



# Tela



The Magazine of The Friends of Blackburn Museum *Autumn 2017*

**WELCOME**  
**To the new Friends' Season!**

## From Cairo to Blackburn to Surrey

Museum watercolour is star of the show at the  
Watts Gallery



WATTS  
GALLERY  
ARTISTS  
VILLAGE

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OPEN TODAY:  
10:30am - 5pm



OPEN TODAY:  
10am - 5pm



### John Frederick Lewis: Facing Fame

Until 3 November 2019  
Watts Gallery

The exhibition tells the story of an English artist who not only travelled to the Orient but was so wooed by it that he stayed in Cairo for a decade, and who, when he eventually returned to Britain, continued to paint Oriental-inspired scenes.

**See page 11 for more!**

**This newsletter is completely FREE**

### Programme 2019/20

Meetings are held at Blackburn Museum  
and Art Gallery

**10th October 2019 at 2 pm:** "A Few of My Favourite Things." Mike Millward, formerly curator at Blackburn, talks about some of the lovely things he has had in his care during his museum career, and a few he hasn't.

**14th November at 2 pm:** ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, after which Rebecca Johnson will talk about the Museum and its development.

**12th December at 2 pm:** "The History and Design of Theatre Programmes." A talk by Ken Ford, a Friend, and a collector.

**9th January 2020 at 2 pm:** "Moran and Cole from Bolton to New York." John Turkington, one of our members, will talk about two painters of the Hudson Bay School with English roots.

**Wednesday, 22nd January, at 2 pm:** Our unique "Nearly Burns Night" Afternoon Tea with our own John Turkington as Master of Ceremonies.

**13th February at 2 pm:** "A Lancashire Garland - 500 years of Lancashire & its dialect" by Sid Calderbank, a native dialect speaker, who has been researching and collecting songs, stories and poems of old Lancashire for 30 years.

**Saturday 22th February, 10 am - 12 noon:** Valerie and Jeff Miles's Coffee Morning, at 10 Merlin Road, Blackburn BB2 7BA.

**12th March at 2 pm:** "The Forge." Jamie Holman will talk about his research into the creation and history of this important Blackburn painting.

**9th April 2020 at 2 pm:** "We Didn't Mean To Go To ... The Secret Garden." Jeff Cooper and Valerie Miles talk about the novelists Arthur Ransome and Frances Hodgson Burnett, and their writings for children.

**14th May at 2 pm:** "Girl Without a Name." A talk by Tony Foster, Chairman of the Friends of Darwen Cemetery.

**11th June at 2 pm:** "Behind the Scenes at the Museum." A member of Museum staff will describe some lesser known aspects of their work.

**Saturday 13th June at 2 pm:** The David Shipway Lecture Speaker and subject to be announced.

**Sunday, 28th June, 2 - 4 pm: FRIENDS GARDEN PARTY:** Mike and Dot Millward invite all members to enjoy refreshments in their hopefully sunny garden at 36 Parsonage Road, Blackburn BB1 9NP.

## ADRIAN S LEWIS (1945-2019)

I first met Adrian Lewis in 1976 when he interviewed me for the job of Curator in the glorious aftermath of the 1974 Local Government Reorganisation. The Museum was now part of the Recreation Department of the new Blackburn District (later to become Blackburn with Darwen Borough), and occupied the whole of the former Library, with a ground floor largely empty except for hundreds of abandoned book shelves.



The Department looked after swimming baths and sport, entertainment and the arts (very much in that order), and Adrian was Assistant Director of Recreation (Arts Division). His title was later changed to the rather more succinct Head of Arts Services.

He arrived in Blackburn in 1971 from the Harris Museum, Preston, where he had been Deputy Curator for three years after graduating from Newcastle in Politics & Anthropology followed by an MSc in the Politics of the Near East at the School of Oriental & African Studies, London.

At Blackburn, his responsibilities came to include the Lewis Textile Museum, Turton Tower and the Witton Park and Sunnyhurst Wood visitor centres. During the optimistic 70s, the staff increased in size, the Museum was open 60 hours a

week and there was a busy and ambitious exhibition programme throughout the Borough. Inevitably, the good times came to an end, and were followed by a gradual decline in funding which has eventually resulted (long after Adrian's retirement) in the Museum opening four afternoons a week with much reduced staffing levels. Exhibitions are now down to a few per year and the branches have gone.

