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The Magazine of The Friends of Blackburn Museum *Spring 2021*

This newsletter is completely FREE

A BIG THANK YOU!

from Mike Millward, temporary editor

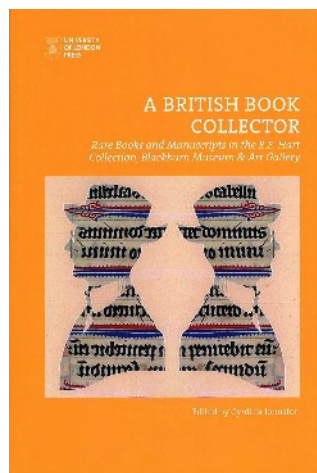
To everyone who has helped with this bumper Lockdown issue. Special thanks go to contributors who are not members of the Friends.

Just Published!

A British Book Collector:

Rare Books and Manuscripts in the R.E. Hart Collection, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery

Cynthia Johnston (Editor)



Based on the Conference held in Blackburn,
November 2017

Reviewed on page 15

DISCOUNT PRICE OFFER TO MUSEUM FRIENDS - SEE THE REVIEW!

PROGRAMME, 2020-21

The Covid-19 pandemic and consequent lockdown has resulted in postponement of the entire Friends Programme for the current season. However, the gloom has been somewhat relieved by John Turkington's LOCKDOWN LECTURES, which take place on Thursday afternoons at 2 pm and have proved very popular and been well attended. So far we have been treated to a grand total of 45.

Thank you John and Sylvia!

John has indicated that he will finish after 50 talks, so take your chance while you can!

Members on email should be receiving regular email notifications, with a link to the Zoom meeting. Details and link are also published on the Friends website as soon as they are available.

LANCASHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

promoting archaeology within Lancashire

Museum Friends are also welcome to the free online events organised by Lancashire Archeological Society.

Meetings are on the third Friday of every month, at 7.30pm, and are being offered on Zoom. Please feel free to join in.

The next event is:

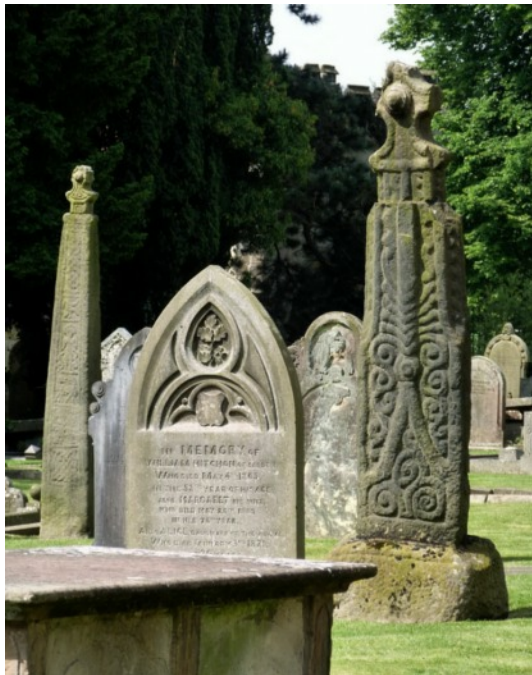
16th April 2021. Ian Trumble (Bolton Museum): *Rameses the Great and the North of England*

For more details including the Zoom addresses, please follow LAS on their Facebook pages or website
<https://lancsarchaeologicalsociety.wordpress.com>

THE WHALLEY CROSSES and the pieces of cross in the Museum

by Norman Thorpe of Whalley

When you walk through the churchyard of St Mary's Parish Church, Whalley, near the south entrance porch you encounter three ancient crosses built of local stone,



like the church. They are badly weathered, in addition to damage caused by Puritan Zealots who pushed them over and dragged them away for use as fence posts. The best time to see them is in sunshine just before and just after noon.

I have numbered them, No.1 being the westernmost, nearest the Day School. Its west side is so weathered that no carving can be made out, but the east side has some clear figures.

Panel 4 has the Norse figure: the "Dog of Berser", by which our Norse forefathers represented "eternity" or "creation". The cross head is not the original.

No.2, the middle cross, has intertwining patterns, said to represent a 'tree of life'. There are no figures. Part of the shaft is missing, so the shaft is not as tall as it would once have been. Decide for yourself, dear reader, if the part of the shaft in the museum is the missing part.

No.3 has a cross head which is obviously not the original. This cross has a large base which has several sockets. There is a

nearly identical base at St. James' Church, Haslingden, near the bottom of the tower, but there is nothing else.



They are sometimes referred to as the "Celtic Crosses", but there is no evidence to support this. Scholars place them in the 9th to 11th century, probably the 10th. By then Whalley was clearly in the Danelaw; those who attribute them to St Augustine are even further in error, by about 400 years. [The names of the places Whalley and Clitheroe are of Danish origin.]



Illustrations

Right: Cross fragments from Whalley Church now in Blackburn Museum

Top: Cross head with knotwork and a prominent conical boss; possibly 11th century.

Bottom: Part of a shaft, not connected with the cross, showing knotwork pattern, probably 10th century.

Photos by permission of the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture, Copyright: R.M.C. Trench-Jellicoe

Above: Crosses in Whalley Churchyard

top: Crosses 1 and 2 in Whalley Churchyard

below: detail of Cross 1 showing the "Dog of Berser" below a haloed figure flanked by serpents

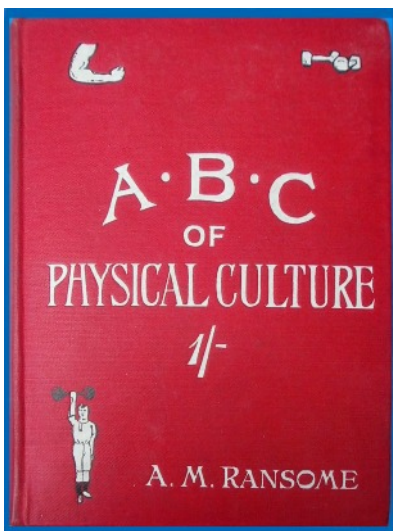
Arthur Ransome's *The A.B.C. of Physical Culture*

by Jeff Cooper

Half of Arthur Ransome's output of books, 24 of them, were published before he wrote *Swallows and Amazons*. He started his writing career with a book that no one would consider reading these days, and it's doubtful that he would have read it himself if he hadn't written it! This was *The A.B.C. of Physical Culture*, published in August 1904. For someone who professed to have disliked anything physical at that time in his life, it is surprising that he considered writing it, but it was a way for him to satisfy his desire to be a writer. He was drawn in by an advertisement in the *Daily News*. But a person who seemed to have an aversion to 'physical culture' would presumably have had problems writing a book that would be held up to scrutiny and approval by people who were interested in the subject. So where did he get his information?



