

## Foxlowe Arts Centre Co-Ordinators

All co-ordinators are volunteers who give their time, a great deal of their time, to co-ordinating all aspects falling within their remit. Each has at least several volunteers helping with the work and they are always delighted to welcome new volunteers to their team.

If you would like to know the kind of tasks which are undertaken with a view to thinking more about volunteering do feel free to 'phone the relevant co-ordinator.

**Building Maintenance**  
Cliff Deighton  
07789 362179

**Exhibitions**  
Erica Brook  
01538 528178

**Films**  
Maureen Wiskin  
01538 385799

**Grounds**  
Alison MacRae  
07753 172564

**Music**  
Andy Norton  
07974 063674

**Talks**  
Derek Tatton  
01538 528178

**Volunteers**  
Marion Fenton  
07938 226469

**Employed Staff**  
**Catering & Events**  
**Manager**  
Vicki Heath  
07926929666  
01538386112  
**Assistant**  
Ruth Hart  
**Chef**  
Robert Davies  
**Assistant**  
Angie Buckley

## Foxlowe Haven

ERICA BROOK

We continue to learn the horrors of the First World War through the centennial anniversary, so the exhibition now being held in the Foxlowe Arts Centre Heritage Room offers respite in giving us a glimpse into another life and time of this old house which proved a haven to many soldiers recovering from wounds inflicted through war when it became a Convalescent Home, one of 3,000 throughout the country, founded by the Order



of St John of Jerusalem, and the British Red Cross.

The Leek and District Historical Society must be commended for providing this heartening exhibition which identifies so many Leek people who in many different ways were united in their concern to support the Foxlowe as a healing convalescent home.

The photographs and accounts give a rich glimpse into an enterprise, run both professionally and voluntarily, which would not have survived without the generous input from the people of Leek.

Today whilst being reminded of the horrors of 'the war to end all wars', we can reflect on our privileged position of establishing Foxlowe as an Arts Centre, a different kind of haven in the same old building, where we can learn from the *good* lessons of the past.

The Collection Box in the Hall, which was made and placed in position late December 2014 by volunteer Cliff Deighton, had by mid-April raised £139.28p.

If our appeal for all Foxlowe visitors to simply put £1 in the Collection Box as they leave the Centre, then during the year we could raise at least an additional £20,000!

What a HUGE difference that would make.

Derek Tatton



## Foxlowe TALKS

DEREK TATTON  
Talks programmer

*The lecturers 'gift' their talks to the Foxlowe, for which we thank them. Admission is free, with a Bucket Collection for the Foxlowe funds, for which we also thank you.*

**Useful and Beautiful - Architectural Metalwork in Leek**  
Wednesday 20th May 7pm

**DR CHRISTOPHER WAKELING**

A WALK and TALK event starting from the Foxlowe with the theme, from boot-scrappers to lamps, and from railings to rooftops, exploring the utility and beauty of iron, copper and lead

**Culture is Ordinary**

Wednesday 17th June 7.30pm

**DR DEREK TATTON**

Talk and discussion based on the work of Raymond Williams, who was one of Britain's foremost 20<sup>th</sup> century writers on Culture and Society. No Talk planned for August.

**We Are Not Defeated**

Wednesday 15th July 2015 7.30pm

**BRIDGET BELL and BRENDA PROCTOR**

Bridget and Brenda were two of the leaders of the North Staffs Miners' Wives' Support Group (NSMWG) which emerged during the 1984-85 national miners strike to save the pits and jobs. They will give a talk and lead a discussion after showing an extract from the film, *We Are Not Defeated*, produced by the NSMW Action Group, revealing the emergence of Women Against Pit Closures as a political force.

## Who Remembers WILLIAM MORRIS in Leek?



William Morris stayed with Thomas and Elizabeth Wardle at their home 62 St Edward Street for several weeks in 1873, 1874 and 1875. That was the period when Morris was researching the production of natural dyes, an interest shared by Wardle.

*William Morris: self portrait*

**Our appeal in the last issue of ST13 for personal recollections, anecdotes, quotes, pictures, associated with Morris prompted Janet Broome to recall her indignation when the Post Office announced in 1996: "The view of the committee that makes the decision was that William Morris was not of sufficient stature."**

So, the centenary of Morris' death failed to make the grade amidst the eight issues of Specials that year that embraced Tunnicliffe bird painting marking the golden jubilee of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, 100 years of going to the pictures, Cartoons, Football Legends (minus the greatest of them all, Sir Stanley) and Big Stars of the Small Screen.

The latter issue prompted outrage in the Commons. Labour MP Robin Corbett declared: "I think it is astonishing these pygmies can elevate the contribution Muffin the Mule has made to our history above that of an inspired visionary like William Morris."

George Foulkes, who later became Labour's minister for International Development added: "This is unbelievable. It is just a completely ridiculous set of priorities and a huge insult."

In his double eleven inch column comment in the Telegraph at the time, the current Guardian arts critic, Nicholas Lezard observed that "wallpaper" was all that Morris meant to a group of working artists. The Post Office perpetuated that image, marking the 150th anniversary of the founding of Morris & Co in 2011 with Morris *Cray* fabric design, two De Morgan tile designs and designs by Philip Webb and Edward Burne Jones.

## Foxlowe Fashion Show

On March 19<sup>th</sup> the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Foxlowe Fashion Show took place. It was a great success and the function room was filled to capacity. With constant laughter, clapping and cheering the evening was not just a night of fun and great fashions, but it also conveyed the important message that it is possible to buy ethically sourced clothes locally. The fashion show links in with local business woman, Carrie Somer's worldwide Fashion Revolution day, which is held on April 24<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh, when 1,113 clothes factory workers were killed and 2,500 were injured.

