

# friends' perspective



## A sprightly eighty year old!

Friends of the Whitworth celebrates its 80th birthday – see page 2

# A sprightly eighty year old

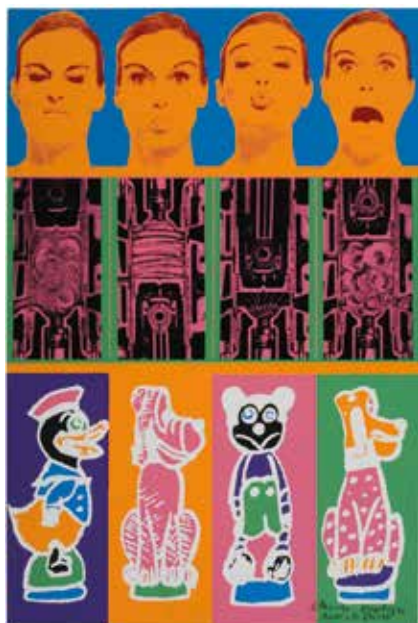
It's happy birthday this year to the Friends of the Whitworth – here, Rosemary Marsh puts us in the picture.

Most people hope to be in good order if they reach the age of eighty. The Friends have achieved this and more with our outstanding record of support for the gallery since 1933. It's time for congratulations and patting ourselves on our collective backs.

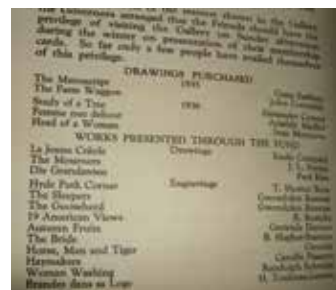
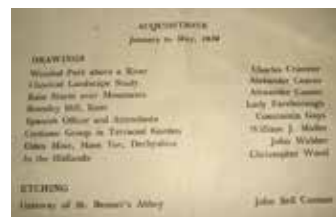
It all began when a Bolton businessman, Thomas Barlow invited interested people to a meeting at his house on 27th November 1933. Barlow was energetic, persuasive and charming and, as importantly, he knew everyone worth knowing in Manchester; he bought art compulsively, had a collection of early Italian paintings and reputedly, the best collection of Dürer prints in private hands. He was also a member of the Whitworth Art Gallery Committee along with his childhood friend, Margaret Pilkington. It is impossible to know now whose idea it was to start a Friends group but they were both acutely aware of the gallery's need for a purchasing fund so that the collection could be enlarged and refreshed. Sir Joseph Whitworth's bequest, although very generous, had by then diminished to the point where there was barely enough to keep the Whitworth open. The meeting must have gone well as by May 1934 there were seventy-eight subscribers to the new society including seven Professors, and the Director of the city Art Gallery and his wife.

The subscription was five shillings, but people were invited to contribute more if they felt able to do so. It was reported at a meeting in May that 'the response had been sufficiently encouraging to enable the Gallery to acquire eight drawings and one etching.' The list includes 'A Classical Landscape' and 'Rain Storm over Mountain' both by Alexander Cozens; 'Spanish Officer and Attendants' by Constantin Guys; 'Oden Mine, Mam Tor' by John Webber and 'In the Midlands' by Christopher Wood and an etching by John Sell Cotman. The following year two drawings were purchased: one by

Ossip Zadkine  
and the other by  
John Constable;  
in addition  
several drawings  
and engravings  
were given by  
members of the



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**Above: Acquisitions in 1934 and excerpts from the Institute records and minutes**

Friends. These included 'Die Gratulanten' by Paul Klee and prints by Gwen Raverat, Gertrude Hermes, H.Toulouse Lautrec, Orovida and Camille Pissarro. Most unusually of all perhaps was a small bronze by Ernest Barlach. In 1936 purchases included drawings by Alexander Cozens, Aristide Maillol and Ivan Mestrovic. By the

time of the, by now, annual meeting in May 1937 membership had risen to over one hundred but it was decided to save the available funds so that a larger sum would be available in 1938. When the time came, it was reported that nine drawings and three prints had been purchased with Friends' funds.