Arthur Ransome in 1907, age 23



There were a number of books available on 'physical culture', gymnastics and body building, but the journal *Sandow's Magazine of Physical Culture*, which had started publication a few years before Ransome looked into the subject, would have been a mine of information. One of the most influential writers in the journal was William Hope Hodgson (1877-1918), who later became famous for writing horror and fantasy novels and short stories, his first story, 'The Goddess of Death', being published in *The Royal Magazine* in April 1904. But before that he had been a sailor, and trained himself as a body builder to protect himself from constant bullying on board ship. This led to him opening a School of Physical Culture in Blackburn, and writing a number of articles, such as 'Physical Culture Versus Recreative Exercise', which was published in *Sandow's Magazine* in February 1903, 'Hints on Physical Culture' also in *Sandow's Magazine* in August 1903, and 'Health from Scientific Exercise' in *Cassell's Magazine* of October 1903. It is almost certain that Ransome came across Hodgson's articles in *Sandow's Magazine*, and used some of them as the basis of his book.

P.G. Wodehouse, later the author of Psmith, Jeeves and Wooster, wrote an article, 'Wrestling at the Halls' in April 1902 for *Sandow's Magazine*. The article's opening might have been an appropriate opening of Ransome's book: "I should like to remark at once, to prevent disappointment, as they say in the advertisements, that I am not an authority on the subject of wrestling. I have never wrestled myself except with my conscience, and though on such occasions I invariably won, I feel that this can scarcely entitle me to speak of myself as an expert."

LOCKDOWN MEMORIES

Members are encouraged to submit their experiences of the past year

To begin with it was the clear blue skies we noticed, with no planes overhead or vapour trails clouding the sun. Then the birdsong, seemingly louder than ever. Apparently this was an illusion, the absence of traffic noise just made them seem louder.

Once we were allowed a degree of freedom, we had the good fortune to join the gardening volunteers at Turton Tower, (with its excellent new socially distanced cafe) This has been a most enjoyable way of making new friends, getting some fresh air & exercise & hopefully improve our horticultural knowledge slightly.

One of the best things about it though was the discovery of John Turkington's brilliant Zoom lecture series. Until March 2020 I'd thought that Zoom was an ice lolly. Now I realise what a tremendous resource it is - learning so many things I never knew I didn't know!

A positive experience amongst all the global gloom.

Cilla Duncalf

AN INQUIRY

Liz Lawson has a question and wonders if any members can enlighten her. She can be contacted on lizlawson1@me.com

I am a new member of Blackburn Museum Friends, only joining in this lockdown period.

My home is possibly the oldest house in Blackburn, becoming so since Little Harwood became part of the Borough.

This house (once 'Bank Hey House' and now 'Myles Wife Hey') is steeped in history and land once owned here was involved in a Civil War battle when Colonel Shuttleworth was injured before the perpetrators moved on to Marston Moor.

There is plenty more.

Is there a chance that any members can help find more or perhaps know more?

Also are there any Detectorists who would be able to explore land opposite and down to the dual carriageway? with a permit of course.

We were asked for ideas - so herewith one or two to perhaps set the ball rolling.



THE QUEST

About 30 years ago, my daughter Sara who lives in France, had a Christmas present she was very disappointed with. Her group of friends at that time, decided that the group would give just one gift of value to each, instead of a small gift to each individual. Choice would be by picking a name out of the hat, to decide who to give their gift to.

Christmas meal over, and gift distribution time. Sara received a heavy parcel wrapped in newspaper.

Inside, a stone object encrusted with gravel, proudly presented by a young man, who said he had bought it in Paris from an antique dealer. Not what she expected at all.

She soaked it in water, scrubbed it with an old tooth brush, and even needed to scrape off the cement-like excrescences with a nail file. The stone horse emerged, and was used as a door stop.

Over the years, she became fond of her horse, and wondered about its origins. Could it have been illegally smuggled and sold from some archaeological excavation?

Museums are closed now, and not available for investigation and enquiries, but, maybe, after lockdown, the quest will be on for answers.

Watch this space.

Frances Mahoney

JOHN TURKINGTON'S LOCKDOWN LECTURES

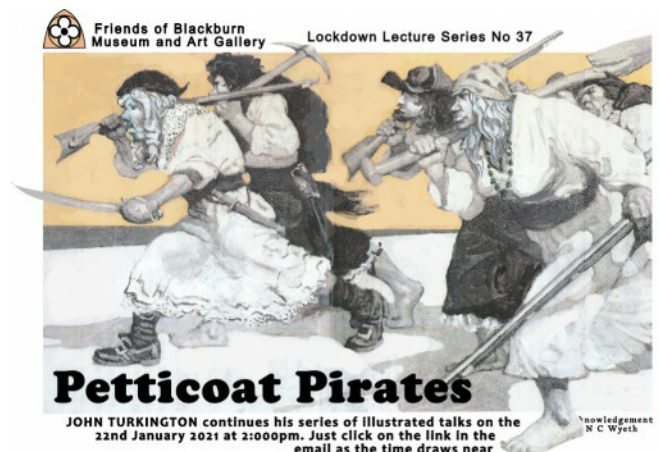


The one bright spot – for those of us with online access to Zoom – has been John Turkington's brilliant series of talks every Thursday afternoon. John has whisked us from the West Indies to the North Pole, from ancient myths and legends to more recent and better documented artists and their achievements. John is our lecturer, and his wife Sylvia provides the voice for the written evidence he cites.

