



# NEWSLETTER

Issue 3: Oct 2008

Editor: Robert Marshall

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. The last three months have been a busy time, so there is plenty to tell you about. We also have quite a few things to look

forward to before the end of the year and we have the 10th anniversary of the Friends inaugural meeting early in 2009.

Andrew Fielding, Project Director of the Lion Salt Works gave a talk, 30 September, on **'The Restoration of The Lion Salt Works.'** I'm sure many of you can, like me, remember when the Lion Salt Works was still in production. Andrew told how all the hard work is finally paying off as early next year construction work will start. It will be nice to see this site being turned from dereliction into something that will be of interest and benefit to both the area and further afield.

We were also shown how the site will look once all the work has been completed.



Andrew and committee member John Hulme

There are even plans to open a restaurant on-site, that will be serving evening meals as well as lunch and teas for visitors.

As well as going into the local plans for the site Andrew told of how it was envisaged that it would be tied in to both National and International schemes. Already the Lion Salt Works is well known internationally, as Andrew told us of an Australian who was touring Europe and when in Poland was to that this was a must see site!

If you want to find out more or just keep up to date on developments then look at the Lion Salt Works Trusts website: <http://www.lionsaltworkstrust.co.uk/>

34 Friends went on the **'Away Day'** visit to **The National Memorial Arboretum & Lichfield.** I'm happy to say that it was a very successful event and that the whole day went without a hitch. The day was left very much for people to do what they wanted and at their own pace. Feedback and observations from the visit included:

'We found the Changi memorial particularly emotive - complete with the original lych gate built by the prisoners, and the story associated with it, and the pieces of actual railway prisoners had built and the yoke and baskets they had used in their horrendous work.'



Photo by Jenny Tyson

'The Armed Forces Memorial is a marvellous tribute, but I wonder how quickly the blank spaces will be filled up!'

'We enjoyed Lichfield itself and the huge cathedral where masons could be seen in action, and visited the Heritage Centre with its modern tapestries of ten centuries of life in Lichfield, and a lot of historic material including period

costumes and magnificent silver.'

'We spent a long time in Darwin house and really enjoyed that and its history.'

'Great to see that Lichfield Cathedral are promoting modern works of art such as the modern altar table with its carved tree of life'

Thanks are due to the organisation of the 'Away Day' by the sub-committee of Jenny, being bossy on the day: Lorna, for collecting and dealing with all money; and Rob, for the research and leaflets.



On behalf of the Friends donations were made to the NMA and to Lichfield Cathedral, funded by the money raised on the bookings over and above that needed to cover our costs.

On the 19 June **Richard York** entertained us with the sounds of traditional instruments from Medieval times. As well as enjoying the music, Richard also gave us insights into the history of both the instruments and the music. He was kind enough to allow us to



Richard York and Tom Hughes

handle the instruments he had brought with him. Richard deserves a special vote of thanks as he developed shingles that day but still came in. Thanks also go to Tom, who stepped in to help by playing the wind instruments that Richard found too painful to play.

If you would like to know more about Richard and his music visit his website [www.richard-york.co.uk](http://www.richard-york.co.uk)

On 1 July 'The Cheshire Show Then and Now' talk took place with guest speakers John Platt OBE, Chairman of the Cheshire Agricultural Society and Stephen Wharfe of Whitehouse Farm, Plumley.



John Platt



Stephen Wharfe

John talked about the history of the show and Stephen presented a slide show covering a year on and around the farm - which was a pleasure to watch.

11 September saw the launch of the exhibition 'Sketches From The Front' a fascinating collection of sketches and paintings by WH Hutchings (1885-1962). The exhibition is organized in partnership with the Cheshire Records Office and Chester Military Museum. This was a well attended launch night, as can be seen by the crowded scene above. If you get the chance please do come and see these wonderful sketches.



above. If you get the chance please do come and see these wonderful sketches.

Right: Matt with Mike Eddison from the Cheshire Records Office.



Left one of the sketches from the exhibition.

We are lucky enough to have exhibitors Jenny Ryrie and our own, Friends Secretary, Rita Lamb from the recent **Boxed In - An Art in Gardens** Exhibition, provide us with details of how they were inspired to produce their work:

### Jenny Ryrie and 'The Industry of Winter'



I'm a painter specialising in landscapes and abstraction, so the idea of working in 3-dimensions was quite a challenge. Although we were given our boxes in plenty of time it took a while to decide how to tackle the project. However right from the start I knew I wanted to work with a predominantly white theme - the opposite of my usual use of wildly vibrant colour.