Again the list includes a fascinating mix of famous names: Edward Bawden, Pablo Picasso, Alfred Stevens, Ethel Walker, Robert Adam, J. White Abbott, Eric Gill, Francis Towne, Ernst Barlach, Max Leiber mann, Franz Marc and one now forgotten G. Bulteel Fisher. No purchases were made in 1939 or 1940 but it was suggested that 'interest in the society might be stimulated by visits to private collections or houses of historic or architectural note'. So the Friends were well on their way to success and after the war activities picked up. By 1948 over twenty subscriptions were paid by covenant and tax was reclaimed to add to the funds. Members were invited to exhibition openings and offered admission to the gallery on Sunday afternoons on production of their current membership card.

However, membership numbers remained modest until the modernisation of the gallery, in the early 1960s but then with a new Director and new modern spaces to display works, numbers increased and when Pat Prestwich became Honorary Secretary, the programme of events for members grew.



*View of West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire - John Piper, 1941. Copyright The Piper Estate.*

The rest, is as they say, history and the list of donations to the gallery would take up several more pages, enough to say that through generosity, hard work and fun we, The Friends of the Whitworth have added over a thousand works to the collection (including those pictured left and front cover) either purchasing works outright or contributing to their purchase.

Long may it continue!



# A Presidential Portrait

Here's a lovely recent portrait of our President, Lady Bromley-Davenport, painted by Marie-Claire Kerr. 'I enjoyed the experience of being a sitter. As an artist,' explained Lizzie Bromley-Davenport, 'I am more used to being the painter than the painted.'

The portraits (there is also one of Sir William Bromley-Davenport) hang as a pair in the stairwell of Capesthorpe Hall, against bright yellow walls. We very much like the contemporary feel and abstract background.'

Marie-Claire Kerr of Melbourne Hall, Derbyshire specialises in portrait commissions, but also creates flower paintings, landscapes and still life.



## Anyone for Afternoon Tea?

Don't miss the new tea room at the Gallery of Costume, Platt Hall, Wilmslow Road, Rusholme. The café serves homemade cakes and fairtrade teas and coffee. Treat yourself and of course revel in six centuries of fashion in a lovely historic house.

It's run by the Modern Caterer – you know them from the Whitworth Café. Opening hours are Mon-Fri 1-5, Sat. and Sun. 10-5. Find out more at [www.manchestergalleries.org](http://www.manchestergalleries.org)



# Winter trip to London

Friends lapped up culture and sights on their recent regular winter trip – this was a few days in London.

Right: Friends in Conservatory, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew before Cork Spire by sculptor David Nash (photo. Adèle Jennison)

Below right: Iron Dome by David Nash (photo. Adèle Jennison)

Below left: De Morgan Centre (photo. Joan Gem)



## Pilkington Lecture 2013

Looking to the next Pilkington lecture – Sir Roy Strong, who as they say, needs no introduction is our speaker.

The former director of the Victoria and Albert Museum and prominent garden historian will be with us in November.

# The Vision begins...

Nicola Walker, Head of Collection Care and Client Coordinator for the Gallery's Capital Development Project gives us an update now that contractors are on site.

After many years of developing a vision; consultation with stakeholders, including our many audiences, locally, nationally and internationally, the University, staff, and of course the Friends of the Whitworth; appointing our architects and design team, as previously reported in 'Friends' perspective'; and working closely as a Gallery with the University, the City Council Planning Department, many expert consultants and our funders, in particularly the Heritage Lottery Fund, we came through the development stages of our capital project with a wonderful scheme that will transform the Whitworth as we know it and take the Gallery firmly into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As a reminder, the new build element of MUMA's design provides an 'H' shaped addition to the Gallery, wrapping around the western end of the present building, extending into Whitworth Park and enclosing an Art Garden that will feature newly acquired sculpture and commissioned art works. A new entrance from the park will bring visitors into direct contact with the Gallery's collections through a series of spaces – Clore Learning Studio, Collections Access Area and Study Centre - designed to engage, challenge and inspire. A new Grand Staircase (as well as a large lift – big enough for a whole school group) will lead visitors up to the Promenade, galleries and a wonderful enlarged café, all with views across Whitworth Park that will be the envy of museums and galleries across the UK.