An additional delight is that every talk has been announced with its own poster, designed by fellow Friend, Mike Waters. Mike's posters are as individual (and informative) as John's talks.

Mike has been producing posters for our regular Friends' meetings for a very long time and in 2019 I put together a selection of these, and a local printer then made a lovely job of turning them into a glossy book. At the end of 2020 I persuaded Mike to create his own book from his Lockdown Lecture posters for the period March to December 2020. Again it's resulted in a lovely book.

These books will be on sale when we can once more hold our Thursday afternoon meetings. We shall also donate a copy of the Lockdown Lectures book to the Local History Collection in Blackburn Library. We may be sick of lockdown but I like to think that at some point in the future this will be part of a 'What did Blackburn do during the Lockdown?' Project.

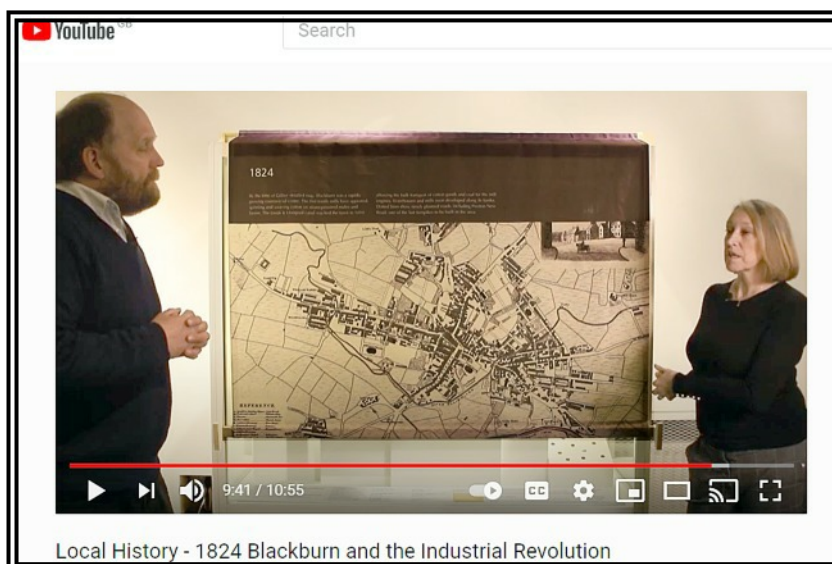


So, many thanks to our talented members who have helped keep us entertained and informed during this bleak period. John's audience extends far beyond our own borough and this has resulted in new links with other Friends' groups.

Valerie Miles

A link to the Lockdown Lecture Zoom meeting is circulated to members with email before each talk. The link also appears on the Friends website as soon as available.

Blackburn Museum has a YouTube channel...



Stephen Irwin, Education Officer, Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery

We have long thought that Blackburn Museum should have its own YouTube channel and now we have. When Covid-19 hove into view and everywhere went into lockdown, we all asked ourselves the question “What next for the Museum?”

Inspiration came in the form of David Willey, Curator at the Tank Museum in Dorset; browsing YouTube I came across a video made by him in the first week of the lockdown. His museum was closed and he had improvised a video titled ‘The History of the Petrol Can’; he filmed it on his mobile phone, in his back garden, using items he had scavenged from his garage.

Throughout the pandemic and assorted lockdowns, the Blackburn Museum remained open to the staff, who regularly check the building and so we could get access to some objects.

So, armed with a mobile phone and having watched a couple of tutorials, we set to and made our first videos; the sound was not good and the lighting was worse but we persevered and got better. We moved location and raided the Education Service loan boxes for objects. This was because our initial concern was to provide materials for children and teachers who had to work remotely.

In September, we made a link with the Blackburn University’s film department; their second year students have to produce ten films, as part of their coursework and we were able to establish a partnership – we provide the subject matter and the script, they do the filming and editing.

Our first student is Bryan and it has been a very happy experience working with him. The films have become more polished and more adventurous. A measure of success is the number of subscribers you have to the channel. The first milestone is 100 subscribers and we achieved this figure (and shot past it) with a local history video at the beginning of March.

Friend of the Museum, Lynda Baldwin, is now involved and has started co-presenting the Local History videos. Currently, we are working our way through maps that used to adorn the walls of the Cotton Town Gallery. Interspersing footage of us discussing the old maps with photographs of the same places in the town today. These have proved popular.

Our aim is to produce videos that are of use to schools and/or of interest to the public. These will be interspersed with specialist videos taking a more in depth look at parts of the collections. I hope that the channel will become a record of our activities as well as our collections.

We currently have 142 subscribers; some are ex-blackburnians living abroad. Others seem to be local people with an interest in Blackburn and Darwen and hereabouts.

Please do have a look at our videos (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1DfM-z63eh8Jfb1KIAtCHQ>); if you like them please give them a ‘thumbs up’ and perhaps subscribe for more. Any ideas for videos are always welcome.

Friends past and present lost during the past year.

The pandemic has affected us in many ways, not least by stopping almost all direct social contact. One result has been lack of news about members of societies such as ours. There will be other news we haven't heard, so please do let us know.

Mike Millward

Madge Thornton died aged 94 on 4 May 2020 in Pendleside Hospice. **Her husband Ken** had died in 2012. They had been enthusiastic and supportive members of the Friends of the Museum & Art Gallery for many years; they were outgoing and active, being keen fell walkers. Madge continued to live an active life on her own until quite recently. She was particularly interested and involved in nature and gardening, and her own garden was occasionally opened to the public.

Remarkably, they were both proficient cross-country skiers, and at Ken's funeral I was amazed to learn that one of his activities was kick boxing. They were great company, supporting numerous countryside and cultural organisations and coming on most of the Friends' trips to France and in this country.

Madge gave instructions in her will for her painting of a rural scene by Wright Barker to be sold for the benefit of the Museum Friends. It sold for £950, which was rounded up to £1,000 by her nephew-in-law Graham Shutt. We are most grateful to the family for this generous bequest.



Ken and Madge Thornton enjoying a meal at the Hôtel de la Poste, Saulieu on the Museum Friends' trip to Burgundy in 2000.

Gerald Walmsley, a long-time member who died just before Christmas, was a regular at the Friends meetings and other gatherings. He always had some good point to make or question to ask and he will be sadly missed.

