

TYNE & WEAR
museums

Annual Report 2008/09

Supporting Information

Friends & Associates

Friends of the Shipley Art Gallery

During 2008/9 the Friends re-affirmed their support for the Gallery both practically through support for new acquisitions and equipment, and constitutionally through a revised Constitution. An increase in subscriptions agreed at the AGM 09 brought us more into line with equivalent Friends' organisations. The programme continues to be a full and diverse one, and close working with the Shipley Art Gallery Curator and staff, and Gateshead Council's Public Art Curator is resulting in a more cohesive and relevant programme for the members. Collaboration with the Friends of the Hatton through activities will increase the number of people attending some events for mutual benefit, for example the Yorkshire Sculpture Park visit in August 09. Highlights of 2008/9 included Public Sculpture Walks with Anna Pepperall, John Grundy's talk on the region's unrivalled heritage, and the talks on craft from speakers such as Felicity Aylieff. The acquisition of a huge pot from Felicity's exhibition for the permanent collection with assistance from the Friends makes an important statement about the commitment of the Friends to the development of the collection. In this context the Friends look forward to being associated with the Henry Rothschild Study Centre being established at the Shipley this year.

Associates of Discovery Museum

The outgoing Chairman Dr John Grant handed over the reins to Professor Kel Fidler FREng, formerly of Northumbria University. Full thanks to Dr John Grant for all his hard work. Keen to take on the challenge, Professor Fidler - with assistance from the President Malcolm Kennedy - arranged a series of meetings to look at new directions for the Associates. The outcome with all in agreement is to focus on raising the public's awareness of engineering in modern society. This will be done through events, lectures and hopefully an engineering heritage trail. The first event to benefit from the new focus will be the annual Northumberland Young Designer and Technologist Competition. This is organised jointly with the Rotary Club of Hexham. Prof Fidler has secured a three year funding commitment from Northumbria University. The Associates have also continued to help the Discovery learning team with the delivery of science activities including the annual *Science Works* event.

Friends of the Laing Art Gallery (FLAG)

FLAG has had a successful year. It continues to grow, and enjoys a lively programme. Supper lectures have proved popular, and we have appreciated stimulating talks from both Gallery staff and outside visitors.

A wide variety of visits have been made, to exhibitions elsewhere, and to country houses. Holidays, in the Portsmouth area, and in September to Normandy, maintained the high standard established in previous years.

Within the Gallery, recruitment to the Welcome Desk has meant that on most days there is now a volunteer available for much of the day to support Gallery staff. A significant innovation this year has been the *Picture of the Month* venture, as part of the Saturday morning tours of the Gallery by FLAG guides. This benefited from excellent advance publicity by the Gallery and the Marketing Department of Tyne & Wear Museums, and has led to increased visitor numbers, and recruitment and donations to the Friends.

FLAG continues to support the Gallery financially in a number of ways. Contributions have been made towards a number of purchases, including Chinese paintings after the exhibition of experimental Chinese ink painting. It remains the case, however, that one of the most significant

roles of the Friends continues to be support for the setting up of new exhibitions, and for the conservation of works prior to display. Money was provided for the Stanley Spencer exhibition and the Hemy brothers exhibition. Grants were made for conservation of a number of works for the *Seasons* exhibition, the *Country Delights* exhibition, *Ships, Sailors and Steam Trains*, and the *Journeys and Quests* exhibition. FLAG has been described as one of the most active and successful Friends organisations in the country.

All those members who play an active role in running the Friends appreciate the close liaison which exists with the Curatorial team, which contributes to a mutually rewarding relationship. FLAG looks forward with enthusiasm to the new challenges of the Tate Partnership, and the development of the *Creative Spirit* Gallery.

Friends of Segedunum

We have had another successful year - membership continues to rise and attendance at our programme of talks is very healthy - averaging around 20. This year we tried to ensure that speakers' topics link more closely with activities at Segedunum so we arranged a talk from Professor John Derry on Hadrian during the display of Hadrian's bust at the Museum. We are also looking at holding events away from Segedunum during next year's programme so we expect we will report on the success of this venture next year. Thanks once again to the committee for its hard work and enthusiasm.

North Tyneside Steam Railway Association

The North Tyneside Steam Railway Association (NTSRA) continues to support the Stephenson Railway Museum both in workshop duties and in running the railway.

