



Aerynn. Photo by Giles Metcalfe.

Comedian Tom Allen (centre) with Leek Arts Festival committee members Mick Dwyer and Phil Edmeades.

Another roaring success for arts festival

Volunteers and staff at the Foxlowe should be applauded, once again, for their part in this year's Leek Arts Festival.

Since the closure of The Swan in Leek in 2012, the Foxlowe Arts Centre has played host to the main events of the annual creative extravaganza of the Leek Arts Festival.

And this year, the Foxlowe team ensured that all went well on the evening for the likes of Scottish songstress Barbara Dickson, comedian Tom Allen, singer-songwriter Aerynn, Steely Dan tribute band Nearly Dan, as well as festival regulars Fairport Convention and Climax Blues Band, to name but a few. Leek Arts Festival spokesman Phil Edmeades said: "We owe a special debt of gratitude to everyone at The Foxlowe for providing the main venue along with all the fantastic 'behind-the-scenes' helpers to run the bar and assist with the hundreds of little things that need to get done each time an arts festival event goes ahead."

This year's Leek Arts Festival ran throughout the latter part of April, all through May and early June, and this year's programme of concerts, gigs and other activities at a variety of venues across the town offered something for all creative tastes.

Phil added: "With a series of sell-out events - including Barbara Dickson, Tom Allen and Fairport Convention, I think we can safely say that this year's festival has been well-received by the people of Leek."

"Interestingly, we also had a lot of people travelling from much further afield to enjoy events including a couple from Stockton-on-Tees who arrived to see Barbara Dickson, and several people from places like Wolverhampton and Birmingham who turned up to see Climax Blues Band, Demon and Tom Allen."

"With 38 events in the programme it was a busy few weeks and we would like to say a big 'thank you' to everyone who has taken part, either as an audience member, as a performer or as a volunteer helper." Phil added that the Leek Arts Festival Annual General Meeting would be held in September (date to be announced) and planning for the 2019 festival would start immediately after that.

He said: "Over the next few weeks we'll be looking at the financial side of things to see if we've got any money left and then, hopefully, we can get down to thinking about next year's festival programme."

Books galore

Did you know that we have a mini library of books at the Foxlowe? Well we do! It is situated within one of our Heritage Rooms on the first floor, next door to the main gallery. There is quite an array of books which can be borrowed – why not take a look next time you visit the Foxlowe?



Hand delivered or cyber delivered - that is the question?

Anyone who is currently getting their copies of ST13 through their letterbox but who would prefer to have it sent to them digitally by email, please email our editor Belinda Hargreaves at hargreavespr@outlook.com and she will happily add you to our emailing list. Many thanks!



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

Twigg branches out to exhibit his scenic art in the Foxlowe cafe



Up-and-coming artist Justin Twigg is currently showcasing his creations in the Foxlowe Cafe. The father-of-one, who lives in Leek, started painting at an early age but it wasn't until last year that the design and technology teacher's passion for painting resurfaced.

He has since produced more than 150 paintings and has now begun to exhibit his work.

Justin was encouraged to have a go at exhibiting by one of the Foxlowe Trustees and he has had his work on display in the cafe for the past few weeks and it is set to remain in place until Saturday July 7. Plus Justin has also booked in to exhibit, along with fellow local artists, in the main Foxlowe Gallery next year.

Ground floor gallery co-ordinator Pat Bennett said of Justin's work: "Justin's prolific output reflects his passion for painting in a range of media including oil paint, acrylic and inks. His work illustrates scenes of town and country in a fluent and expressive style."

"An added pleasure for 'Leekensian' visitors to the Foxlowe is Justin's focus on familiar local venues."

Justin said he was really pleased that he was able to exhibit his work at the Foxlowe so soon after making an enquiry to do so. He said: "It has really spurred me on to do a lot of different things in such a short time."

"I have since entered several competitions, including the Buxton Spa, and other national ones too. I now have my work exhibited in the local gallery and one piece will be exhibited in Nottingham in July."