Adrian made a huge contribution to the cultural life of the Borough. The Museum possesses some quite remarkable collections, much of which had been hidden away in the Library years. As the museum gained the extra space, his most important contributions were the display of the large collection of Orthodox Christian Icons and the Hart Collection of illuminated manuscripts, printed books and coins. The latter had been bequeathed to "the people of Blackburn" by Edward Hart in 1946, together with the then sizeable sum of £10,000 which had remained unspent. At reorganisation it was ruled that the collection belonged to Blackburn (the museum) rather than Lancashire (the library), and Adrian spent the next 10 years trying to persuade his department to spend the gradually depreciating money. He eventually prevailed and the new gallery opened in 1985, with air conditioned, purpose-built display cases and a state-of-the-art dust elimination system which worked brilliantly. The fabulous coin collection had been a major reason why Adrian had come to Blackburn in the first place.

During the project a mezzanine floor had been inserted in the gallery, and four years later, led by Adrian, work began to display the icons, another of his great interests. Constructed entirely in-house, with cases built by the museum technicians and using brand-new fibre optic lighting technology, it was the largest display of icons in the country.

In 1991 came a third triumph: a South Asian Gallery to show the culture of Blackburn's newer citizens of Asian heritage. This was not easy: unlike icons, coins and books, people vary and have their own ideas of how to represent their history. Adrian worked with immense patience to get the idea off the ground, involved local people, found the money to make it happen and saw the Gallery, the first of its kind in the country, opened to a great fanfare, winning a prestigious Whitbread Award the following year.

Of these displays, the last is the only one that survives (and that only partly): the icons and Hart Collection were redisplayed some years ago with the aid of a gigantic grant. I personally think the old displays, while less modern and colourful, showed a lot more stuff with much more information.

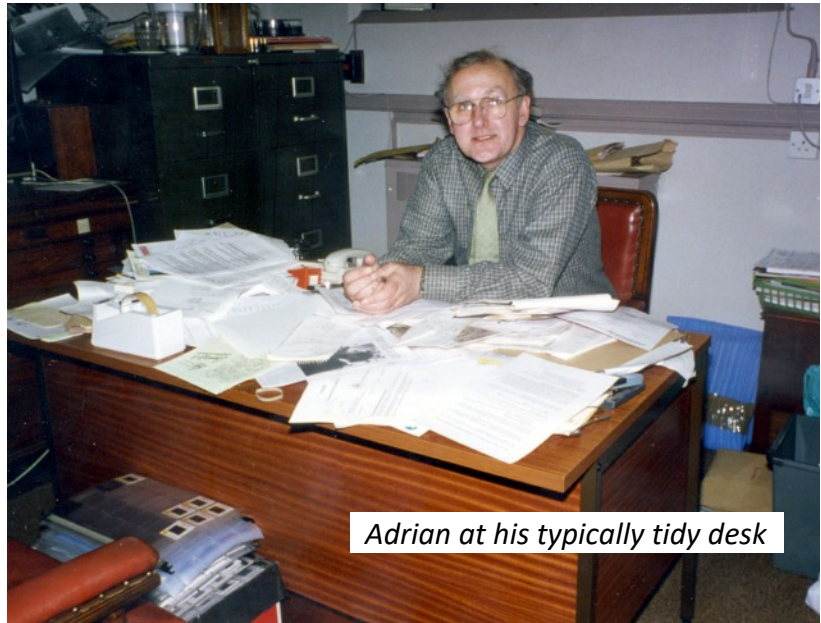
Two of his less glamorous but equally important advances were public toilets and a lift. The former might seem now to be a necessity rather than a luxury, but Adrian had to fight to get it approved. Anxious to get things right, he met with disability campaigners to ensure we were on the right track, and I well remember the occasion when a wheelchair bound delegate arriving for a meeting was unable to get in because the bell had been mounted high up to deter naughty school children.

It was even more difficult to convince his superiors about the lift. They did not have to manhandle large glazed pictures up and down stairs, or explain to people with reduced mobility that the upper floor was effectively closed to them.

Staff and visitors probably take these “luxuries” for granted now, but they should thank Adrian every time they have need of one or the other.

His undoubted qualities were not always recognised by the management, possibly due to their lack of interest in his intellectual concerns. This list of only a few of his contributions shows that they might just have been missing something vitally important.