Helen Turner died at her home in Colne aged 94 in September 2020. She and her husband **Winston** had been paediatricians in Burnley. Winston died in 2010 aged 95. They were members of the Friends until about the time of Winston's death and were enthusiastic members and excellent company, taking part in a number of our trips to France. They were keen collectors and amassed a superb collection of antique glass.

During the last War, Winston had the quite remarkable distinction of passing Douglas Bader fit to fly despite being a double amputee. Bader went on to shoot down 22 enemy aircraft and his story was told in the 1956 film "Reach for the Sky."

Helen and Winston Turner taking the sun on the bridge at Chauvigny in the Poitou during the Museum Friends' trip to France in 2002.



Some members may not have come across the Museum Blog on the Museum & Art Gallery website at <http://blackburnmuseum.org.uk/blog/>. Below is an example of the wide variety of content covering all manner of museum-related things, including paintings, social history and icons from the collection as well as a series of posts by Cynthia Johnston about items from the "Holding the Vision" exhibition

Diana or Christ? **Edwin Long (1829-1881)** **by Anthea Purkis**

Curator of Art, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, 11 November 2020



Would you give up your beliefs to live? Or would you die for them? For centuries, people have stood up for what they believe in and in extreme cases even die for it.

In this painting a young Christian woman is being forced by Roman soldiers to give up Christianity for paganism. In a jam packed stadium, the crowds are keenly waiting for her decision.

Although the Roman Empire was vast, it successfully absorbed people from different countries, languages and religions. Rather than focusing on differences, the Romans used religion to promote unity and loyalty in all corners of the empire. All of its citizens were expected to integrate their beliefs with Roman gods and to worship the Roman Emperor.

In the first few centuries after the death of Christ, Christians were a tiny and persecuted religion because they believed in only one God and refused to worship Roman gods. This was seen as bad for society as Pagans believed that by not respecting and worshipping the Gods, revenge would be sought with fire, flood or disease. In some parts of the Empire, Christians faced fierce persecution and were rounded up and killed as in this painting.

The painting is set in the Roman city of Ephesus, on the coast of modern day Turkey. All eyes are on the central character, a young Christian woman whose expression is heavy with the burden of making a life or death decision. Will she give up Christianity by offering incense to the statue of Diana, the goddess of hunting or will she refuse and be dragged away by the soldiers to be killed? Behind her, a Roman official holds up the certificate which guarantees her freedom as it records she has given up Christianity for paganism. Although her eyes are looking up towards Heaven, her body is leaning towards the altar of Diana. What will she decide? Diana or Christ?

Threats towards Christianity were also felt hundreds of years later in the Victorian period when this picture was painted in 1881. Christians were becoming increasingly concerned at new scientific ideas about the origins of life with the publication of Charles Darwin's influential books on evolutionary theory and of increasing secularism in society.

Although the Victorians were open to new ideas, many remained god-fearing Christians. Such was the popularity of this painting, that the artist painted two.

The painting that we have on display was originally shown at the opening of Blackburn Museum's New Art Gallery (now Victorian Gallery) in 1894, loaned by Mrs Thwaites. Alongside the catalogue entry for the painting at the opening exhibition for the New Art Gallery in 1894 was this poem written by J B Greenwood inspired by the scene depicted by Edwin Long RA in Diana or Christ? This excerpt taken from the end of the poem describes the moment that the young lady makes her difficult choice –

“Tempt me no more; not one grain will I cast,
Denying Him who gave His life for mine;
Into his hands my spirit I resign,
Lead on; the bitterness of death is past!”

Diana or Christ? became part of the permanent collection when it was donated at the end of World War One in 1919 as a tribute to the local men who fought and died in a war, which ultimately was about fighting and dying for what you believed in.

The information label on the frame says –

A tribute of admiration to all those of Blackburn who went forth to battle for their King and Country's cause and who by their self-sacrifice and gallantry helped to achieve a glorious victory in the Great War 1914 – 1918.

When the painting was displayed in 1919 visitors were given leaflets which helped them to interpret the painting and understand its relevance to them. The young lady featured in the painting is sacrificing her life for her beliefs just as the soldiers who fought sacrificed their lives for our futures –

This picture is presented to keep ever in the memory of the Blackburn people the great Choice that was made by our men in the Great War, and to help their children to make a similar choice for the Right in all the circumstances of Life.

BANK HOUSE by Barbara Riding

When I was first married we rented a ground floor flat in a large Victorian house. It took a while to realise, that if I stood on the front door step and looked over the wall, I could see the drive leading up to the front porch of Bank House, said to be the oldest house in Blackburn. I was amazed. Whoever could have granted permission in the 1800s to build a house on to the wall of Bank House.

Many years later I met Maime Wilson who lived there and she invited me in. She took me to see a tiny narrow room in the kitchen there and take a photograph. At the end of it was a blocked-up window which when the house was first built would have looked out on a garden or fields rolling up over Revidge.



The Wilson family lived in Bank House for 100 years. In 2014 after we had witnessed the unveiling of the plaque honouring John Noel Nichols, the creator of Vimto, who had been born there, Philip Wilson asked Ray Smith if the Local History Society would like a tour of the house at a later date. Unfortunately Philip died before this could happen.

When the house came up for sale, I contacted Marketa, Philip's widow and she invited me to have a look round. She took me through each room to see the architecture and the antiques, the lovely long window sills and the row of bells that were rung in the past to summon the servants. Up the stairs in a little front room there was a special window. Over two hundred and fifty years ago, someone had scratched on the glass.

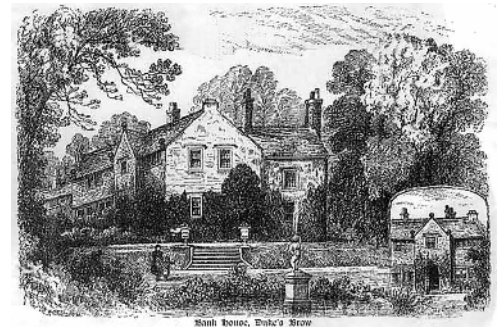


The Spewing Laddie and the Broken Window

Sadly, some young person, in the past had climbed up a nearby tree, swung onto the window and cracked it! Fortunately, there was a framed statement on the wall nearby so one can read what it once had said.

