

Volunteer Profile

Volunteers are the backbone of our community-run venue – and here we focus on one of many volunteers who put in hours upon hours of their spare time to help make what the Foxlowe Arts Centre is today.



Andy (right) with comedian Phill Jupitus.



Andy introducing the comedy night.

Andy Norton is not only a pro-active trustee of the Foxlowe Arts Centre, he is also our very hard-working music and comedy co-ordinator who organises and instigates our ever-growing varied programme of gigs and has brought some big name acts to the the Foxlowe stage along the way. The father-of-three, who is married to Julie and lives in Leek, has volunteered at the Foxlowe Arts Centre since the very beginning. He began by helping to paint the hallway and cafe before its opening in December 2011.

He said of why he started to volunteer at the Foxlowe: "It seemed a great idea. It has also been a tough challenge, but I like a challenge!

"I started helping with painting and then set up the bar and also helped with the health and safety in the kitchen.

"I then began to liaise with the town's comedy club and arts festival committee to bring them both to the Foxlowe after the former Swan pub closed.

"I am also part of the Situation, which brings new live music to the Foxlowe."

Andy became a Foxlowe Trustee four years ago. He said: "I had a hand in lots of management stuff at the Foxlowe anyway, so it seemed the obvious thing to do in becoming a Trustee.

"It is brilliant being a trustee, although hard work with loads more to do."

As for why he continues to plough so much time and energy into the Foxlowe, Andy said: "The Foxlowe is important for Leek and the Moorlands – now and for the future.

"The volunteers and staff are amazing. We have volunteers that clean out toilets, do the garden, wash dishes, chop vegetables and so much more – we just couldn't run the Foxlowe without them.

Andy said it's been great to be on the Foxlowe journey and that there's been so many 'best bits'. He said: "It's great to be part of a fast growing charity for Leek and Moorlands; a charity that provides lots of fun, laughs, and wows; a charity that has big plans and which now has a building in equity with a very short mortgage."

As for aspirations for the future of the Foxlowe, Andy added: "It would be great to get even more people involved and also have a greater expanse in our programme of all events.

"I would like to help protect the brilliant job we have done so far, slowly upgrade our facilities, and conserve the fab building we have here in the centre of our town."

Andy is on the look out for volunteers to help further build the programme of music and theatre events at the Foxlowe Arts Centre.

He said: "If you want to get involved in running an event, maybe bring a star to Leek, or perhaps would like to gain experience in sound, lighting, bar work or event promotion and marketing then please email me at andysmorgen@yahoo.co.uk."

So once again, we have found out why our volunteers do what they do for the Foxlowe Arts Centre! Thank you again to each and every one of you – you are what make the Foxlowe tick - every second of every day!



All that unites us

Our community-run arts centre will be the venue for a celebratory event as part of the nationwide Great Get Together in memory of the late Jo Cox.

Many events are set to take place across the country on Sunday June 24 in memory of the late MP.

And for Leek, the Peace Through Folk organisation has a day of celebration lined up for their Great Get Together, which they will be hosting in the garden and inside the Foxlowe Arts Centre in Leek.

The garden party and picnic is set to "celebrate all that unites us" with Folk, Blues, Americana and classical music and song – along with creative artists and fun.

Running from midday through to 10.30pm, it will be free admission although a donation of an 'in date' packaged or canned item of food would be much appreciated for Leek Food Bank.

Any singer, musician, band, choir or creative artist who would like to be involved in Leek's Great Get Together at the Foxlowe can call Malcolm Hawksworth on 07805 529492.

Kind donations from afar

Here at the Foxlowe Arts Centre we are always extremely grateful to receive donations which help us in the running of this much-needed community arts centre for Leek and surrounding areas.

One recent donation has come from as far as Canada. The generous funds were sent over by Honor Nivin, who lives in Toronto and has family connections with the Foxlowe.

Honor kindly made the donation in memory of her friend Jean Botham, of Leek, who sadly passed away late last year.

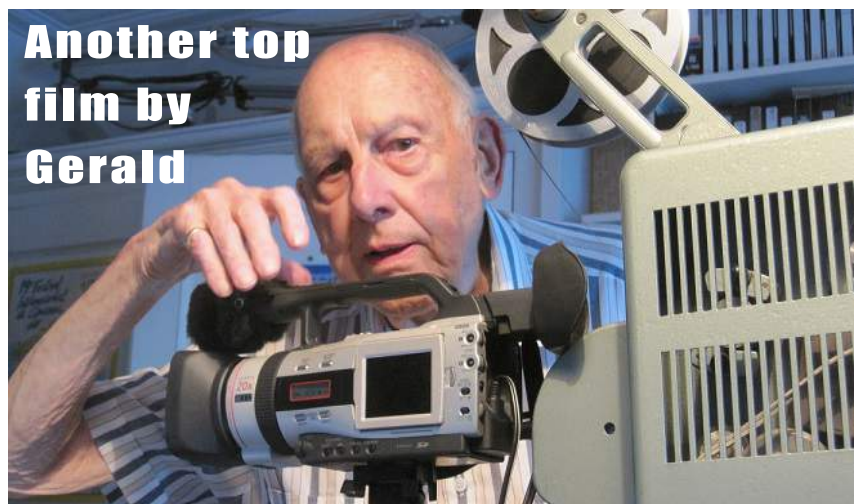
Honor explained: "Jean, and her twin sister Norma, helped me many years ago to visit Foxlowe, as it is connected to my late father's family, Cruso.