His management style could, to say the least, be unconventional. On one occasion he left a very large pyramid shaped pile of papers on his desk, covered it with a cloth, put a notice on top reading “Disturb at your peril!” and took a fortnight off!



Adrian retired from the Museum in 1996 and founded A S Lewis Heritage Services, a temporary exhibition hire service. A few of the exhibition titles give a flavour of the range of his interests and knowledge:

Russia – 1917; Return to Tokyo- the modern Olympics since 1786; Comics for Kids; Marilyn Monroe - an icon of the 20th century; Germany at Sea - maritime scenes on currency notes of the inflation of the early 1920s; Tarot - a card game with implications; Bathnight - the story of soap; Superheroes; Ladies in their Corsets.

Museum involvement did not end after Blackburn. His long interest in the Ribchester Roman Museum and the archaeology of Ribchester continued, and he was Chairman of trustees in his last years.

Thanks to Adrian’s work with Blackburn Civic Society, blue plaques throughout the borough celebrate local people and events, amongst them contralto Kathleen Ferrier, novelist Dorothy Whipple, Egyptologist Professor Garstang and the visit of Paganini, the celebrated violinist.

He was one of the most knowledgeable and intelligent people I ever met. He had a terrific grasp of history which enabled him to get the best out of museum objects. Anyone who was lucky enough to hear his brilliant talks to the Museum Friends, with titles such as “Dr Roe's Six Other Virgins” or “The Murder of Mr Thynn” will know exactly what I mean.

The last time I saw him in public was at the Museum giving the 2018 David Shipway Lecture on “The Little Cows of Béarn.” This rather opaque title hid a masterly tour of French history through the coinage of one of the former provinces of Gascony. Despite ill-health and equipment problems, and without any notes, Adrian held me spellbound for an hour. He died only eight months later.

I shall miss him a lot – and Blackburn should too.

Mike Millward



## WILLIAM MORRIS WALLPAPER – A DESIGNLAB NATION EXHIBITION

SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2019 TO  
SATURDAY 25 JULY 2020

Further Information

Displayed in the Hart Gallery

Blackburn Museum,  
Open Wednesday to Saturday  
12 to 4.45 pm  
01254 667130  
museum@blackburn.gov.uk

## William Morris Wallpaper Exhibition



On display from 7 September 2019, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery hosts a new display of wallpaper with samples on loan from the V&A. The exhibition is part of the DesignLab Nation programme. This project aims to bring together secondary schools, local museums and local designers to inspire and preserve the essential role of design education. Arts and Crafts period wallpaper by William Morris will take centre stage with additional wallpaper recently acquired by Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery from artist and sculptor Halima Cassell, who created wallpaper designs with local manufacturer, Graham & Brown.

This DesignLab Nation project is the third in the series, working with local schools, colleges and designers, funded through and under the guidance of the V&A in London.

DesignLab Nation is generously supported by Art Fund, The Foyle Foundation, with additional support from the Brian Mercer Charitable Trust, The Zochonis Charitable Trust and Sarah Nichols.

The V&A was awarded Art Fund Museum of the Year 2016. The prize money has been used to support DesignLab Nation.



*Acanthus and Pomegranate pattern Morris wallpapers on show in the exhibition*

## FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS

### Holding the Vision: Collecting the Art of the Book in the Industrial North West

On Friday 31st January, 'Holding the Vision: Collecting the Art of the Book in the Industrial North West' will open at the Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery.

The exhibition will bring together, for the first times, collections of rare books and illustrations held by the Blackburn Library, the Harris Museum and Library and the Towneley Hall Museum and Art Gallery. Funded by the Paul Mellon Centre, the Society of Antiquaries and ACE, the exhibition will display many items that have never been displayed before. Extremely rare early printed books, original art work for book illustrations, chap books and children's books will tell the story of collecting the art of the book in the early twentieth century.