For months every time I walked our rather puzzled dog in the fields and woods I would have my eyes fixed to the ground scouring for interesting items. I gathered buzzard feathers, poppy and honesty seed pods, bird eggshells, old china fragments, clay pipe stems. Everything was in muted shades of white, cream, neutrals or blue - the colours of winter.

Meanwhile I also built up a collection of beer bottle tops - white with a honeybee motif - (thanks to my husband and

a fellow beer enthusiast who needed little encouragement to make such a helpful contribution in the name of art).

The idea that had finally taken shape was a box painted white and filled with carefully arranged natural objects suggesting winter. In addition the manmade items were to represent art and craftsmanship.

The bottle tops were placed in a spiral, the bees symbolising the "industry of winter". When everything seems dead and frozen in time (the dried seed pods, the broken fragments) in fact hidden forces are busy preparing for regeneration.

The old blue and white china shards that had lain buried in the earth and some contemporary ceramic tiles which were also placed in the box to suggest a similar cycle in art. New art is born out of earlier art. Moreover it is when the imagination and artistic creativity seem 'fallow' that new ideas are often brewing, soon to produce new art forms and periods of productivity.

The poppy pods have a double-meaning - opium is often linked with poetic imagination because of its hallucinogenic properties - (although my emphasis is on artistic ideas rather than narcotics!) All the objects were placed in the box in inter-linked spiral patterns, to suggest moving machinery - the cogs of the imagination.

The spiral is an ancient symbol of life-generating forces - and was chosen by Cheshire Artists Network for its Year of Art in Gardens motif. The Box Art project certainly helped stimulate the rusty cogs of my imagination!

I think I'll set my mind to an Autumn box next!

Jenny Ryrie

## Rita Lamb and 'I saw It Down The Allotment'



Never volunteer. A simple rule, but one I can't seem to learn. So when Matt casually asked if I'd like to contribute an artwork to the new gardens exhibition I agreed. Worse, I volunteered a reluctant friend to do another, even though it's forty-odd years since I created my last artwork ('O' level), and both she and I didn't have any ideas.

Fast-forward to a week before the exhibition. I still didn't have any ideas but I did have a box - a large, compartmented box to fill with items embodying my allotment experience. Well, as it happens my allotment is largely a battleground between me and the demon Scutch grass, so I decided to make Scutch my theme.

3 July saw 27 Friends visit **Mount Pleasant Gardens**, at Kelsall. That morning the weather looked very unsettled but by the time we had gathered at the car park it had turned into a glorious summer afternoon.

We were given a guided tour by the owners followed by refreshments and then time to wander around at our leisure. It is quite amazing that such a large site is so well hidden from such a busy road as the A556 and that you can be so oblivious of all the traffic. The garden has grown over the years and as you move around it is hard to believe that it has not been meticulously planned. It was also nice to see a large area left, more or less, to grow as a wild meadow. It is a local gem and if you missed it this time I would recommend you visit it next year.

I now had The Idea. What I didn't have were the artistic skills necessary to carry it out. Not a problem if you're Damien Hirst of course, you just come up with the concept and your minions make it real. I lacked minions. As time dwindled I grabbed the camera and bolted for the allotments.

My finished piece was mainly a photographic record, an allotment alphabet from Artichoke to Zucchini. For authenticity I added my trusty rusty trowel, and those bits of Victorian pottery and clay pipe stems you're always digging up. It sort of worked. Anyway I wasn't too embarrassed on the Open Evening, swanning about with a glass of wine among the real artistes

But meanwhile my reluctant friend (who is also a Friend) had taken just a few days to transform *her* box into a beautiful arrangement of dried grasses and seed-heads, a delicate tone poem in greens, straw colours and dark reds. Simple, evocative, exquisite. And it could so easily have wrecked our friendship! But, I rose above it and forgave her in the end. It was touch and go though.

Like they say - never volunteer.

