

HAPPENINGS

February 2007



Welcome

Since there has been a break in the production of the newsletters due to unforeseen circumstances (and Christmas) it makes sense to briefly describe what has happened at the Forum meetings since the last newsletter was produced in November. So here goes.

The December meeting saw an invited speaker, **Andrew Curtis**, who gave a very interesting talk on Rock Art. He



was clearly enthusiastic about the subject and illustrated his talk with some particularly spectacular photographs of examples in the Northumberland landscape. For those who were not already aware it became clear that Northumberland is particularly well endowed with excellent examples and they have been extremely well documented by Stan Beckensall over a thirty-plus year period. Stan has produced a number of books on the subject and has donated his research to Newcastle University. It is all now accessible on the university website at

www.rockart.ncl.ac.uk. The more famous images are known as Cups & Rings.

Also in the December meeting we were treated to a demonstration of Découpage by **Dory Fawcett**, ably assisted by **Joyce Johnson** before having a go ourselves. This involved the production of three dimensional cards which was particularly appropriate with Christmas approaching.

In January we had a short talk by **Mike Kirkup** about his experiences as a Wansbeck writer before **Jason Thompson** led a particularly interesting Creative Writing Workshop. **Andy Curtis** had us in stitches with his "Pineapple" rendering and **Rebecca de Wessington** had us in tears with her very personal prose about an episode in her life. We were also treated to particularly pleasing pieces of writing by **Liz Curtis**, **Maureen Anderson**, **Simon Minnis**, **Eddie Galvin** and **Alan Vinters**. We were all invited to have a go which we did with varying levels of success.

The Winter Arts competition was judged by **Alan Thompson**. Sir John Riddle

was unable to attend at the last moment. And so we come to the February meeting which was...



The AGM

The first major item on the agenda was to elect officers for the Forum, the present officers having resigned at the end of their twelve months in office. **Eddie Galvin** was re-elected to the Chair after being suitably proposed and seconded. **Jason Thompson** was re-elected to Vice Chair and **Alan Vinters** was re-elected to be Treasurer but **Rebecca de Wessington** did not seek re-election to be Secretary since she has taken up a new post as PR Manager. **Rebecca McCready** was elected as the new Secretary.

Alan Vinters gave a short presentation concerning the wisdom and viability of applying for charitable status. The main points were that doing so would open the door to greater funding and would also remove the personal accountability of the committee members. It was agreed that we should adopt, in principle, the idea of applying for charitable status to enable the committee to make further detailed enquiries. They will report back at the next meeting.

Eddie drew the meeting's attention to a number of points.

Subscriptions are due and should be paid to **Rebecca McCready** who will register members

Volunteers are sought for a number of worthwhile causes.

For the Healthy Living Centre which is once a month at 9.30am usually on a Tuesday.

For St. Bartholomew's Pageant Steering Group. This is ad hoc but usually once a month.

For the Funding Group / Exhibition Group / Business Development Forum.

For help with the Kids' Art Forum - next meeting 5pm, 5th March at Simonside Hall.

For help with the Summer Arts Spectacular.

For help with the 2008 Calendar.

Arts Forum Tee Shirts are on sale at £8 each and although Eddie could not guarantee that they would make anybody look as handsome as him he assured us that they would nevertheless represent a good bargain and would help to promote the Forum.

Eddie also asked members to indicate their interest in any of the following activities:-

First meeting of the Creative Writing Group.

Photography Group - next meeting at the Black Pearl, 6.30pm 15th February.

Tickets for Rigaletto now £16

Adult Reading Group next meeting 21st February at the Library. Current book : "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night."

Ceramics and Painting Groups. Next meeting 24th February from 10am in the People's House. The Painting Group also meets from 12pm each Tuesday.

Trip to Shipley Art Gallery. Saturday 24th February. Meet 10am at the Sports Centre. Return to Newbiggin 4pm. £4.50 per head (museum free) Please book with **Gillian Perfect** asap.

Joyce Johnson has completed her MIDAS training successfully and is now qualified to drive the Watbus. She can take us where we want to go!

Moving On

Jason Thompson took us through a brief tour of the Art Forum's website and explained how we could contribute to its success and how we could participate in the site's blog. If you have still not visited the site go now - www.newbigginartsforum.org.

The meeting was divided into six groups to discuss and give a response to a number of set topics which **Laura Mathieson** then collated on a flip chart. The aim was to analyse the findings and engage in further discussion about them. We ran out of time to do this and also to discuss the Summer Arts Spectacular so time will be set aside at a future meeting for both these issues.

Peter Fairburn and his group of folk musicians entertained us after the formal meeting was ended. He asked how many people in the meeting were musical instrument players and received a surprisingly positive response. He was disappointed, therefore, that folk music did not feature prominently in the

Forum's agenda and expressed the hope that this might be addressed in due course.