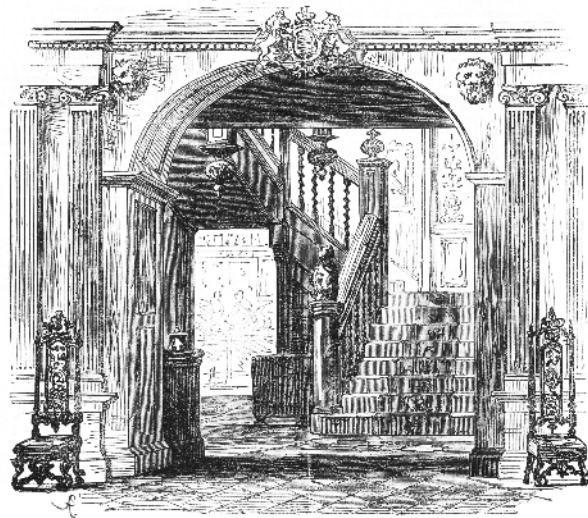
## Charles Dickens in Lancaster

### Valerie Miles

In September 1857 the renowned novelist decided that he was exhausted and in need of a holiday. Not a family holiday with his wife, sister-in-law and nine children, but more of a boys' outing. So he and his friend, Wilkie Collins (not yet famous for *The Woman in White*), decided to tackle the Lakeland Fells, starting with Carrock Fell.

Collins promptly suffered a badly sprained ankle and they retreated to Lancaster, to the King's Arms & Royal Hotel. Dickens was delighted with this old-fashioned building. 'The house was a genuine old house of a very quaint description, teeming with old carvings and beams, and panels, and having an excellent old staircase, with a gallery or upper staircase, cut off from it by a curious fence-work of old oak, or of the old Honduras mahogany wood. It was, and is, and will be for many a long year to come, a remarkably picturesque house.'

Their rooms (containing giant four-poster beds) were reached by 'an uncommonly quaint staircase'. Dinner was served in their private sitting room, and the two men were presented with 'two little salmon trout; a sirloin steak; a brace of partridges; seven dishes of sweets, five dishes of dessert, led off by a bowl of peaches; and in the centre an enormous bride-cake'. The



STAIRCASE IN THE KING'S ARMS.

bride-cake was explained by the landlord as 'custom of the house'. Dickens joked that this was an excellent custom, giving you the pleasure of the cake without the pains of marriage.

They planned to stay for only one night before setting off for Doncaster (the races!) via Leeds, but the vagaries of the Sunday rail service meant that Dickens had time to explore Lancaster. He noted the unusual narrowness of the streets (China Lane was a mere 8 feet wide) as he made his way to the local 'lunatic asylum'. This (now the Moor Hospital) was opened in 1816 and Dickens described it as 'an immense place...admirable offices, very good arrangements, very good attendants, altogether a remarkable place.'

He wrote a long description of it for his *Household Words* magazine:

'Long groves of blighted-men-and-women trees, interminable avenues of hopeless faces ; numbers, without the slightest power of really combining for any earthly purpose; a society of human creatures who have nothing in common but that they have all lost the power of being humanly social with one another.

In one gallery...which looked to me about the length of the Long Walk at Windsor...which was otherwise clear of patients (for they were all out), there was a poor little, dark-chinned meagre man with a perplexed brow and pensive face, stooping low over the matting on the floor, and picking out with his thumb and forefinger the course of its fibres.'

As he watched this isolated man tracing the matting fibres, Dickens commented 'I thought how all of us, God help us! are poring over our bits of matting, blindly enough, and what confusions and mysteries we make in the pattern. I had a sadder fellow-feeling with the little dark-chinned, meagre man, by that time, and I came away.'

This was supposed to be a working holiday which would provide material for *Household Words* and Dickens did indeed write a fictionalised account of the trip, under the title of *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices* published in October 1857. Dickens became Francis Goodchild, and Collins became Thomas Idle. It was of course impossible for Dickens to travel unrecognised – when he arrived in Lancaster the great and the good immediately left their cards for him at the

hotel, offering to show him round the town, and the *Lancaster Guardian* immediately published an item about his visit.



So anyone who'd had contact with the two travellers naturally devoured *The Lazy Tour*, desperate to see what the celebrity had to say about them. One reader who was extremely pleased was Joseph Sly, the manager and owner of the King's Arms. He couldn't have asked for better publicity. He wrote to thank Dickens and over the years Mr and Mrs Sly regularly sent him a box of game each Christmas. Dickens in turn presented them with a lithograph portrait of himself, which was displayed in the

hotel. Mr Sly received one further mention in Dickens' work: in Chapter III of *Dr Marigold* the hero spends a couple of nights at the King's Arms & Royal Hotel.

