

HAPPENINGS

March 2007



Welcome

Eddie Galvin welcomed everyone to the March meeting, especially newcomers, and read out apologies for absence from Alan & Pip Driver, Keith Tait, Claire Cooper & Judith Grieve. He then reminded the meeting that subs were due (to Rebecca McCready) and explained that they had been set at £2 per year. There were still T-shirts available for £8 all sizes.



Eddie was looking for volunteers to distribute flyers for future events. Jean offered to do Spittal and Bankhouse; Irene offered to do the Colliery; Jen took the Library; Alan K volunteered to do Dixon's Corner and we are still looking for a volunteer to do White House Corner & Betty's. The flyers will be available for collection from Pride of Northumbria, Front Street, on the Saturday after each Forum meeting. Eddie went on to thank Eva Hartley for volunteering to represent the Forum on Newbiggin CAP and is still looking for volunteers to meet at the Healthy Living Centre (once a month, usually Tuesday at 9.30am), and to be part of St. Bartholomew's Pageant Steering Group (ad hoc but usually once a month).



Artists' Showcase

A large selection of work was displayed for the meeting to have a look at. The major part was a superb collection of photographs by the Photographic Group.

Eddie invited the exhibitors to talk about their work and to break the ice explained a little about his own submission which he called Meteor Sky. This was a response to witnessing an imagined meteor shower while in the Australian Outback. He called the style dot art - based on Aboriginal Art and enthused about how anybody could easily make a visual response to any subject using simple materials and simple techniques.

Eva Hartley accepted his invitation to talk but said she wanted to talk more about the painting group than her work and paid tribute to Keith Tait and Alan & Pip Driver who had been instrumental in developing her interest and her level of achievement. She emphasised that she had only started painting in September last and by way of exploration had tried out a variety of media including pencil, pastel, oil pastel, charcoal, acrylic and gouache. She had been encouraged to paint light and later to paint music. These exercises had broken down her preconceptions about art and instilled much greater confidence in her. She was able to go on to explore a greater range of possibilities derived from her feelings about the subject matter.

She said her husband bought her some oil paints for Christmas and her attempts at oil painting stem from then. She explored a range of subject starting points until Pam Shears invited her to paint the view from her house, which overlooks the bay from the lifeboat station. Eva held up her attempt at this challenge which she called "Sea and Sky" emphasising that what she had achieved was as a direct result of

enjoying herself, believing in herself and learning from those who surrounded her in the Painting Group. She hoped that this short story and the results on display would encourage others to pursue similar avenues.

Remember the Painting Group meets every Tuesday from 12pm in the Healthy Living Centre (People's House) on Woodhorn Road. It also meets on the last Saturday of each month from 10am onwards. Everybody is welcome!



Guest Speaker

Hala, representing North Northumberland Women's Network, gave an informative talk about the aims and achievements of the organisation. Although these were not necessarily all arts based she concentrated on describing some of the activities that did fall into the arts category. These included Trans National Co-operation, Women's Workshops, Support for Women into Learning, Enterprise Support, Women by the Water, Website Production and Heritage. All these and many other activities can be accessed on the website - www.nnwn.org - for anybody wishing to follow up what was said at the meeting.

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.

Tonic at the Sports Centre Friday 23rd March 7pm £2 It's the year of the World Cup and four women are determined to get away from it all, but an uninvited guest and a suitcase full of money throw their well laid plans into disarray...Tonic is a story of courage, hope and survival. Performed by Open Clasp Theatre Co., a women's Theatre Group.

Ctrl-Alt-Del + Pub Quiz. At Riverside Leisure Centre, Morpeth, Friday 16th March Charity Event - Minimum donation £3

Music & Ice. Hirst Park Ashington Sat/Sun 24/25 March 10-5 Activities include a synthetic ice rink, live local music, arts & crafts appetiser sessions, real food taster sessions, raffle (1st prize Apple iPod) plus much more.

2008 Calendar

Rebecca McCready has undertaken to organise the 2008 Calendar and needs help from anybody who can pursue sponsorship, provide pictures or contribute in any other way. Please contact Rebecca at e-mail: Becky@newbigginartsforum.org



Groups

Next meeting of the **Photography Group** 12th June at 6.30pm at Pride of Northumbria, Front Street

Next meeting of the **Adult Reading Group** Wednesday 21st March at the Library (Current Books - Touching the Void & The Lady in White)

Next meeting of the **Ceramics Group** Saturday 31st March at the Healthy Living Centre, Woodhorn Road from 12pm.

Next Meeting of the **Painting Group** Saturday 31st March at the Healthy Living Centre, Woodhorn Road from 10am AND every Tuesday from 12pm.

Creative Writing Group. This doesn't exist as yet but Eddie is keen to get it established. If you have an interest in this area please let Eddie know so that plans can be made.