You can see pictures of boxed artworks in the photo section of our website. Jenny also has work displayed at: [http://www.chester.gov.uk/tourism\\_and\\_leisure/arts\\_and\\_entertainment/virtual\\_art\\_gallery/virtual\\_art\\_gallery\\_g/jenny\\_ryrie.aspx](http://www.chester.gov.uk/tourism_and_leisure/arts_and_entertainment/virtual_art_gallery/virtual_art_gallery_g/jenny_ryrie.aspx)



## Tea & Talks

These are still proving to be popular events and are great value for money too. The latest were Roz Gorton, who gave a talk on 'Tatton Park & the Egertons' and Tony Bostock with 'Moulton: Something of its Origins & History'. Both of these were topics of local interest but the next two bring a bit more diversity with 'Cheshire Ghosts' and 'Battle Fields of France.'

If you want to hear about some unusual artefacts then make a date in your diary for 25 Feb. next year when Tom

Hughes will be telling us about 'Curiosities from the Museum's Collections.'

So if you have an hour or two to spare and fancy a cuppa and some friendly company then be sure to book a place at one the the forthcoming 'Tea & Talks.'

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## Film Shows

The Regalette continues going from strength to strength as more people become aware of it. It is currently Northwich's only 'Silver Screen' and whilst not the largest of screens it is not lacking in the quality of movies on show. It also has the advantage of only a modest cost of entry and no large crowds, so there will never be a problem with queuing up in the rain!

Films shown this year have varied from 'Harry Potter & the Order of the Phoenix' to 'In the Shadow of the Moon', a fascinating documentary on the men and women behind America's Apollo space program.

Future films include 'Oliver Twist', the classic film starring Alec Guinness and Robert Newton and the remake of '3:10 to Yuma' starring Christian Bale as a desperate rancher helping to escort a gang leader (Russell Crowe) across country to the train station where he can be packed off to jail.

Films are not limited to English but include an international flavour such as with 'Tell No One' a French thriller (with sub-titles) that will have you on the edge of your seat.

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## News & Notices

The **Friends website** became active in May and it has a steady stream of visitors, in fact we have gone international! We have had visitors from America, Belgium, France, Indonesia, Netherlands and Sweden. From June until the end of September it averaged 7 visitors, looking at 50 pages, a week. We have recently

introduced visitor comments in the Events, News and Newsletter sections. So if you have any views or comments on any of these items please feel free to leave a note - you don't need to register or even leave your real name! Finally, if you would like to see new sections or content please let us know.

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### Cheshire FM: Live from the Salt Museum.

With National Allotments Week featuring in the middle of the Boxed in - Art in Gardens Exhibition, it was a perfect excuse to persuade our local community radio, Cheshire 92.5 FM, to broadcast part of its Morning Show from the Museum.

If you were listening on Tuesday 12th August, you would have heard Matt giving a potted-history of Museum.

Peter O'Brien, Chairman of the Over Allotments & Leisure Gardeners' Association also joined the broadcast surprising Cliff in the Studio, when he told him that there were still 300,000 allotments in the country and in some places a 10 year waiting list.

A great opportunity to promote our Museum to listeners in the Mid Cheshire area.

Reporter - John Hulme

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The **Friends Of The Salt Museum will be 10 years old on 3 February** next year and we would like to hear from any members who were there at the start. If you have any stories, recollections, photographs etc. let us know so that we can share them with our newer members.

**Membership of The Friends** has grown to just over **200!** This bodes well for the future as the number of people joining is far greater than that of those who do not renew their membership. That said, every member lost is one too many and their support will be missed.

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## Booking for events - a reminder

Please remember the booking procedure for Friends' Talks, basically book as early as possible but at least two weeks in advance as we can only seat around 60 in the Board room and 45 in the 'Regalette' mini cinema.

To book, simply phone the museum on 01606 271640 or email [cheshiremuseums@cheshire.gov.uk](mailto:cheshiremuseums@cheshire.gov.uk) Make sure you tell us how many tickets you wish to reserve and if you are bringing any non-members. Please also remember to RSVP to invitations to private views of exhibitions - again, we need to know numbers as part of our fire regulations. If you've made a booking but are unable to attend, please inform the museum as soon as you can so the seat can be reallocated.

All Friends have free admission to the evening Talks whilst Film shows are £3 per person for Friends and £4 for non-members. Tea & Talks cost £1 for everyone - to cover the cost of refreshments.

As our membership grows these procedures will help to avoid disappointment whilst maximising attendances and ensuring that all such future events remain viable.