"Pat Bennett and her husband were extremely supportive and helpful and I would like to thank them, as well as trustee Belinda Hargreaves as, without her support, it wouldn't have happened at all."

Justin added: "The Foxlowe cafe is a great venue and I would love to exhibit there again in the future. I have also been offered a future show upstairs in conjunction with other local artists."



Gallery Views

The latest exhibition in the Foxlowe Gallery saw a collaborative display of creative work by four artists.

Animal, Vegetable, Mineral Exhibition included works by Phil Hardaker, Vivien Wilson, Eve Bennett and Jayne Ford.

The next exhibition will involve a group of five artists living in South Cheshire/North Staffordshire. The creative collective formed in 2009 and their name QuinQue derived from the Latin word for five.

A spokesman for the group said: "When we first began to create art as a group, we set group tasks and worked on the same subject matter, but over time, as we developed, we found our own pathways, each drawn towards different subject matter and different mediums."

Patricia started specialising in botanical drawings and became a member of the Royal Society of Botanical artists, while Maggie and Barbara became interested in various forms of printmaking but especially reduction linocutting and the pair are founder members of Linocut Friends on Facebook which now has over 22,000 members globally.

Jackie and Barbara have a passion for watercolour and continue to wrestle with this very difficult medium, experiencing great joy when work goes well.

Sue, Maggie and Jackie had chosen acrylic as a preferred medium until more recently when they became very interested in pursuing oils.

Through personal growth, QuinQue members' work has become quite varied, but their story as a group gives them a cohesion, a unity and a unique story.

The spokesman added: "We have become increasingly aware of how personal art is, how tastes differ dramatically between individuals and we feel that, collectively, we can offer something of interest to everyone."

The QuinQue exhibition at the Foxlowe Arts Centre will run from Saturday July 7 through to Saturday August 11.

The Foxlowe Arts Centre's main gallery is situated on the first floor of the Georgian building. Opening hours are Wednesday to Saturday from 10am until 4pm and the first Sunday of the month between 11am and 4pm. Admission to the gallery is free. The Gallery Co-ordinator Jane Wilde has a band of committed volunteers who help to curate and steward the Gallery. However, Jane is always on the look out for additional volunteers to come on board to help showcase some of the most creative work in the area, and beyond. To offer your help email volunteers@foxloweartscentre.org.uk



Another successful Plant Share in the Foxlowe Garden.

Garden News

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

Well, we hoped for warmer weather in the previous issue of ST13 and we certainly got it! Now, instead of worrying about fragile little plants being exposed to the biting cold, the Foxlowe gardeners are worried about them wilting through lack of water and just in the space of a week. Fortunately the watering has been made much easier by the installation of our large new water tank which filled with rainwater over the winter from the Gateway Shed's roof. Thanks to all involved with that, from the donor to the installers.

The beautiful weather has brought many more visitors to the garden with groups of people on the lawn making the place look like Glyndebourne. Workshop groups from Baby Signers to Qigong have also enjoyed decamping to the lawn outside. And the *Speckled Wood* butterflies were so absorbed in their mating ritual, they flew straight into a gardener's face.

The Plant Share on April 19 brought out a steady stream of garden enthusiasts and lovers of cake, despite the allure of alternative events. The few remaining plants are now available on the patio for those who can offer them a good home in exchange for a donation to the Foxlowe – just look for the *Plants to Go* sign.

The gardeners' main role since has been keeping the garden looking good for all the forthcoming outdoor activities, including parties, a wedding and, of course, the Great-Get-Together on June 24, an opportunity to celebrate the spirit of inclusiveness inspired by the late Jo Cox. In addition, they are planning a few more installations, including a proper coat of paint for our little shed and, more excitingly, a carved wooden bench on the small lawn – watch this space.

Soon we will be starting to prepare for the annual Apple Fest, this year on Saturday, October 6, for which we will need to collect many screw-top wine bottles – time for Foxlowe supporters to start some serious drinking!

If you would like to become involved with the garden, please contact Alison McCrea 07753 172564 or e-mail volunteers@foxloweartscentre.org.uk.



Baby Signers group in the Foxlowe Garden.