Trips Update

Rigoletto at the Theatre Royal. Tickets now £16 for 7.30pm performance on Wednesday 13th June. Contact Gillian Perfect (e-mail Gillian@newbigginarts-forum.org)



Dance Workshop

Representatives from Ashington High School Tribal Dance Group treated us to an excellent demonstration of their art before encouraging all those with the courage to have a go. The group was led by Ashleigh Poxon, the youth development worker, and is called Tribal Trouble. Holly Christie, Naomi Howard, Adele White and Jessie Short made up the group. Ashleigh explained that the dance was made up of a combination of belly dancing, flamenco and group improvisation. She explained something about the dress worn to emphasise the dance movements. Belts of coins and tokens were worn which when shaken made a shimmering noise. Different types of head dress were also worn and the overall effect was quite exotic. The music was mesmerising too. The dancers demonstrated a slow piece followed by a quicker piece (or was it the other way round?) Members of the forum were then invited to dress in various styles of belts and head dresses before being led by Ashleigh in their own dance spectacular. Margaret's belt kept falling off and Alan Vinters and Alan Kielty spent most of the time competing with each other! Everybody enjoyed themselves enormously, including those who didn't actually dance. The whole event was an introduction to yet another aspect of the arts. Tribal Trouble are fund-raising to send a group to Peru. We were only too happy to make a contribution to their collection.



Arts Council Debate

The Arts Council is undertaking a nationwide survey about the arts and has published a booklet called "The arts debate - About the consultation". Eddie encouraged everybody to take a copy together with a response sheet. If these could be returned duly completed it was a way of allowing everybody to have their say about the arts. More importantly, perhaps, a response of fifty plus from the people of Newbiggin was likely, at the very least, to put Newbiggin on the Arts Council map. It would also open the door to possible future funding. Everybody is strongly encouraged, therefore, to fill in a response sheet and return to the next Forum meeting on April 2nd so that they can be despatched collectively to the Arts Council.

Coloured Pencil Challenge

Eddie distributed a selection of coloured pencils - generously donated by Newbiggin Life - and invited everybody to produce a piece of work for display at next month's meeting. The results of the Crayon Challenge were on display but there wasn't enough time to discuss these.

Summer Spectacular

Laura Mathieson and Rebecca McCready are hoping to organise a Newbiggin Summer Spectacular on or about the weekend of 23/24th June. It is hoped to have a variety of events - a showcase gallery of work, stalls, mini workshops, cakes, tombola et al - for the whole weekend plus a scratch performance on the Sunday. This entails the preparation, rehearsal and performance of a short production all within one day - phew!

Volunteers are needed to help with the organisation and also to help on the days. Any help no matter how small will be greatly appreciated. Please contact Laura Mathieson on 01665 714471 (e-mail MthsnLaura@aol.com) or Rebecca McCready (e-mail Becky@newbigginarts-forum.org)



Funding / Exhibition / Business Development Forum.

It is important that volunteers are found to help with these three specific areas. We need a Funding Group to pursue public funding, an Exhibition Group to arrange and organise exhibitions and displays and a Business Development Forum to move us forward. Eddie did not have time to explain and discuss these needs at either of the last two meetings and it is now becoming more urgent. He hopes to include some time on the agenda of the next meeting for this purpose, but anybody who is interested in any aspect of these three areas is asked to contact Eddie before then.

March Kids' Forum

The second meeting was held in Simonside Hall on Monday 5th March. It was well attended by twenty-plus children accompanied by their parents. The children ranged in age from four years old to ten years old and all were able to produce some very exciting pottery work. They were shown how to roll out a slab of clay (a bit like making pastry but not as tasty) between two wooden laths of equal thickness. This ensures that the slab of clay produced is even in thickness all over. They then were shown how to impress a pattern into the clay using small portions of crochet work generously provided by grandma. Then a tin can (ex Heinz beans and similar) which had carefully had its bottom and all the sharp edges removed was placed onto the slab and pressed down into the clay in a similar way to using a pastry cutter. The excess clay was cleared away to reveal a circular, decorated slab which was then placed upside down on top of a hump mould made of plaster of Paris. This looked a little like a mushroom. The clay was then gently coaxed around the mushroom shape of the hump mould to form a dish (albeit upside down). A hair dryer was then used to dry the clay out a little so that it was stiff enough to remove from the mould and turn the right way up without collapsing. The children were raring to have a go themselves and went on to produce their pots. In many cases they produced more than one. Some older, more able children were shown some ways to embellish the basic pot by attaching feet, footrings and in some cases applied decoration around the rim of the pots. Some of the results were exceptional.

At the end of the session the pots were taken away to be fired in a pottery kiln to a temperature of 1000oC which will turn the clay into pot. It is hoped to return them to the next meeting when they can be glazed with simple bright colours.



Rolling out the clay



Impressing the pattern



Drying the pots





Placing the clay slab on the hump mould



A finished pot



Finished pots waiting to go for the kiln firing

The children learned quite a lot about simple pottery techniques almost without realising it because they were so busy enjoying themselves. Our thanks must go to the helpers Jen Ridley, Jean Thompson, Kelly Newcombe and the three classroom assistants from Windsor First School (I must apologise for not knowing their names) who were on hand to make sure the children didn't get into difficulties. They did a wonderful job and ensured everything ran smoothly. The next meeting is on Monday 2nd April at 5pm in Simonside Hall again, when the children will be doing some simple block printmaking.

Contacts

Eddie Galvin - Chairman
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Telephone 01670 858834

Rebecca McCready - Summer Spectacular & 2008 Calendar -
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Next Meeting
Monday 2nd April
at 6.30pm