Dickens did visit Lancaster again, during his public reading tour in 1861. On 12 December he gave two readings in the Music Hall – now the Grand Theatre – *Marley's Ghost* and *The Trial from Pickwick*, and the *Lancaster Gazette* declared that the elite of the town and neighbourhood were there in force.

We rightly associate Dickens with London and the South East but, when he did move further afield, he studied his 'foreign' surroundings with exactly the same curiosity and humour that he applied to his home territory. Lancaster welcomed his visit.

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## A Printing Detective Story

The Hart Collection contains a single page from the the 42-Line Bible printed at Mainz by Johannes Gutenberg, ca 1455 - "The Gutenberg Bible." The collection also holds two vellum fragments from Psalters printed on the same press by Gutenberg's successor, Peter Schöffer. The origin of these fragments is unknown, but were probably recovered from later bindings in which they were reused.

Those who were lucky enough to attend the Edward Hart Symposium held in Blackburn in November 2017 will have heard a brilliant contribution by Dr Eric White, Curator of Rare Books, Princeton University Library in which he described his work uncovering "ghost" copies of early printed books, especially of the Gutenberg Bible, by studying surviving fragments of lost books cut up for use in later bindings.

What follows has been shamelessly adapted and condensed from a post by Eric White on the Princeton blog *Notabilia* touching on the same subject. This is well worth a look, and can be found at <https://blogs.princeton.edu/notabilia/category/binding/>

Mike Millward

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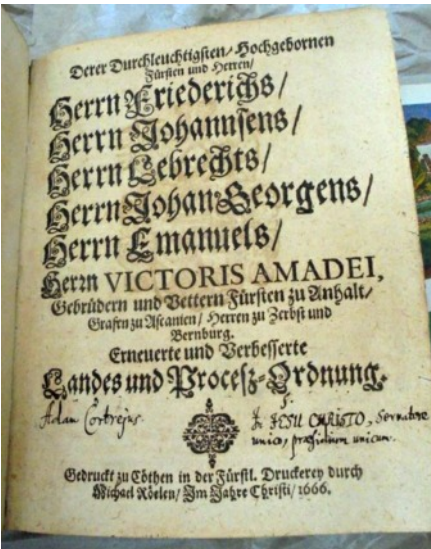
In March 2017 Princeton University Library's Department of Rare Books and Special Collections acquired a single vellum leaf from the Gutenberg Bible printed in Mainz during the early 1450s. The fragment survives because – more than two centuries after it was printed, and long after its historical significance had been forgotten – its vellum was recycled and used to make book covers. This is the only specimen of the Gutenberg Bible still preserved as a book binding ever to appear on the rare book market. Clearly, a discarded copy of the Gutenberg Bible was cut into hundreds of pieces for this purpose – but where, and when? The fragment encloses a copy of the *Erneuerte und verbesserte Landes- und Procez-Ordnung*, an ordinance of litigation within the Electorate of Saxony, printed at Cöthen, Germany, in 1666. A contemporary inscription indicates that the volume belonged to the noted 17th century jurist Adam Cortrejus, who studied at Jena, served as Syndic in Halle, and died in Magdeburg. His limited travel and the strictly local interest of the law book suggest that this book – and likewise the lost Gutenberg Bible – was bound in Saxony-Anhalt, northwest of Leipzig, in the late 17th century. Previous research by Eric White into several dozen other surviving vellum fragments of the Gutenberg Bible categorized by their distinct styles of

[Continued overleaf]



*Vellum fragment of Gutenberg Bible used as binding for a 17<sup>th</sup> century law book*

rubrication (headlines, initials, and chapter numerals added by hand), has identified a group of six identically rubricated leaves which he suggests are the remnants of an otherwise lost Gutenberg Bible from the Dresden area and predicted that any yet-to-be-discovered fragments exhibiting the same rubrication style very likely would hail from that same region. The Princeton fragment closely matches the Dresden group, indicating that all seven fragments derive from the same lost Bible. Moreover, the three German towns associated with Princeton's binding – Cöthen, Halle, and Magdeburg – are just to the northwest of Dresden and Leipzig.