The exhibition spaces will be increased – bringing the old lecture theatre back into reuse as a gallery adjacent to the two existing temporary exhibition galleries, and a magnificent new Landscape Gallery will be built to the north west - allowing the Gallery to continue with its ambitious exhibitions programme, and new opportunities to display its internationally recognized collections of works on paper, textiles and wallpapers. Not content with giving us such a beautiful new building, MUMA have carefully and cleverly interrogated the operational needs of the Gallery, and rationalized many back-of-house spaces – collections storage will be brought together, as will conservation and technical facilities (and all on a level with the loading bay and within easy access to the large lift); a new staff entrance, staffroom and café kitchen have been planned to keep food and art as separate as possible, and across the project, an enlarged shop at the front of the Gallery and improved office accommodation, meeting rooms and toilet facilities will make visitors, staff and, I hope, our Friends happy!

Finally, the project will open up areas of the building currently hidden from public view and smothered by 1970s partitioning, to reveal our magnificent staircases and Grand Hall with its hammer-beam ceiling; a new lift will provide access to this part of the Whitworth for the first time and a much needed and highly desirable function room and lecture space. An important feature of the project has from the start been a commitment to green technologies and sustainability. The project is on track to meet BREEAM 'Excellent', and will incorporate a number of green features.

These include ground source heat pumps beneath the Art Garden, a Bio-diverse roof and photovoltaic panels on the roof. Removing our existing air-conditioning and moving to passive environmental control, making use of the thermal buffering capacity of the new building to protect our exhibition galleries and storage rooms, and introducing

natural ventilation and more, but controlled, daylight into the building will all help reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. Further information about this aspect of the project is explained in the presentation currently on view in the Gallery Foyer.

During the latter part of 2012, the University appointed ISG as the project contractors and many of you will already have literally felt their presence on site. ISG have now set up their compound in the Gallery car park, erected hoardings around the park side of the building and created a site entrance off Denmark Road. The first part of the construction phase is to dig out the floor of the undercroft to the temporary exhibition galleries and old lecture theatre (an area known to staff as the Lion's Den) and to start on the foundations for the new building. As soon as staff returned to work in the New Year, we were met with a slight increase in noise levels and somewhat alarming vibrations as piling got underway. Such activity at close proximity to a Gallery frequently known and loved for its calm, reflective atmosphere is a new experience and one that we intend to approach in a positive light – no disruption equals no new building! ISG are supporting us to continue with our exhibition programme, to understand the nature of the Gallery's business, and to join us in engaging with our local community and wider audiences; between us we will do our best to retain quiet in the Gallery for specific events; and as a Gallery we are finding ourselves more excited by the day as our new building unfolds around us.

Myself, and Dean Whiteside, House Services Manager, are meeting with the ISG Liaison Manager on a weekly basis, and in contact as necessary at other times. New information about the progress of the capital development project is being posted on a regular basis on the blog: <http://capitaldevelopmentwhitworth.wordpress.com/>





# Highlights of Macedonia

Helen Fowell brings you her insights on a Friends' trip...

This was my first overseas study tour with the FOW and Gill very kindly asked me to share my experiences of Thessaloniki. On arrival my first impression was of a modern working port. Soon, however, we were up by the ramparts at the heart of the city and starting the process of uncovering Thessaloniki's past, guided by our scholar, Dr John Karavas, a professor of ancient history who has an extensive knowledge of the modern history, art and culture of the region.

Thessaloniki was a crossroads for several ancient civilisations. The Via Egnatia, still a main thoroughfare, was the major trade route linking Rome with Constantinople and the empires of the east. This was a city in which Christians, Muslims and Jews co-existed for centuries, each group having its own impact on the art and architecture of the metropolis. We started at the heart of the classical city, with a tour of the ancient agora. Then we visited the Rotunda, founded as a Roman temple, then a Christian basilica, latterly a mosque, finally re-consecrated as an orthodox church. The sole surviving minaret in the city is found in the grounds alongside Islamic carvings and Jewish gravestones.