"My paternal grandmother in Canada was born Florence Cruso and she used to visit her family in England often.

"My late father was named Fielden Cruso Nivin, who also left some funds and some old Cruso books to the Foxlowe."

Thank you again Honor for your generous donation – and thank you to all who have donated, pledged, volunteered, and supported the Foxlowe Arts Centre!

Another top film by Gerald



The latest film made by a much-loved Moorlands film-maker is available to purchase at the Foxlowe Arts Centre.

Gerald Mee has been recording events and activities in and around his home-town of Leek for over seven decades. Gerald's latest creation is a conservation DVD which has been launched by the Leek & District Civic Society.

'Looking Out For Leek', which has been scripted by Trevor Siggers and narrated by Ray Johnson, centres on Leek's conservation areas and developments in the last few years and is a most interesting snapshot of our local history. Copies of the DVD can be purchased for £8 from the Foxlowe Gallery.

Gallery Views



The current exhibition at the Foxlowe Arts Centre is a solo first for a former Staffordshire Moorlands artist.

Textile Tectonics is being presented in the first floor gallery by Stacey Harvey-Brown until Saturday May 12.

Having lived in the Staffordshire Moorlands for more than 25 years, Stacey is delighted to be showing her first solo exhibition at the Foxlowe Art Gallery.

Beginning her study of weaving in Rudyard, nearly 30 years ago, and living in the area for over 22 years, Stacey expanded her weaving studio and taught courses for 12 years before recently moving to South West France where she continues to teach and exhibit.

Weaving is not usually associated with three dimensional forms but Stacey draws from natural forms found on her travels around the world. Recent explorations of forms found in the sea: corals, seaweeds, flatworms medusa and nudibranchs have inspired new weaves that are 'Made To Be Touched' - this is a truly tactile exhibition.

Following the Textile Tectonics exhibition will be a collaborative display of creative work by four artists.

Animal, Vegetable, Mineral Exhibition will run from May 19 through to June 30. It will include works by Phil Hardaker, Vivien Wilson, Eve Bennett and Jayne Ford. There will be a special preview evening on Friday May 18 at 7pm.



Keep up-to-date with what's happening at the Foxlowe Arts Centre's facebook page.



Garden News

ALISON MCCREA, Foxlowe Garden co-ordinator, reports on the latest green-fingered developments.

We hope the weather will be warmer by the time you read this. The bitter weather caused a delay in seed sowing and vegetable planting but the gardeners are happy to report that the potatoes are now all in. There are four varieties, including a very exciting new purple one (*Violetta*) – so watch your plates in the autumn!

The broad beans should also be in by late April. They are a very lovely crimson-flowered heritage variety but their variable germination rate makes the decision about planting a bit more difficult. We took pity on their struggles with the cold and have kept them under glass for a while longer. However, the fruit bushes are all in place, with three types of currant (white, red and black), in addition to the red gooseberries and autumn raspberries.

In response to a special request from the kitchen, we have also planted a couple of rhubarb plants in a temporary bed next to the bee hotel. When the wall is rebuilt, we will move the rhubarb to the neighbouring site that is currently hosting the stack of bricks and install some flowering plants in their place.

Winter pruning is now complete, with a dedicated group of garden volunteers making apparent light work of the willow fedge. Our thanks to Sheila McHale (pictured) for the finishing touches.

The 'historic' new *Costard* apple tree is now in place in front of the Vicarage wall. In due course we will install supports so that it can be trained in espalier fashion. Meanwhile, we're looking forward to the blossom on the apple bank trees beside the car park, as well as on the plum tree by the gardeners' small shed and the *Amelanchier* (Juneberry) that replaced the sadly deceased *Lavatera*.

The April seed share brought in some very interesting new seeds and seedlings, including black Russian tomatoes, and several new enthusiasts signing up to our mailing list – many thanks to all who took part.

The Plant Share will be on Saturday, May 19 between 11am and 2pm. In addition to plants and seedlings, there will be cakes, jams and chutneys to share – see the Foxlowe website for further details.

If you would like to become involved with the garden, please contact Alison McCrea on 07753 172564 or email

volunteers@foxloweartscentre.org.uk.

Palestine food and film

Lemon trees are the focus for a film screening by the Leek Palestine Link Group at the Foxlowe.

Delicious Palestinian food will also be on offer on the same evening as the award-winning film: Lemon Tree. The film is the story of a Palestinian widow who must defend her lemon trees when a new Israeli Defence Minister moves in next door and threatens to have her lemon grove torn down.

It will be screened on Wednesday May 2 at 7.30pm. The food will be served from 6pm, when the bar will also be open. This is a free event with donations welcome. All proceeds to Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP).

Movie night offerings at the Foxlowe

A fine mix of films is on offer at Foxlowe Films – thanks to the volunteer team which organises the weekly film slot.

Tuesday evenings is movie night at the Foxlowe Arts Centre with admission for the 'cinema-style' evening just £5. Here is a list of the remaining films for the current Foxlowe Films season: May 1: Maudie (12A), May 8: Call Me By Your Name (15), 15: The Florida Project (15), May 22: Baby Driver (15), May 29: A Fantastic Woman (15), June 5: The Post (12A), June 12: Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri (15) tbc, June 19: Darkest Hour (PG) tbc, June 26: The Shape of Water (PG) tbc. Admission £5. Doors open for Foxlowe Films at 7pm for 7.45pm screening. There is a bar and also hot drinks available. There will also be a special half term screening of Paddington 2 (PG) on Tuesday May 29 at 2pm which will cost just £2 per person.