*Title page inscribed by Adam Cortrejus of Halle*

The Princeton binding was discovered in about 2006 by a

Cologne bookseller amongst a mixed lot of mostly 19th-century law books auctioned in Bonn. He advertised online that the binding would be sold on January 26, 2017, at the 31st annual Ludwigsburg Antiquaria, held near Stuttgart, when it would be available at a substantial (but by no means inflated) fixed price to the first applicant, or, in the event of a broader interest, to the winner of a lottery among those in attendance.

discovered in about 2006 by a

On the first day of the fair at least 76 bidders (including Dr White) drew lots for the item; the winning number belonged to a member of a consortium of German dealers headed by an independent bookseller, who agreed to Princeton's immediate request for 'first refusal' upon determination of his sale price and Princeton had negotiated the acquisition by the end of February. The binding was displayed at the New York Antiquarian Book Fair, marked 'sold' and Princeton took possession of the item in March 2017

discovered in about 2006 by a

Today, 36 paper copies and 12 vellum copies of the Gutenberg Bible survive reasonably intact, either as complete Bibles or as incomplete bound volumes. Added to these are an incomplete paper copy dismantled in 1920 for sale as individual books or single leaves (one of which is in the Hart Collection at Blackburn), and three copies on paper

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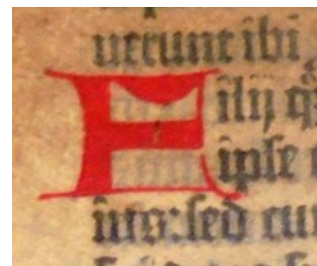
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*Initial F on the Princeton binding.*



*Initial F on a fragment found in*

and eleven copies on vellum known only from binding waste. The study of the impact of early printing in Europe is helped enormously by the fourteen copies, including the one represented by Princeton's fragment, that may not survive in the form of books, but which do survive, nevertheless.

As a result of the Princeton acquisition a historically unique Gutenberg fragment is now safe in an eminent university library. All other Gutenberg Bible leaves discovered since 1900 have been removed from their host bindings, destroying historical evidence. This 'miraculous' fragmentary survival demonstrates the extreme fluctuations in the Gutenberg Bible's historical fortune over five centuries and uniquely documents the time and place at which an otherwise lost copy was discarded for use as waste material for book bindings.

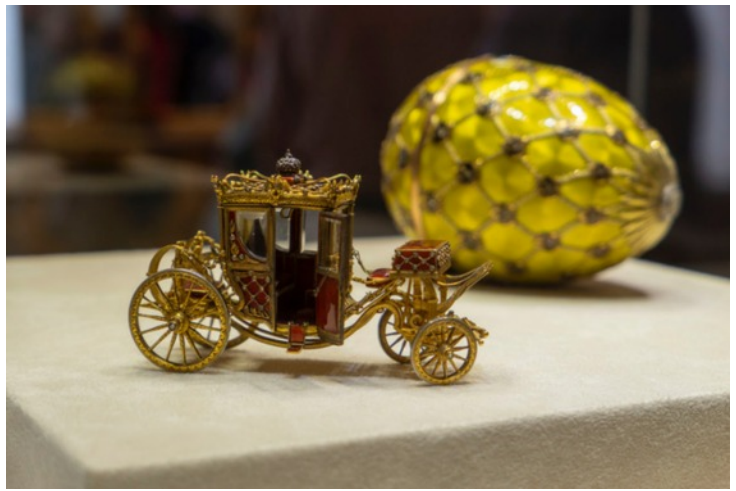
Princeton already owned a 2 volume paper copy of the Gutenberg Bible (which had been preserved in benign neglect in Erfurt until 1840 in its original binding), as well as 19 paper leaves from 3 others. The addition of a vellum fragment from a copy cut apart in the late 17th century enables comparison of a complete Gutenberg Bible and provenance evidence of five copies in one library.



# Visiting Fabergé

John Turkington

Almost all the museums in St Petersburg are state owned an exception being the Fabergé Museum which is in a small private palace. Situated beside a canal, it looks from the outside just like any Blackburn terraced house without garden or parking space, a little bigger perhaps but its small ballroom is the size of half a football pitch, the staircase would grace Buckingham Palace and the discrete amount of gilding would coat St Paul's dome several times over.



The first Easter egg, The Hen, for the Imperial family, ordered by Alexander 2nd is here. It is completely plain, just like an enamelled boiled egg but with a golden surprise in the middle, a Romanov crown containing a ruby pendant. The last, made for Nicholas 2nd and delivered just as the First World War was starting does have some decoration, but restrained, in sympathy with the economic and mortal plight of the common people.