Several years ago, the little statue, nicknamed the Spewing Laddie because it was attached to a small fountain, was stolen from the garden. It was eventually recovered but Philip never replaced it. That day I was led down a secret entrance into the cellar, and there he was, recumbent on a cushion on a stone shelf.

I wonder who has bought Bank House and is there anyone in Blackburn caring for its conservation



Bank House with the Spewing Laddie in the garden. Print after Charles Haworth, provided by the Lancashire Telegraph for use in the Cotton Town digitisation project.

*Heaven protect this house and you
Until you bid this world adieu.
August 15th 1744.*

ROMAN RELICS FOUND IN A LANCASHIRE GARDEN

Before moving to Blackburn, we lived for 28 years in Ribchester in a house converted from a coach-house and stable. Immediately behind it are the remains of a 2nd century Roman Bathhouse. It was partially uncovered in 1837 when many stones and pillars were taken up and used in nearby buildings. Our house had clearly recognisable pillar bases built into its walls.

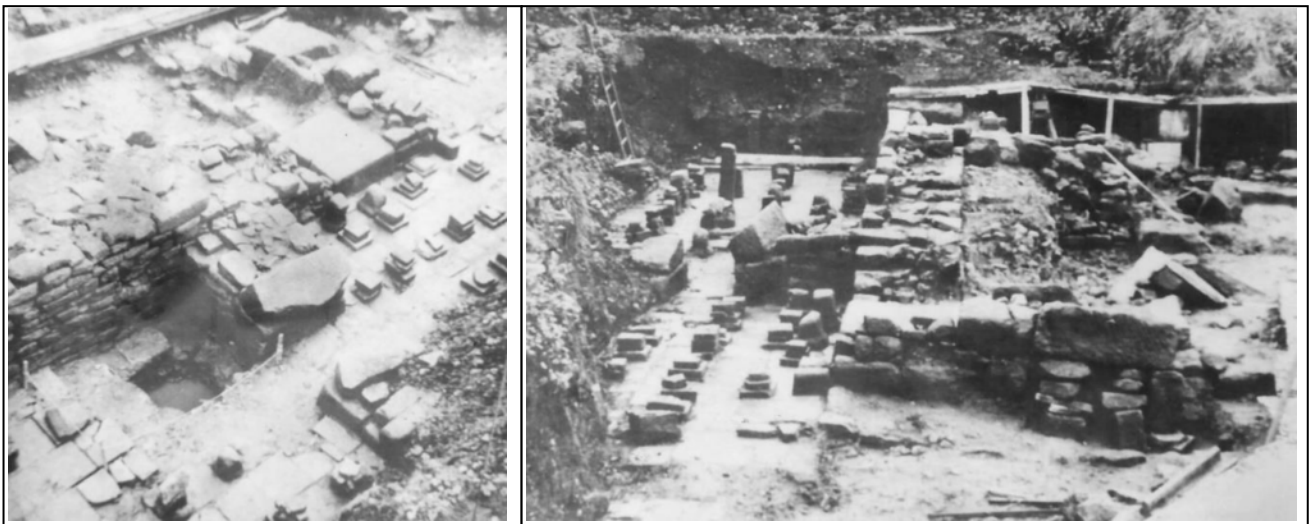
A limited official excavation took place in 1927 when this photograph was taken with what was to become our house in the background (The whole site was in the curtilage of the building).



It was not until the 1960s that the full extent of the bathhouse was exposed by a team of amateur archaeologists who worked most weekends over a four year period.

Unfortunately they could not get any assistance from professional bodies to conserve the remains so the red brick tiles and stone pillars were covered over with soil to protect them.

The two photographs below were taken during those excavations.



In the 1970s the owner of the site sold it to the council in order to have it preserved for the public and in 1978 Lancashire County Council organised a re-excavation. The following year we moved into our house and began doing the conversion work including digging out part of the garden to provide rear access to the ground floor. In doing this I found a piece of pottery and wondered if it

was Roman. I took it over to the archaeologist working in the bath-house who confirmed that it was. More digging unearthed dozens more pieces of all shapes, sizes and materials. Here are our children helping with the digging in 1979. Some pottery just unearthed is on the stone to the left.



Stephen, on the right, has worked at Blackburn Museum for almost 30 years – the museum’s longest serving employee!

When the archaeologists left, all the tiles and pillars were put in storage leaving only the outer walls of the various rooms. Unfortunately if left in situ they would have had to be enclosed in a building which was financially out of the question.

Lancashire Museums Service advertised for someone to open and lock up the site and keep it tidy. Being right next door, I offered my services and became the 'Bath-House Warden' for the next 25 years.

On the right is my display of the pottery, tiles and other artefacts we found in our garden. On the top shelf – and seen below - is a bowl that is almost complete.



It was in pieces when I found it and it looked as if it had been smashed on the spot. I was able to cement it back together.

I find this piece of Samian ware on the right to be particularly fascinating. It has a figure etched on it presumably by a Roman soldier nearly 2000 years ago so he could identify which bowl was his.



Another favourite item is this piece of tile that I first thought had the maker's fingerprints embedded in it. However from their shape it seems more likely to have been a dog or a fox walking across it whilst it was still wet and drying.



Stephen came in one day with a very small oval 'stone' that he had found whilst out playing. It had a figure on it and at first I dismissed it as being from a child's toy. However we took it to the Ribchester Museum where we were told that it was a Roman intaglio, probably made of glass. Since then I have seen many intaglios in museums but never one as small as this one.

In 2017 I took advantage of the opportunity to have some of our finds assessed at Blackburn Museum by Stuart Noon, who visited regularly working for the Portable Antiquities Scheme organised by the Trustees of the British Museum. He recorded and photographed 26 items to go on the scheme's database at www.finds.org.uk

The first item I took was Stephen's intaglio. Here is part of Stuart's description and photograph of it:

An intaglio of Roman date 1st to 4th C. It is possibly blue glass or more likely blue onyx and depicts a scene of a standing figure. It has an oval face with steep sloping sides. Onyx stones with outer white surfaces were carved to create the banded navy/black light blue seen in this example. The diameter is 6mm. and the weight 0.14g.