In 2008 trains were suspended until the works on the Coast Road Bridge were completed. The works were completed in time for Santa Specials in December. Santa Specials is always a popular event with approx 100 passengers on each train over three weekends, Saturdays and Sundays with four trains per day. Train crews start at 7am to prepare locos and clean carriages and run the

service until about 16:30 when all of the stock and locos are marshalled into the yard and the shed, a long but enjoyable and rewarding day.

Technical problems with loco 401 "Thomas Burt MP" has meant that it has been off the rails this year and will be for some time to come, much to the disappointment of the NTSRA however a plan for its repair is being developed. In the meantime an ambitious plan to reconstruct loco Ashington No 5 "Jackie Milburn" has been developed to get it running again when its refurbished boiler returns to us in September this year. Volunteers and staff will be working on it full time when the boiler returns.

A very proud event for the volunteers was the winning of the Volunteers Group of the Year Award presented by the Regional Museums Hub. All of the volunteers were very pleased to have been nominated by the Museum's manager and of course to win the award. In addition TWM funded a trip to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway in North Yorkshire and what a successful day it was with a trip on the train from Grosmont to Pickering and return and visits to their motive power and carriage sheds.

We look forward to continue to support the Stephenson Railway Museum and TWM in the future.

Friends of South Shields Museum & Arbeia Roman Fort

The Friends' programme of talks has again covered a wide variety of subjects ranging from the Shetland Islands, to the Medieval history of Bede, to Laygate in bygone days. Some of the talks were directly related to the Museum exhibitions, particularly the major Greek display, while Erasmus Bottle yet again gave his own particular slant on history.

All told the Friends have had a very successful year of talks, most being very well attended. Summer 2008 also saw the Friends sponsor a new event at Arbeia, a Summer flower festival which provided a riot of colour and earned rave reviews from all who attended. A very successful innovation which we hope to sponsor again in 2009.

2008 also saw the Friends contribute towards the cost of producing the Public Catalogue Foundation catalogue of all of the oil paintings held by Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

In May the Friends were represented at the Museum's Local History Fair, while the Christmas Fair continues to provide a very successful fundraising opportunity.

Friends of Sunderland Museums (FOSUMS)

FOSUMS made donations totalling £2500 during 2008. £500 was for 'Looking at Lowry, £1000 towards the cost of the Tyne and Wear Public Catalogue Foundation, and £1000 towards the Boom Town and Success and Scandal exhibitions. As well as our regular monthly meetings we held a Fun Day in the Museum in the October holidays, and another in Monkwearmouth Station Museum in the Easter holidays. As well as providing fun for those who participate, we hope these Fun Days will raise awareness of the Museum and the Friends Group and help our fundraising. It is intended to hold them regularly.

We also had two successful outings, a summer visit to Beninbrough Hall and a November visit to York. FOSUMS had a stand at the South Shields Local History Fair in May and another in June at the big local history fair in the Seaburn Centre.

Doxford Engine Friends' Association

The Association continues to flourish, with membership increasing to a record 185. Our reach is now truly global, for we are in regular correspondence with members in Belgium, Canada and the USA, New Zealand and Australia. We have been able to bring people together who lost touch many years ago, truly making a difference to their lives.

The Doxford engine preserved at the Regional Museums Store (RMS) continues to benefit from the attention given by members, and over 450 hours' voluntary work was committed during the year. One of our key objectives is to enable people to understand and appreciate the engine. We have helped with visits and tours at the RMS, and we welcomed hundreds of people to our stand at the Sunderland History Fair.

To expand our knowledge of maritime history we have journeyed to Cheshire, to see the Anson Engine Museum and the Anderton Boat Lift, and to the South West of England for visits to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and to explore the maritime history of Weymouth and Portland.

Friends of the Hatton Gallery

The friends group with a membership of c.220 throughout 2008 successfully met its principle aims of fostering friendship through artistic endeavour and education as well as raising funds for the Gallery. On three occasions per month an art group open to members meets, usually led by the Gallery learning officer, Hazel Barron Cooper, and the annual drawing/painting week in Raasay went well, an illustrated account being part of the lecture series run along side the Gallery's own lecture series. Other lectures included an account of the 'Aesthetics of Photography' (Ian Ground), John Tenniel 'The man who showed us Wonderland' (Andy Collins) and 'Conserving art works' (Rachael Metcalf).

In addition, a print workshop preceded the Annual Open Exhibition - the major fundraising event. This was held from November through to early January and 170 works were selected from around 280 submitted by 84 artists. Funds have been given to support the Gallery's project that uses art to re-engage disaffected young people.