The show was opened by trustee, Colin Broome and then the packed audience were treated to Leek's Art College students proudly presenting their amazing and unique up-cycled 'Wrapped in Culture' designs. What a fantastic confidence booster it must have been for those young people to hear the rapturous applause of the audience as they walked up and down the cat walk displaying their own creations.

Following the students were local companies, Gaddam and Gaddam, Holly Crow, Melissa Claire, Wardrobe, Huggett, Equatorial and Pachacuti. Each company owner gave a fascinating and insightful introduction to their business and products. The variety of styles were amazing and there was something for everyone. The models, male, female, adults and children did the designers proud and strutted down the catwalk with confidence and a great sense of fun.

This year we had stalls in the bar and people were able to buy the clothes that were viewed on the catwalk during the evening, home made jewellery by Aphrodite, and even enjoy a facial with organic products courtesy of Tropic Skin Care.

While the audience were having such a fabulous time, behind the scenes volunteers worked tirelessly to ensure everything went smoothly, and a big thank you goes out to the organisers, catwalk builders, models, dressers, back stage helpers, front of house, bar staff and caterers for their work, energy, ideas and enthusiasm, to everyone who donated raffle prizes and the ladies who ran the raffle, Leek Art College, the choreography, music and lighting team, the events'



Cycle-friendly planters were installed on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March.

The Foxlowe cafe is a popular refuelling stop for cyclists coming through Leek and now the centre can offer attractive and secure cycle parking with the provision of four specially

## Cycle-Friendly Foxlowe

designed PlantLock planters that have robust rails to which bicycles can be locked.

Two have been installed at the front of the building and two on the rear terrace. There will be space for one or two bicycles on each planter at the front of the building and up to three on each at the rear.

The funding for these has come from the Peak Park Cycling Friendly Places Fund to provide cycle parking in Leek, which comes in good time for the planned opening of a signed cycle route from Stockton Brook to Leek, via the Caldon canal, which

is likely to bring more cyclists into the town.

Foxlowe garden coordinator, Alison Macrae said: "We are delighted that this grant from the Peak Park has allowed us not only to provide facilities for the increasing number of cyclists visiting Leek, but also to enhance the Foxlowe by the provision of planters. These will have heather plants at the front of the building in recognition of the funding from the Peak Park and strawberries on the terrace in line with our policy of having as many edible plants as possible in the garden. We hope our visitors will enjoy eating them along with tea and cake in the summer."

## From Inspiration to Synthesis

ERICA BROOK

*Perceives that all three artists acknowledge reverberations from each other in an ever increasing circle of creativity.*

Many visitors to the exhibition in January, *Diversity and Complexity*, may already have seen some of Dionne Swift's landscape paintings, where her response to rural bleakness which has its own stark beauty, invites one into its open spaces of land water and sky.

These few pictures were a trailer for the current exhibition *From Inspiration to Synthesis – paintings, pots and rugs*, in which Dionne's paintings are accompanied by the ceramic work of Tone von Krogh and rugs created by Andrew Warburton.

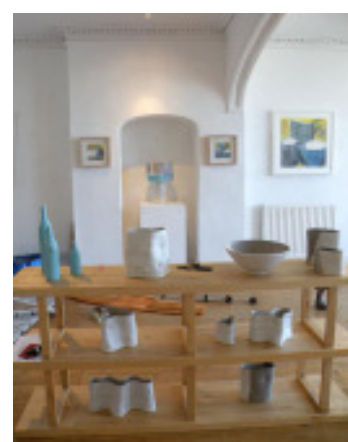
Dionne's work, with its tightly limited palette, engages with land and sky, blocks of strong colours, 'stitched' together by line, evoking her response to bleak empty landscape and its own testing beauty. The added interest in the exhibition is seeing these paintings placed with the work of her colleagues, with obvious signs of similarities in their different media.



Photograph: *Lifeworks* exhibition

photographers and video maker. Everyone worked so hard in their own time to ensure the evening was another huge success for both the Foxlowe, the local community and the global community alike.

An incredible £829 was raised and donated to the Foxlowe to ensure this great community enterprise continues to provide an Arts Centre for the town. The Fashion show is now established as an annual event and will continue to run in conjunction with The Fashion Revolution Day in April. Anyone wishing to take part in next years event can contact the Foxlowe for details.



Tone's work, with indications in colour and seeming simplicity of design, hinting at her Norwegian roots, are clear uncluttered ceramics inviting a response to their own visual tranquillity, gentle pale colours and pleasing unforced shapes.

Andrew's design and colour, texture, and line, created in his rugs, add a further dimension in influences from Dionne's work, whilst all three acknowledge reverberations from each other in an ever increasing circle of creativity.

A footnote is added in the textile wall hanging to be seen in the William Morris Room by Andrew, not one to be placed within the Gallery exhibition, but too strong and interesting to be missed.

Making William Morris connections are not hard when we recognise the skill and application of hand and mind in making this piece, with its 21<sup>st</sup> century message.

Although this is an exhibition where pieces could be readily seen placed in a home environment, it is also an invitation to engage with a way of seeing with each of these three talented and skilled individuals delivering their own very personal message.

**The exhibition runs from Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April until Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May.**

**The Gallery is open from 10am until 4pm Wednesday to Saturday, and 11am to 4pm on Sundays.**

**REMINDER**  
for Pledgers, Volunteers and Supporters  
General meeting Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2015  
7.30pm.