Its Database reference is LANCOM-2FB9C6

Here are a few more items he recorded together with the Database references (which need to be prefixed by LANCOM-) for more information.



Two sections of amphora handle. Ref: 37E141 and 37F37D



ABOVE Broken copper alloy tweezers.
Ref: 2FC6D9

RIGHT Top of a ring-necked flagon.
Ref: 2F9376

BELOW and BELOW RIGHT Terra Sigillata
(Samian) shards from the walls of bowls.
Ref: 2FA3ED and 2FAB05



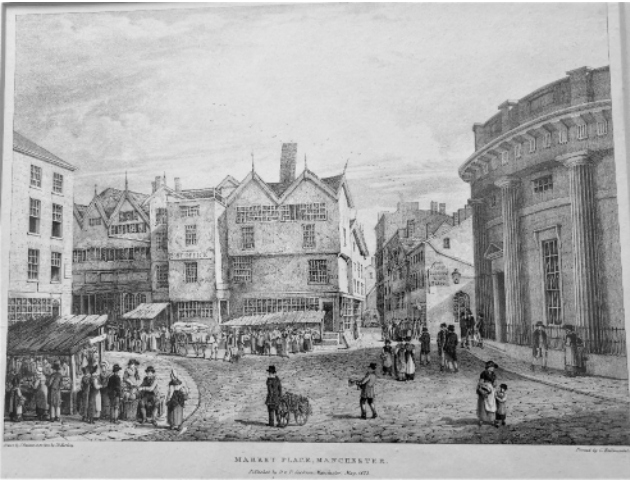
This is a shard from a black-burnished cooking pot with lattice work decoration.

A piece of terracotta wall or floor tile marked with grooves.



One slight disappointment was that I never managed to find a Roman coin! I thought I had struck lucky one day when I did come across a coin - only to find it was a silver halfgroat of Henry VIII issued between 1526 and 1532. As such it is probably more valuable than most Roman coins! It is on the Database, ref: 3F2661.

KEN FORD



All Change in Manchester

Bruce Kitchin,



These lithographic prints, purchased several years ago, show two Manchester scenes as they were in the early part of the 1820's. They bear the titles, **“Market Place, Manchester”** and **“Smithy Door Looking Towards Cateaton Street”**.

By 1820 the phenomenal growth in Manchester's population was placing a huge strain on the movement of people and traffic. The principal thoroughfare, Market Street was “very narrow and inconvenient, and in its present state, dangerous for the persons and carriages passing through the same”.

In July 1821, an Act of Parliament was obtained giving the necessary powers for the widening of Market Street and the improvement of certain other streets. Seventy-two Commissioners under the chairmanship of Thomas Fleming were appointed to carry into effect the provisions of the Act. The work took twenty years to complete at a cost of £232,925 14s. 0d.

It was realised that many of the oldest and most picturesque buildings were about to be pulled down, and Messrs D & P

Jackson decided to publish their **“Views of the Ancient Buildings of Manchester”**.

The original drawings were by John Ralston, a local artist, and were then drawn on smooth stone tablets by a group of lithographic draughtsmen, comprising A Aglio, D Dighton, J D Harding, G Harley and Ralston himself. The intention was to produce four parts of five prints. Although Ralston produced enough drawings to complete the series, only two complete parts and an additional two prints were issued. It is true to say that without these prints, we would only have a very sketchy idea of the appearance of old Market Street and the surrounding area.

In 1975 a facsimile edition of the Views was published by Hugh Broadbent, Oldham, with the addition of extensive notes. Even incomplete copies of Jackson's original Views are now extremely rare, but a complete copy containing the first ten plates, from the Victoria and Albert Museum, was made available for reproduction. Copies of the additional two prints published, plus a copy of the Smithy Door print were made available from other sources.

The Market Place print, the first in the series, was published in May 1823. It depicts the Market Place just prior to the start of the street widening scheme. It is not known when the market was established, but a document dated 1359 stated that it been held “from a time to which memory goeth not”. The market was held on every day of the week except Sunday with Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday being devoted largely to the sale of meat and fish as well as manufactured goods. The fish included salmon from the Ribble, also herrings, soles and flounders from the north-west coast, and haddock, cod and lobsters from the Yorkshire coast. The quantity of butcher's meat sold every Saturday was said to be almost beyond belief, and for quality to be equal at least, to that sold in any other market in the United Kingdom.

To the right of the picture is the Exchange, now the Royal Exchange. The buildings straight ahead are on the site now occupied by the Arndale Centre, with Marks and Spencer now on the left.

The Smithy Door print dates from June 1825 and was not included in the original series. It appears to have escaped notice until discovered in a collection of Lancashire prints sold at Sotheby's in 1975. It is probable that only a very few copies were printed.

Smithy Door was a narrow twisting thoroughfare running from the Market Place to the junction of Cateaton Street and Deansgate. The view shows the bottom end with the tower of the Collegiate Church, now the Cathedral, in the background. The area was known for its pot and crockery dealers who displayed their wares outside their premises. The black and white building with three gables had once been a substantial residence but was now divided into shops and warehouses. The street looks peaceful enough, but on Saturdays it was a market for the sale of butter, eggs, poultry, vegetables and domestic pets, and became a scene of utter pandemonium.

According to tradition, Smithy Door is said to have acquired its name from a court action brought by a local blacksmith against one of his customers for non-payment of an account. The blacksmith did not keep proper books but recorded his transactions on the back of the smithy door. Knowing this, the debtor demanded that proof of the debt should be produced in court. The blacksmith then ran to his smithy, took the smithy door off its hinges and, to the loud applause of all present, carried it into the court.