After lunch we visited the archaeological museum and gazed at the magnificent treasures, testimony to Macedonia's rich natural resources. The ancient inhabitants displayed their wealth in the form of exquisitely crafted golden jewellery, the less well off making do with gilded imitations. Burial jewellery was particularly spectacular; shrouds decorated with gold leaf and beautiful head wreaths made of multiple leaves of beaten gold. We explored Thessaloniki's Byzantine past with a look at three historic basilicas including that of the patron saint, St Demetrius, all very different in decoration and mood. One unexpected treat when John took us up among the rooftops to visit Osios David, a tiny C4th chapel containing a beautiful mosaic of Christ

and the evangelists, so ancient that Christ is depicted as a smooth chinned youth. We took dinner overlooking the Thermaic gulf, with views of Mount Olympus in the distance. We also visited the Byzantine museum with its collection of tombs, funeral stele and ancient icons. A trip up the famous white tower gave panoramic views of the city. We also toured the Jewish quarter and markets including the beautiful Besesteni, an Ottoman 15<sup>th</sup> century brick-built market, still in use today. A stall holder beckoned us up a hidden staircase so we could wander the roof space. The Salonians are clearly proud of their heritage.

Later in the week there was a change of scene when we went for a refreshing boat trip around Mount Athos. The two final days were spent in the foothills of Mount Olympus, allowing us to explore the ancient city of Pella, once the capital of Macedonia under Philip II. The nearby town of Vergina contained for me what was the highlight of the trip, a visit to the beautiful and atmospheric museum built around the necropolis containing the remains and funeral goods of Philip II and three other nobles. Grave goods were of amazing quality, and included Philip's armour and a spectacular crown of oak leaves fashioned in gold. We even visited the grotto where Alexander the Great was tutored by Aristotle.

This was an unforgettable trip thanks to the pre-visit study day by Birgitta Hoffman and the extensive pre-planning done before the trip by Daniel Moore of Distant Horizons with Stuart Halsall. Co-ordination of planes, hotels, transport and visits was flawless. I would certainly recommend future tours and felt this was excellent value for money. And many thanks for the kindness and friendliness of my fellow travellers particularly as I was alone, and the hospitality of the Greek people.



The Rotunda



Helen is serenaded!



A protest march in Thessaloniki



The effects of earthquake



The forum on Via Egnatia



Dr John Karavas and attentive audience

# An outsider looks in!

Corrinne Lawrence, a first-time visitor writes...

How often, like me, have you enthused wildly over the cultural experiences of foreign holidays, yet ignored local gems? A Manchester resident for most of my sixty-seven years, I recently visited the Whitworth Gallery for the first time with my WEA Creative Writing class to see the acclaimed 'Hockney to Hogarth' exhibition.

I looked forward to being introduced to fresh visual stimuli to excite new thoughts and ideas, and was not disappointed. The current collection proved to be a rich source of inspiration! The traditional entrance hall, naturally lit

from an impressive dome, is spacious yet intimate - a splendid place in which to sit and discuss the collections with a friend, or enjoy refreshments from the excellent cafe. Visible from the entrance hall, the first exhibit is an arresting sculpture of wooden rulers exploring man's fascination with measurement. The subtle lighting of this first area has a sense of theatre that effectively transports the visitor to the Gallery's worlds of textiles, painting, photography and sculpture, and contrasts in lighting throughout the gallery emphasized the individuality of the different exhibitions. With plenty of space to stand back and view exhibits, the overall impression is one of contemporary elegance.

Contributing to a relaxed, yet vibrant atmosphere, the unobtrusive Whitworth guides are friendly and unpretentious. Willing to share ideas when prompted, they possess a wealth of knowledge appropriate for either the novice or the connoisseur. Although the David Hockney exhibition was the main focus of our visit, there was much else of



Carmen Walton, creative writing tutor with Corrinne

interest. This included a collection of African fabrics – displayed, quite rightly, as discrete works of art. Particularly fascinating, too, was a wall-hanging of hand embroidered red roses, some with the needle still inserted as though in mid-stitch, and trailing long lengths of silk.