Thanks to **Andy Curtis** for a particularly impressive November production of the newsletter. **Pete Seddon** has undertaken to carry on this responsibility, at least for the foreseeable future, and Andy will be a hard act to follow! Contact Pete on **01670 817029** or email PS@pseddon.demon.co.uk with anything you want included in future newsletters. Why not write a piece about your group or your recent visit or any other interesting experience you want to share?

Kids' Forum



The first meeting was held on Monday 5th February in Simonside Hall. It was well attended by about twenty-five children and their parents. They ranged in age from 7 to 10 (that's the children - not the parents!) Since the Pop Art workshop for the adults had been a success it was decided to do a similar thing for the youngsters but with a more appropriate subject content. So a



range of photocopied images of the likes of Harry Potter, Johnny Depp, McFly, a mini (car) et al were provided from which they could choose their own. Then they were shown how to use watercolour paints to colour in the images in the garish manner of Andy Warhol in his series of Pop Art Silkscreen prints from the sixties. Not only were they keen to get started but they were good. Most managed to do more than one in the time. When the paint had dried (is there a case here for acquiring a communal hairdryer?) the images were cut out and stuck down on brightly coloured backgrounds to emphasize them. Everybody enjoyed themselves immensely (including the mainly watching parents although some of them joined in) and considering this was after a full day at school they had enormous energy! We had a visit from the Community Policeman - but everybody was too busy to really notice him. The important thing to notice here is that everybody enjoyed themselves and produced something worthwhile. Young children are far less inhibited than adults and this resulted in some super work. Our thanks must go to **Kelly Newcombe** who so enthusiastically ran the workshop (after she had had a full day at school as well). Thanks also to **Carla Hall**, the Methodist minister for allowing the use of the church hall.

The next Kids' Forum is on March 5th at 5pm in Simonside Hall again. We are hoping to do some ceramics.



Groups

The **Ceramics Group** has now met twice on the last Saturday of the month at the People's House. The next meeting will be on 24 February from 10am until 4pm. Come along at any time during this period and have a go. Topics covered so far have included preparing clay, making pinch and coil pots, making slab pots and glazing with paint-on glazes. The completed pots were delivered to the Forum meeting for collection.

Members of the **Painting Group** have been visiting the Cobweb Orchestra at the Leisure Centre for a number of weeks now. The idea has been to draw and paint the musicians during their rehearsals. There have been some new members joining the now flourishing **Painting Group** including a wee trainee blind guide dog that enjoys eating shoelaces. Other members are welcome.

The **Photographic Group** is scheduled to meet again in the Black Pearl on February 15th at 6.30pm



What's On

Music at St. Bartholomew's. Summer concerts in Newbiggin by the Sea at 3pm on Sunday Afternoons.

April 22 - The Solingen Quartet

May 13 - The New Tyneside Chamber Orchestra

June 10 - 20,000 Voices (plus a workshop)

July 8 - Heavenly Harps

August 12 - The Denlyn Quartet & Friends

September 9th - Soul Doubt

Entrance programmes are £5 per concert, available at the door. Season tickets for all six performances can be purchased for £25 from **Mrs. E. Underhill**, Concert Secretary, 106 Wansbeck Road, Ashington, NE63 8JD or ring Revd. **Judith Grieve** on 01670 817220 for more details.

Alnwick Playhouse. **Catherine Stott**
"Paintings from Music" Fri 2 February
- Sat 24 February. Well worth a visit.

The Aurora Project A network of Northumbrian artists and Craftspeople offering Open Studios, Workshops, Exhibitions and Special Events. Information from (www.theauroraproject.org.uk) or booklet available in local libraries or from Project Manager Brian Reid, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF 01670 534756

Public Art Walks in Tyne and Wear. Nine easy routes in Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, North Tyneside & South Tyneside. Booklet available from most libraries or information from www.northeastengland.co.uk

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Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. South Shore Road, Gateshead 0191 478 1810

The Biscuit Factory. Stoddart Street, Newcastle. 0191 261 1103

Globe City. Curtis Mayfield House, Carlisle Square, Newcastle. 0191 222 1666

Hatton Gallery. University of Newcastle. 0191 222 6059

Laing Art Gallery. New Bridge Street, Newcastle. 0191 232 7734

Shipleigh Art Gallery. Prince Consort Road, Gateshead. 0191 477 1495

University Gallery. University of Northumbria, Sandyford Road, Newcastle 0191 227 4424

Side (Photographic) Gallery, 9 The Side, Newcastle. 0191 232 2208

Waygood Gallery, 37 High Bridge, Newcastle .191 221 1712



The Painting Group at the People's Centre

Peter Fairburn entertains at the AGM

The Painting Group at the People's Centre

Jason Thompson serenades the AGM

Jean concentrating at the AGM

Surprising Joyce

Don't forget to submit your news, articles, photographs, etc., for inclusion in future newsletters.