred Downing Fripp is going to McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, USA.
- *Snow White and her Stepmother* by Paula Rego is going to Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Paris.

Whitworth Park Dig

The University of Manchester's Archaeology and History Project has done much work in Whitworth Park with a number of Friends of Whitworth Park acting as volunteers on the 'dig.'

The site of the old bandstand, the lake and early land drains designed to reduce water from this former mossy, boggy area have been examined with many interesting artefacts coming to light – many combs, clay pipes, coins, marbles, knuckle bones and a commemorative medallion.

Anyone with memories of the park please contact Ken Shone – shones@altrincham.freereserve.co.uk or **0161 928 5744**.



Sweden - an impression

Adele Jennison reports

Those of us who hadn't been to Sweden before were in for a surprise – the country is ravishing! Our 'Study Tour' had been planned imaginatively by Daniel Moore of Distant Horizons, Stuart Halsall and our academic guide, Nirvana Romell, with input from FOW Gwyneth Mitchell who originally had the idea.

Places were filled quickly and it was a huge stroke of luck that the inspiring, knowledgeable and tireless Nirvana is married to a Swede, so she knew the country from the inside. Within hours of arrival at our pretty and well-appointed hotel in the Gamla Stan district of Stockholm, we were sitting down to a delicious smorgasbord in the sumptuous surroundings of The Grand Hotel by the harbour. What a great start to a holiday! Over the next few days, we whizzed easily round the city on various modes of transport, seeing the majestic City Hall, the scholarly Nordiska Museum with dazzling Viking artefacts and the 17th warship Vasa, housed in a purpose-built 'hangar', which emphasised the awesome size of the vessel.

A characteristic of Whitworth tours is an expert local curator, which we had in every place we visited. Most Swedes speak good English, so language wasn't a problem. Nirvana was able to enlighten us with her customary wit and erudition on the quirks of the Swedish character and their traditions. At the National Museum she thrilled us with a talk on Rembrandt and Rubens which almost took flight. Our trip was blessed with perfect weather and the group were energetic and in excellent spirits. The next few days were spent on the island of Gotland, reached by a luxurious and spacious ferry. As with Stockholm, we stayed in the charming medieval district of Visby, on the gentle sea front with beautiful sunsets. A day of introduction to Gotland's countryside saw us beguiled by the laid-back, Cape Cod style of beach life, punctuated every so often with exquisitely restored medieval churches.

After time in Visby itself, where we heard a slightly different slant on Viking history, sampled the best of Scandinavian food and saw contemporary Swedish design in the seductive boutiques, our vacation had come to an end. All agreed it was one of the most successful 'Friends' trip and it whetted our appetite for more! There is a selection of photos from the holiday on the Friends of the Whitworth website, to give you more of a visual insight into our enlightening visit to a little known country.



A beautiful evening, Gotland.



Nirvana Romell with her group in Stockholm



17th Century warship Vasa



Dansen by Carl Eldh on Stadshusterrassen



Solbaten by Christian Berg

Why not take this once in a lifetime opportunity to really make a difference to the Whitworth ? All donations, large or small are welcome - please send cheques payable to the Friends of the Whitworth at the address below...

Chairman, Friends of the Whitworth, The Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M15 6ER.