Its floor-level counterpart was a digitally constructed display of the same pattern, complete with the movement and sound of a sewing machine. So, from my delightful first visit, and from reading 'friends' perspective' and the gallery's interesting programme of events, I concluded that the Gallery loves its public, and skillfully feeds its interests. I, for one, will be visiting again very soon!

*(Ed's comment – and just wait Corinne until you see the new build!)*



The Creative Writers

# An enthralling talk

Shirley Nicholson is a Friend of the Whitworth. She married Jake Nicholson, son of Winifred and Ben and so she came to the gallery to give a talk on her illustrious family. A rapt audience filled the South Gallery – hope you were there! Shirley has also just edited a book, about which another Friend and stalwart of the 'Tuesday team' Gwynneth Littleton has written a brief review:

"It is exciting when one of our members gives a talk and in Shirley's case to also be able to mention a lovely book that she has recently edited. Her father's sister was a Milk Lady during the Second World War in the stunning surroundings of the New Forest. She wrote a vivid diary, and managed as an artist to make the occasional sketch or map. Amazingly she kept personal instructions 'could you please leave me an extra pint of milk today and tomorrow... Lieutenant Christopher is here on leave.'

She developed a delightful bond with her wayward pony Peter and is reunited with him at the end of the war when she has her own sixty acres of land in Dumfriesshire."



1927 Winifred and Jake by Ben Nicholson  
© Angela Verren Taunt. All Rights Reserved DACS 2013



The textile gallery has a wonderful rehanging - this of course caught Shirley Nicholson's eye



Shirley Nicholson and Gwynneth Littleton show a work by Ben Nicholson to a packed audience in the South Gallery

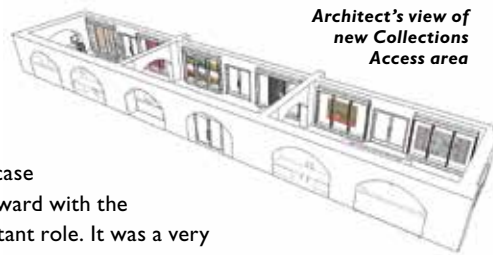


## A message from Kate...

Volunteer update from Kate Glynn

At the end of last year, we held our first meeting with the Friends of the Whitworth to discuss volunteer opportunities in the new Collections Showcase area and outline how best we can move forward with the development of the Volunteer Access Assistant role. It was a very useful session and we were really pleased so many Friends are keen to get involved and we were impressed with the group's enthusiasm and commitment to the new role.

We have decided that an effective way to move forward with those that are interested in this new role, will be to hold regular behind the scenes sessions which will provide opportunities to gain further insight into our collections and build knowledge in preparation for the launch of the new galleries in 2014. Thanks again to all those that attended and we are very much looking forward to working with you on the development of this role over the coming months. If you are interested in being a volunteer please contact:  
Kate.Glynn@manchester.ac.uk



Architect's view of  
new Collections  
Access area



David Morris, Head of Collections with  
volunteers in the soon to be transformed  
gallery basement

## 40 years of the RNCM

Mim Butler reports on a celebratory concert

There was a special concert at the Gallery to mark 40 years of the Royal Northern College of Music. It featured a trio of oboeists, called Les Trois Canards, who delighted the audience of some 120 people with a programme including Vivaldi, Purcell, Macmillan and Saunders.

The RNCM chose the Whitworth concert to feature as one of their 40 special events. These free concerts have been a feature of Sundays in the South Gallery for many years thanks to a generous bequest left by a Friend, Gina Miller. She was an enthusiastic art lover and supporter of the Whitworth.

Follow the Sunday concerts programme at the Gallery on the Friends' website. Details are also included in the regular mailings.



Photos, Richard Butler.

## Art, people and ideas

The adult programme offers you a rich variety of events...