A British Book Collector: Rare Books and Manuscripts in the R.E. Hart Collection, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery

Cynthia Johnston (Editor)

Review by Mike Millward



The Deposition from The Blackburn Missal (Hart MS 20918) with the arms and possibly a portrait of Antonio Pancera (1350?-1431)

Those of us lucky enough to attend the conference at Blackburn College on the Hart Collection in November 2017 (yes, it was that long ago) heard a number of distinguished international scholars talk about various aspects of the Hart Collection. It was the culmination of a series of events encouraged by Cynthia Johnston of the School of Advanced Studies, London University, whose interest in the Collection began in 2012 and has since resulted in 2 exhibitions each in London and Blackburn, 3 conferences, publications, and even a dramatic production about Edward Hart's life performed in the semi-derelict and freezing cold Blackburn Cotton Exchange. For me, having known the Hart Collection for my entire working life, all this attention is a source of great pleasure, even if tinged with a little envy.

Most of the chapters in this book were first presented at the Blackburn conference. The length of time that has elapsed since is no doubt partly due to the pandemic, but also, I suspect, to the difficulty of getting a diverse group of academics to produce the goods. The results have been worth waiting for: the list of contributors is impressive, all their offerings make excellent reading and the book is beautifully illustrated.

This article is hardly a review – I wish I had sufficient scholarship to attempt a review of the work of so many distinguished academics. It is merely a brief summary by one who has been closely involved with the Hart Collection for more than fifty years.

After an introduction by Cynthia Johnston, we are treated to David McKitterick's examination of Hart's motives as a collector and benefactor. This is followed by Nigel Morgan's masterly discussion of the English 13th century Blackburn Psalter and its place in English manuscript production. I well remember Prof. Morgan's first visit to the Museum in 1979, and

realising we had been contemporaries on the same course as undergraduates. (His subsequent career was rather more successful than mine). Indirectly that visit ultimately led to Cynthia Johnston's involvement with the collection and so to this publication.

Roman scholar Francesca Manzani, while shining fresh light on the influences at work in the production of the spectacular Italian Missal of 1400, shows its early owner to have been Antonio Pancera, correcting a 16th century mistake which was still causing confusion until recently.

Scot McKendrick's thorough reappraisal of the Blackburn Hours, a work of the Master of Edward IV, calls for further research into this remarkable and important manuscript.

An entertaining and absorbing discussion by Eric White demonstrates how much can be learned from three apparently insignificant fragments of the earliest substantial books printed in Mainz, the cradle of European printing.

Cleo Cantone speculates whether the devout Hart's motivation in assembling his small collection of Oriental manuscripts was perhaps to make "a virtual pilgrimage."

Cynthia Johnston presents the results of her research into the extent, methods and background of book collecting by Hart and his contemporaries in Preston, Blackburn and Burnley; collections which are now in our local museums and libraries.

The final chapter is Rebecca Darley's persuasive discussion of the complex value of collections like Hart's, making a strong case for keeping and caring for them where they are: ". . . it is in the national interest to support, protect and cherish the treasures of museums like Blackburn. It is of global relevance that they be known, published and explored." Strong words indeed.

In conclusion, I beg you all to remember that Edward Hart made a most generous, carefully considered, conscious decision to leave his collection to the people of Blackburn. Local government is currently in a parlous financial state, and the pandemic is not helping. There may come a time when local council leaders come to value the collection in a different light, and we must be on our guard against any assault on Hart's intentions.

I will allow Eric White, an eminent scholar from Princeton, thousands of miles away in the United States, to sum up Edward Hart's contribution to his home town:

"Clearly, Hart's decision to acquire the three fragments under discussion was a wise and foresightful one. Together, they preserve specimens of three of the earliest typefaces used in Europe, and they represent the first three substantial books printed with moveable types in the west. Only five libraries worldwide - in Paris, Berlin, London, Manchester and Princeton - own integral bound copies of all three books, and hardly any other private libraries have ever included fragments from all three Although nothing can substitute for the study of complete copies of great books, a collection that has made room for such fragments is one that has pursued the most practical and the most noble of instincts."

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A British Book Collector, Edited by Cynthia Johnston, 229 × 152 mm, 248 pp, Paperback: 978-0-9927257-9-2, £30 (See below for details of a 30% discount available to Museum Friends)

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When the Museum & Art Gallery re-opens

20th Century Art
The Contemporary Art Society
at Blackburn: 1950-1970

Anthea Purkis,
 Curator of Art, Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery

In the latest Government Roadmap out of Covid, indoor entertainment venues, including Museums and Art Galleries, are due to reopen on May 17th 2021. We hope to reopen our doors on Wednesday 19th May with a new exhibition, **20th Century Art: The Contemporary Art Society at Blackburn: 1950-1970**.

Contemporary Art is a fluid term, a naturally moving point in time. When art is described as contemporary then strictly speaking it is the work of a living artist, although it can encompass the relatively recent past and artwork of an innovative nature.

The Contemporary Art Society was founded in 1910 to encourage an awareness and appreciation of contemporary art across Britain by purchasing key pieces and donating them to public museums and galleries.

In this exhibition, we are showing a selection of the contemporary art pieces presented to Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery by the Contemporary Art Society between 1950s – 1970s. Although no longer classed as contemporary the art in this collection is representative of the specific art genres and styles of their period.



NEAR CLAYTON, SUSSEX. PRESENTED BY THE CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY. 1952. A.W. RICH.



Illustrations	
Top	Alfred William Rich (1856-1921): <i>Near Clayton, Sussex</i>
Left	William Rothenstein (1872-1945) <i>Mervilly, 1917</i>

Was the earliest cinema in England in Blackburn?

At about the time the pandemic was gathering force a year ago, Museum Friend Pat Gavin came across a claim that the earliest cinema in England was near Eanam Wharf in Blackburn, but long since demolished. He asked local theatre enthusiast Eric Nolan for clarification (although Eric does not claim any special cinema knowledge), and this was the reply:

I remember this was claimed for many years, however it was not so, but like the Loch Ness Monster, publicity was made of it for cunning business purposes!

The very first cinema in England was the Kineopticon, opened in London on the 21st March 1896 by Birt Acres at 2 Piccadilly Mansions at the junction of Shaftesbury Avenue and Piccadilly Circus. It showed a series of short silent films, but was destroyed by fire shortly after opening. In the same year on 28th September the first Moving Picture Show opened in Blackburn at the Lyceum Music Hall, Market Street Lane. 100 years later in 1996 a British Film Institute Plaque was placed on what was by then Margo Grimshaw's "Never Never Land" & "C'est La Vie" nightclub.