A copy of the booking procedure is available from the Friends website, in the Events section, look for '[Click Here for booking procedure](#)' link.

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## Curator's Corner



### Looking Back ... Looking Forward

As Autumn is now upon us and the nights start to draw in, it's an opportunity to reflect on the summer at the Salt Museum. The drab and dreary weather proved beneficial in terms of enticing visitors through the door so ever grey cloud sometimes has a silver lining in the heritage business! We don't get too carried away though because what we gain at the Salt Museum we often lose at our other site at Stretton Watermill, it being a more outdoor attraction.

The many visitors that passed through our door this summer certainly had a lot to keep them occupied. We had 'Boxed In' our contribution to 'Cheshire's Year of Gardens'. Working with our friends at the allotments in Over proved great fun and hopefully the film we made, 'A Year on the Allotments', reflected this. It's going to be screened again at Winsford Library on 14 October. Our Education Officer, Tom Hughes, kept the younger ones amused with a fun programme of holiday activities - from visiting Romans to making scarecrows and medieval shields. The audience for our evening film shows continues to grow too.

We also received our annual inspection this summer as part of VAQAS (Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme). The report scored the museum highly in all aspects of its operation including the lay-out, coffee shop and displays. It praised the site's 'state-of-the-art presentation and interpretation' and concluded by stating that 'Cheshire is fortunate to have so attractive and accessible a museum in Northwich with great opportunities for further development.'

So, a great summer but we never rest on our laurels... Although as a museum we spend a lot of time looking to the past, we also keep a beady eye on the future. Putting together a lively programme of exhibitions and events is the name of the game and so vital in maintaining a healthy number of visitors. With that in mind, we are close to deciding the 'runners and riders' for next year's exhibition programme. We hope to serve up a tasty menu which will include Roman Imaging & Identity, the Home Front (WW2), paintings and photos by artists from Mornant, France (Hartford's twin village) and George Mallory and Sandy Irvine's notorious expedition to Mount Everest. Watch this space!

Matt Wheeler

## Calendar of Events

**Oct 29** Tea & Talk - Cheshire Ghosts by Tom Hughes

**October 30** Film Shows 11 a.m. The Black Cauldron cert U, at 2 p.m. Oliver Twist and 7 p.m 3:10 to Yuma cert 15

**Nov 11** Evening Talk - First World War Readings from the Cheshire Regiment Archives.

**November 20** Film Show 7 p.m. Tell No One cert 15

**Nov 25** Evening Talk - A Trip Down the History of the River Weaver by Colin Edmondson: Winsford to Witton

**Nov 26** Tea & Talk - Battlefields of France by Helen Green

**Dec 9** Friends' Christmas Social Evening with a Quiz & treasure hunt.

## 2009 CALENDAR

**Jan 17** Exhibition opens on 'Image & Identity - Faces of Romans & Britons in the North West'

**Jan 28** Tea & Talk - Cheshire Writers by Tom Hughes

**Jan 22** Film Night - Couscous cert 15

**Feb 3** 10th anniversary of the inaugural meeting of the Friends

**Feb 25** Tea & Talk - Curiosities from the Museum's Collections by Tom Hughes

**Mar 25** Tea & Talk - Chemicals from Salt, the Story of Muspratt's of Merseyside by Arthur Townsend

## Newsletters

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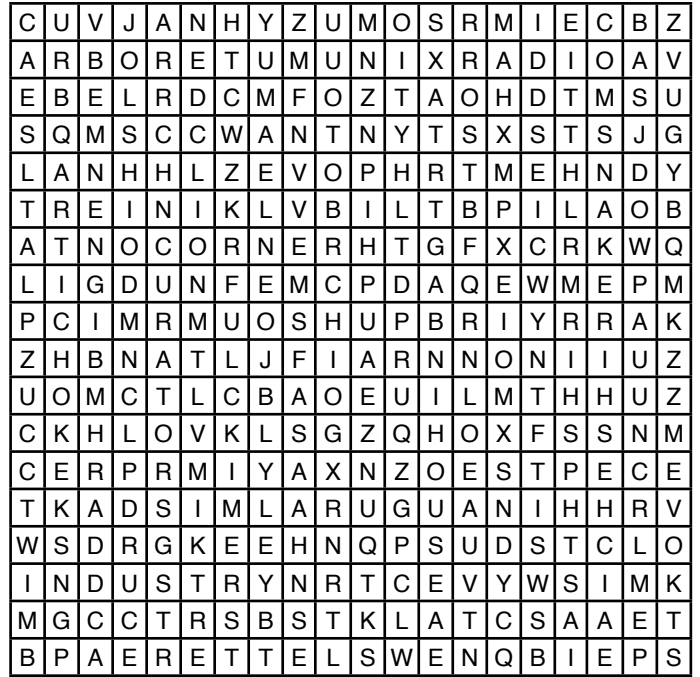
## And finally