There are seventeen original eggs, beautifully displayed, each with its own case allowing easy viewing. The museum was not crowded so it was easy



to take one's time to admire the wonderful workmanship and colours. Fabergé had about 500 people working for him at the height of his fame, each one a skilled craftsman encouraged to seek private commissions so as to keep up the quality of the products. We had a very knowledgeable guide who was keen to share her wisdom with us so I wandered off to pursue my own thoughts and rely on Sylvia for any details I wanted to know about.

There were years when two eggs were commissioned, the second being for Czar Nicholas' mother who was very jealous of her daughter -in-law's Easter gift. It was apparently a tricky job to ensure that the eggs were of equal worth and quality.

There were a vast number of enamelled cigarette cases, silver tea services, china and commemorative ware which I found all in the 'best possible taste' (for Kenny Everett fans) I was most impressed by the lighting of the picture gallery, not the actual pictures unfortunately. The paintings were all on the grand scale and seemed to pop out of the walls. I thought at first they were back-lit but only spotlights were used, perhaps justifying a research visit by a museum curator to find the details. They really did look splendid.



A highlight of the museum is the café, which was quirkily decorated, very colourful and comfortable too. Oh, and the toilets are to be praised.

We were in a party of nine, the only ones to escape from the gift shop unencumbered by shopping.

## Follow the money ....

### How the Friends have contributed to the Museum & Art Gallery

Since the Friends was founded in 1982, we have been providing you with a variety of interesting (and in some cases inspiring) talks, taken you to a number of wonderful places, and put on coffee mornings and garden parties, all so that we can accumulate finances for the Friends. But what have we actually done with the money that you have so generously contributed each year?

Five years after our foundation we had accumulated enough to be able to fund our first contribution to the Museum: to the preview of an exhibition about the Lakes in Lancashire. It was a small start, but showed the willingness of the Friends to be at the centre of helping to provide extra support for the Museum. Up to now we have contributed about £45,000 to the Museum (about £62,000 in today's money).



17<sup>th</sup> century icon: *St Parasceve Pyatnitsa*

Terni'. Since then we have contributed considerable sums to help conserve and restore paintings and books, including another Turner ('Mainz'), a Guarino ('Isaac Blessing Jacob') including commissioning a new Renaissance-style frame, some Japanese prints, the Whalley Lectionary, and items from the Hart collection.

The administrative purchases have been important contributions to the general running of the Museum over the years, and have included improvements to the entrance hall, the 'Active Audio Visual' display in 2001, matched funding for Arts Council exhibitions, consultancy charges, new chairs, lighting, display facilities, and computer equipment.

Your contributions to the Friends really do make an enormous difference, for which the Friends and the Museum give our grateful thanks.

Jeff Cooper

We provide three categories of financial help: firstly, the purchase of artefacts and paintings for the museum's collections; secondly, the conservation and restoration of artefacts and paintings in the museum's collections; and, lastly, what can be termed 'administrative' purchases.

The first artefact that we helped purchase, in 1992, was a sideboard from Imperial Mill for the Lofthouse Memorial. A few items were purchased (tobacco jars, a diary, a 16<sup>th</sup> century icon, etc.) between then and 2006 when we began to contribute in earnest to the purchase of a number of important art works and artefacts. These included a Halima Cassell sculpture, a long case clock, as well as pictures by M.E. Fisher, John Yates, Richard Cross, Claude Brun, Debbie Smyth, and Julia Swarbrick.

The second, and in some respects a more important area, is the conservation and restoration of the art works and artefacts already owned by the Museum. Our first step into this area was in 1988 when we contributed to the conservation of the Turner watercolour 'The Falls of



Circle of Francesco Guarino (1611–1654): *Isaac Blessing Jacob*

## John Frederick Lewis: Facing Fame

9 July – 3 November 2019 at the Watts Gallery, Compton

An exhibition dedicated to exploring the life and art of the Victorian Orientalist artist John Frederick Lewis (1804-1876).



Just after the war, Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery received a remarkable wealth of items bequeathed by local men. In addition to the Hart and Lewis collections, a superb collection of watercolours was left by local lawyer E L Hartley which includes works by Turner, Cozens and Girton amongst many others.