The Whitworth Art Gallery's Adult Programme offers a diverse range of events and activities that bring art, people and ideas together, creating learning and social opportunities to explore our exhibitions and collections in new ways.

From social art and craft activities such as Crafternoon Tea to Serious About Art, weekend courses inspired by the themes or techniques of current exhibitions. After Hours promotes the gallery as a social space with interventions from musicians, artists, writers and performers throughout the evening. The Adult Programme also collaborates with organisations such as the WEA to offer more formal education opportunities for a wide range of audiences.

Aiming to be as exciting and innovative as possible the programme regularly changes, so to keep up to date visit the dedicated blog [www.whitworthadultprogramme.wordpress.com](http://www.whitworthadultprogramme.wordpress.com)

For further details contact Ed Watts, Adult Programme Coordinator;  
[Ed.Watts@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Ed.Watts@manchester.ac.uk)

## BAfM Annual Meeting 2013

The Friends of the Whitworth were founder members of the British Association of Friends of Museums (BAfM) way back in 1973 and since then we have gained useful contacts, information and advice and had a lot of fun in the process.

Their annual meeting is the opportunity to join in, take part and see different museums and galleries from the point of view of their Friends. This year the get-together is in Aberdeen (27,28,29 September,2013) hosted by the Friends of Aberdeen Art Galleries and Museums. All members of the Friends are welcome to join in – info at [www.bafm.org.uk](http://www.bafm.org.uk).

# Life in the Park

## An update from the Friends of Whitworth Park

Clumps of 100 oak, 80 beech and 40 silver birch saplings have been planted to thicken up the western boundary (where the lake was) next to the Academy High School. The plan is to underplant these with woodland edge plants, but before that country lane hedgerow flowers will go under the hedge planted in November.

A flagpole celebrating the Green Flag award stands proud in the centre circle – all offers of help in tending this lovely area happily taken! A cause for concern is that more than half the trees in the park are ash.

The Community Archaeology and History Project recommences this spring (after maternity leave) – a summer 'dig' will involve school pupils. Oxford Archaeology completed an excavation at the rear of the Gallery – an interesting feature was a stone sett courtyard and the layout of glasshouses and potting sheds.

To support the Friends of Whitworth Park with your money, your labour or preferably both contact [shones@altrincham.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:shones@altrincham.freeserve.co.uk) and chat with Ken.



Stone Sett courtyard



Ken Shone and his shoe 'find.'



The Green Flag Award in centre circle

## Spring and Summer at the gallery

As you'll see from the Gallery's Exhibitions and Events programme it's going to be a lively and interesting spring and summer, especially as the **Manchester International Festival** hits town... with exhilarating work from **Nikhil Chopra**. The gallery and artist will be engulfed by cotton, Chopra making connections between Mumbai and Manchester.

Look out for exhibitions on **Michael Landy**, **Beryl Korot** and what will be a fascinating combination of works on paper from the Whitworth collection of prints and watercolours by **William Blake**, **Anish Kapoor** and **JMW Turner** curated by Helen Stalker. The exhibition is Revolutionary Light.

There's also the last exhibition in the South Gallery before closing for building work. Between 1964 and 1968 architect **John Bickerdike** created a space to display large contemporary paintings – the display will show works created during this period.

It's the final year of the Whitworth as it has been since 1889 and we look forward to the next phase. Look out for a weekend of celebrations at the end of August.

Also look out for details of a **Gallery Gala Supper and Auction** this summer!

## Just for Friends

Nearly 200 Friends recently enjoyed an 'exclusive' private view of John Piper: The Mountains of Wales, Paintings and Drawings from a Private Collection. The raffle was also a big hit with prizes including lunch for two at the Gallery bistro,

lunch at Chancellor's, silk Rajasthani pictures and of course a bottle of champagne.

Thanks to Maria for deciding to have this special event for the Friends.

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.

Editor: Gill Crook. If you have any ideas for friends' perspective I would be pleased to hear from you. Contact me at [fow@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:fow@manchester.ac.uk)