On the next page is a crossword and word search puzzle, both based on the contents of this newsletter. The word search words can be read across, up, down, diagonally and left to right or right to left. Crossword answers are inverted on the right

Across  
2 magnificent, 6 sketch, 9 motif, 10 lion, 13 feedback, 15 volunteer, 16 inaugural,  
17 bode, 18 meadow, 20 dwindled, 22 cathedral, 23 broadcast, 24 derivation  
Down  
1 restoration, 3 abstraction, 4 medieval, 5 heritage, 7 contemporary, 8 allotment,  
11 memorial, 12 procedure, 14 artefacts, 19 edition, 21 shawm

## WORD SEARCH

APOLLO	INDUSTRY
ARBORETUM	LION
ARTICHOKE	NEWSLETTER
BEE	RADIO
CHESHIRE	REGALETTE
COMMENTS	RESTORATION
CORNER	SHAWM
CURATORS	TALK
CURIOSITIES	TEA
DARWIN	YUMA
HOUSE	ZUCCHINI
INAUGURAL	



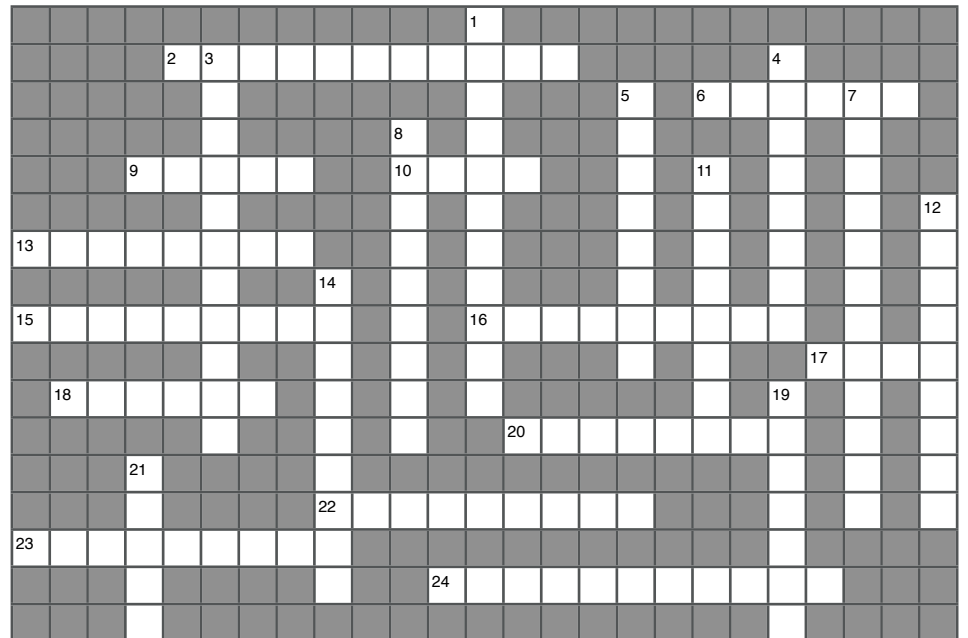
## CROSSWORD

### Across

- Impressive, elaborate
- Rough drawing
- Decorative design
- Jungle King
- Information used for improvement
- Unpaid worker
- Marking the beginning of something
- Proclaim or foretell
- A piece of grassland
- Diminished in size
- Bishops seat
- Transmit by radio
- State of being abandoned

### Down

- Return to former state
- Existing as an idea only
- Relating to the Middle Ages
- Inherited or passed down from previous generations
- Existing at the same time
- Amount given to someone
- Structure built as a reminder
- Established method
- Items of cultural interest
- version of published work
- Forerunner of the oboe



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