

## Garth Edwards

The exhibition which was in the Skill and Labour gallery is about local glass etcher Garth Edwards. Garth, who died in 2008 spent most of his adult life as a teacher at Blackburn College of Design and Technology. Having painted portraits and Pennine landscapes, Garth had also been etching glass panels in churches from the 1970's. Many of the local churches have images etched by Garth either within the churches or external windows. Images include scenes from the Bible and Book of Common Prayer as well as scenes of industry, culture and nature.

Garth's primary job was as a teacher. The etchings were a hobby that he enjoyed to create when asked by a friend. Having spent the last few months researching, compiling and putting together this exhibition, I have learnt a lot about the etchings in the local Blackburn churches. I am impressed by their variety and the skill and talent that Garth extended to his creations. The impression of the art changes depending on the light and location of the etchings, this means they never look the same twice, they can be beautiful, ethereal, ghostly and dramatic at different times.

What I have enjoyed most about this exhibition is learning about Garth himself. A kind man with an enormous talent who never searched out large profits and huge acclaim for his etchings but instead just wanted to help out his friends.

**Katharine Robinson is a student on the MA in Museum Studies course at Newcastle University and completed a placement here at the museum. One of her tasks was to create this exhibition.**

### Fund Raising

We do have some fund raising events through the year - look out for the coffee morning coming up - so that we can support the museum in various ways. Membership fees bring in some income but we lost the President's garden party this year through ill health. We buy specific items as requested by the museum staff, contribute towards the purchase of art works and perform voluntary tasks. This newsletter for example is printed by the museum through the laptop computer we bought them using the printer we also bought. We pay the museum for doing this. They make a small profit and we save a fair amount of money over using a commercial printing firm.

We actually spend very little on running the Friends group, our main expense is postage, and luckily most of our speakers are willing to perform for nothing beyond our heartfelt gratitude.



Athanasius Kircher showing visitors around his (then) famous museum, a highlight of any trip to 17th C Rome

### The concluding talks in last year's programme

#### April: Athanasius Kircher, the last man to know it all

Our own John Turkington produced a fascinating talk on the extraordinary talents and career of this seventeenth century polymath. John seemed also to 'know it all' when it came to Kircher's works and studies, and he showed an excellent range of illustrations which brought home to us just how extensive Kircher's work was.

This was a splendid introduction to a type of scholar we are unlikely ever to see again – they don't make them like that any more.

**May: Passing the Baton** Philip Newton, armed with an impressive array of musical instruments, gave a wide-ranging talk embracing harmonics, philosophy and musical history. He illustrated his talk by playing musical excerpts on violin, keyboard, drums and even a whistle (not all at the same time!). Philip's enthusiasm for his subject is striking and he provided an unusual and thought provoking session, which was greatly enjoyed.

**June: Egyptian Archaeology** As part of the background to our annual outing, Claire Ollet, a post-graduate student from Liverpool University, gave a lively and enjoyable presentation on the Garstang Foundation and her own research work. She outlined the archaeological work carried out by Garstang and explained how the finds from these expeditions were distributed.

During her research into Blackburn's pieces she had identified two extremely unusual items, previously considered unimportant, a rare example of a ring with the cartouche of Amenhotep III and an even rarer inscription on a scarab beetle. Both are of great historical interest and have caught the attention of the British Museum.

Valerie Miles

## From Egypt's Sands to Northern Hills

This exhibition was planned to be in place for the start of October, but every one is suffering in various ways from the Government's spending cuts and so it will be a little while yet until it appears. Our first speaker, Pat Winker, is an expert on the life of Garstang, and I was hoping that the exhibition would be in place for this meeting but her talk will act as an appetiser for us.

The project is a collaboration between the Garstang Museum in Liverpool, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, Towneley Hall in Burnley and Kendal Museum. It has focused on the collections of eminent Egyptologist John Garstang and the objects that now reside in the partner museums which he sent back. The objects scattered around the partner museums have been reconciled with Garstang's own notebooks and photographs to create an exhibition entitled 'From Egypt's Sands to Northern Hills'. This exhibition looks at John Garstang and his excavations, while also using the objects to explore issues regarding life and death in Egyptian society.

### Asking the Members

On the Liverpool trip the friends wrote down their thoughts on our programme of talks, our visits and made very positive comments about the way the group is run. While the talks themselves were well received, there were difficulties with both sound and vision. The acoustics in the Victorian Gallery are very poor and we do need an efficient amplification system which has unfortunately not worked properly on a couple of occasions (one blown fuse and one person struggling with the microphone) but this should now be much better for the forthcoming season. People sitting at the back have sometimes struggled to see the screen - it depends how tall you are! - so we are trying to set the screen on a table. This is not a straightforward job as the screen is heavy and awkward. Due to the Government cutbacks the Museum does not have the staff it once had to help with these matters.

The various outings were all enjoyed and there were many suggestions as to other possible destinations. One common theme was that people enjoyed staying in towns or cities so for our next holiday I have booked us into an hotel on Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow.

Theatre trips, the seeming fact that our Thursday meeting night is the choice of every other organisation and some really useful suggestions for our speakers also appeared on the survey. I am aware that there were 38 of us on the Liverpool trip so you might have some constructive suggestions you would like to make which you were not able to do at that time but please let any committee member know your constructive suggestions at any of the meetings.

The Editor



### BAFM

BAFM stands for The British Association of Friends of Museums. There are similar groups in countries all around the world working to support galleries and museums. We are members of this association and have found it most useful on matters from information to arranging insurance. Our President, Joy Heffernan, is a prominent member and until recently David Shipway was the North West organiser.

We regularly receive the BAFM magazine and a locally distributed newsletter which is most informative.

The annual conference, held in London this year, discussed how to work best with the museums we support - a most relevant topic in these straightened times.