The Victoria Assembly Rooms on Eanam Bridge was converted to a cinema around 1907. It was not far from the Alexandra Cinema in Dock Street, with both claiming to be the first cinema in the country. By 1927 the Victoria was managed by the Charnley family, and was re-named Charnley's Pictures.

About 1941 it was re-named the Victoria Cinema. It closed suddenly in April 1960, when staff had difficulty opening doors inside the building. Cracks appeared, and the cinema was closed and shored up. A sink hole was



The plaque and a corbel now at the Empire Theatre, Ewood after rescue from the original Lyceum Music Hall when it was demolished. The photo shows Susan Valentine, Michael Berry, Anthony Valentine (Theatre Honorary President), Margo Grimshaw and Eric Nolan.

found beneath the building and Higher Eanam road outside was closed. The building was demolished and the site is now a car park for the factory next door.



From age 11 to 20 I lived in nearby Audley Lane where my Mum ran a corner sweets & tobacco shop, and we would sometimes go to see films on Thursday, half-day closing. I remember seeing "The Song of Bernadette" at the Alexandra and later at the Victoria, I well remember seeing (this time with my sister!) Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" - however there was no trouble and no seats ripped out as at some showings elsewhere, despite the warnings of the local Watch Committee, and the expectant hopes of the local rags !



The Alexandra Cinema building in Dock Street is claimed to have been commenced in 1906, but because it did not open until three years later, other purpose-built cinemas had also sprung up. It was initially called Pendleton's Picture Palace after the brothers who built it: a title which was contracted to 'Penks'. It is not listed in the 1914 Kinematograph Year Book.

James Ainsworth and his son-in-law John Hudson took over the hall in March 1917. It was referred to as the Alexandra Picture Hall on 25 May 1917 in the Lancashire Evening Post report of the coroner's inquest into the suicide of the 57 year-old Ainsworth. He had hanged himself from the hall's balcony supports early one morning when there to do his daily cleaning stint. He was said to have been "worried . . . about the picture business", having been in it for only "eight weeks". Tragically, business was described as "good". Prior to that, since the age of eight he had worked in cotton mills.

By 1927 the hall is named Alexandra Picture Theatre, with B. Ainsworth and John Hudson listed as the proprietors until 1954,

The Victoria Cinema, Eanam Bridge (Jim Halsall for use in the Cotton Town digitisation project: www.cottontown.org)
And The Alexandra Cinema, Dock Street (Blackburn Library)

when ownership passed to 'Alexandra (Blackburn) Ltd'; The change coinciding with closure for renovation and the installation of Western Electric equipment to replace the original sound system by Gramo-Radio of Church near Accrington.

Again, in my time in Blackburn, the cinemas were still referred to as "Charnley's " & "Penks", and folk would come into our shop on a Friday evening to buy cigarettes and sweets on their way to the "flicks".

Glad to be able to put the records straight.

Eric Nolan

Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim, Norway by John Turkington



A couple of years ago I was admitted to the heart unit in Trondheim, Norway. My son flew out to help Sylvia, my wife, with caring for me. I had never been to Trondheim before so as soon as I was fit enough, I persuaded him to push me out in a wheelchair to view the town, which is in the northern half of the country. He did rather struggle as the wheelchair, the only one the hospital could loan me, had one wheel missing. The highlight of the trip was to visit Nidaros (the old name for Trondheim) cathedral. It is the most northerly Gothic cathedral in the world.

It was a sight to take my breath away, also my son's as we had going uphill all the way. He had been there before, with Sylvia, to a service while I lazed in bed but I was astonished by this vision of towers, spires and decorated frontage rising up from trees and parkland in the bow of a river just south of Arctic Norway. There were even pilgrims carrying heavy crosses over their shoulders as they trudged towards the entrance.

In mediaeval times it was place of pilgrimage to rival Canterbury as it contained the bones of St. Olaf, the patron saint of Norway. It still does though no one knows where they are. Over the centuries, the building has suffered many catastrophic fires and periods of complete neglect leading to dereliction. Somewhere in this maze of time and destruction the original whereabouts of the saint was lost which has not stopped it still being a place of pilgrimage.

The whole building as we now see it is the result of over 100 years of intense restoration, employing generations of masons, carpenters, wood carvers and painters. Many parts are original, dating back to the 12th century with additions over time as in any ancient building, though it was actually founded in 1070.

I was wheeled to the adjoining café for coffee, cinnamon buns and warmth after a tour of the exterior. We could not go inside the cathedral as it was being used for a special service for a very large band of pilgrims so here is what my son thought of the interior.

'As mother and I walked in we snuck a couple of hymn books off a cart to help us pass as locals, hopefully avoiding us being targeted for donations or conversion, this is good advice when visiting any church.

The door was about a third the way along the cathedral, directly to the left of the door was a choir singing away which struck me as unusual, being more used to seeing them situated at the front, although it had the wonderful effect of bathing you in music on entering the church.

We scurried towards wooden chairs towards the back of the church. I had been expecting the colours inside the cathedral to just reflect the stone grey exterior, however parts of the interior, probably it was the woodwork round the organ pipes, were painted bright turquoise and yellow.

The colour of the stained glass in the main windows at the front and back were quite striking, with cobalt blues and strong pink/purples.'



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.

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.

We also plan each year's programme. John Turkington is the principal organiser here, but we all need to suggest topics and speakers to ensure a varied and stimulating programme. John then sorts out the dates and bookings. As everyone is acutely aware, the last year did not go as planned! The last part of the 2019-2020 programme had to be cancelled, followed by the eventual cancellation of the whole of the current years planned events. As detailed elsewhere in this issue of *Tela*, John has been delivering an amazing programme of weekly Lockdown Lectures. Hopefully we will be able to resume our museum-based activities for next season.

Our Secretary, Sarah Gill will be resigning when we are able to hold an AGM. Mike Millward has offered to stand as her replacement and is currently acting as assistant secretary.

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 exhibition.

Valerie Miles

Committee Members

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

Valerie Miles, Chairman
Mike Millward, Co-opted member (and
Assistant Secretary)
Janine Monaghan, Member
Robert M Svarc, Co-opted 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