One of the others is John Frederick Lewis's small but spectacular *In the Bezestein, El Khan Khalil, Cairo*, [see left] which is currently on loan to the Watts Gallery, Compton near Guildford for the first exhibition of his work for 40 years.

Lewis was a friend of Landseer, but had no formal training himself. In his early years he posed as something of a dandy, but after travelling extensively in

Europe in the 1820s and 30s, became more bohemian. He reached Greece and Turkey by about 1840 and then Cairo, where he settled down in 1841 and stayed for a decade, living as a 'languid Lotus-eater' leading a 'dreamy, hazy, lazy, tobaccified life' according to his friend William Makepiece Thackeray. The prosperous merchant in his local costume is in fact Lewis himself. He often appears in his pictures, as does his wife Marian; she can be seen in the marvellous oil painting *In the Bey's Garden* in The Harris Art Gallery, Preston [see right].



By this point in his career, Lewis was an "Orientalist", that is, a painter of subjects from Western



Asia. The long fascination artists and poets had had with the East intensified in France, with the short-lived Napoleonic conquest of Egypt. Delacroix, Gérôme and Ingres were prominent amongst the French painters looking to the Islamic world for subjects, often used as an excuse to paint a great deal of naked female flesh. It would be difficult to imagine more than that on show in Ingres' *Turkish Bath* in the Louvre [see left]. Lewis's roughly contemporary approach was very different: he never painted a nude, and his Orientalist works have a closely observed and often homely look which while clearly idealised, have none of the salaciousness of much of the genre.

He returned to England in 1851 and produced many paintings based on the precise drawings he had made in Egypt, often producing similar subjects in oil and watercolour. He is quoted as saying "... in spite of all my hard work, I find water colour to be [so] thoroughly unremunerative that I can stand it no longer - it is all, all always, rolling the stone up the hill - no rest, and such little pay!" He achieved great success and became President of the Society of Painters in Watercolours in 1855, Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA) in 1859 and RA in 1865.

After his death in 1876 he suffered decades of obscurity until rediscovered about fifty years ago, since when his best work has become very valuable indeed.

Mike Millward

## Committee Meetings

We meet 4 times a year and, despite our formal Charity Status structure and formal agenda, the meetings are surprisingly brief and informal. (I think if someone addressed me as Madam Chairman I would probably start looking round the table for Madam Chairman, not realising it meant me.)

The most important person present is actually Rebecca Johnston. Rebecca isn't officially a member of the Friends or the Committee but she keeps us up to date on plans for exhibitions and activities and for refurbishing the building. This means we can liaise on the best ways to support the Museum, whether financially or by promoting and attending events.

Naturally, we then consider our finances and Jeff Cooper presents his summary of the state of our bank accounts. The majority of our income is from membership fees, which then leads us to consider the perennial question of how to increase membership numbers.

And that in turn means looking at publicity (or our lack of it). Philip Crompton, who already organises distribution of our posters and flyers, is now arranging for some pop-up display stands to be created. Apart from general publicity we hope to organise an event within the Museum as part of the 2020 Festival of Making.

We also plan each year's programme. John Turkington is the principal organiser here and comes up with some splendid suggestions, but we all need to suggest topics and speakers to ensure a varied and stimulating programme. John then sorts out the dates and bookings.

So that's the general format of a Committee Meeting. These discussions are carefully recorded by our Secretary, Sarah Gill, who then circulates the Minutes so that no-one is in any doubt about what was agreed.

The money we raise from members is sometimes used for 'boring' things which are easy to overlook. Our next financial contribution is likely to help pay to reframe a series of Arts Society prints, ready for a future exhibition. No-one is going to look particularly at the mounts and frames, but renewing these means that the splendid prints can safely be shown publicly.

Valerie Miles

## Committee Members

Jeff Cooper, Hon Treasurer and  
Membership Secretary  
Geoff Coulthard, Member  
Philip Crompton, Member (Marketing)  
Sarah Gill, Hon Secretary  
Joy Heffernan, President  
Rebecca Johnson, ex-officio

Bruce Kitchin, Member  
Gillian Mason, Member  
Valerie Miles, Chairman  
Janine Monaghan, Member  
John Turkington, Member (Programme,  
Outings & Newsletter)  
Mary Waters, Member

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The Friends of Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery is a registered charity.

It was founded in 1982 with the aim of promoting and supporting the Museum

Subscriptions for the year are: Individual membership £10