



FRIENDS OF THE MERCER ART GALLERY

NEWSLETTER

WINTER/SPRING
2024/25

Party Time!

Join the fun at the
Friends' Christmas bash

NEW WAY TO BUY EVENT TICKETS

There's a new way for members of the Friends of the Mercer Gallery to buy tickets for unmissable events, which makes the process straightforward and worry-free.

Using the short code that was sent to members via email at the end of September, all that's needed is to click on the link included in the flyer for the event, enter the unique code and buy the number of tickets required.

The system selected to make buying tickets more efficient is called Ticket Tailor and is widely used by many charities across the UK.

Not only is the process efficient but it gives Friends event organisers the opportunity to check how tickets sales are performing and also gauge the popularity of events to ensure the interests of members is being met.

Friends committee member Marion Hancock who is in charge of the talks programme says the committee spent some time researching ticket systems and decided that this was the best option.

Friends deputy chair Perveen Aslam had the IT skills needed to set things up, and treasurer Paul Greening made sure things ran smoothly in terms of uploading membership data.

Marion says: "By using Ticket Tailor we are able to streamline the booking process for members and at the same time, make the booking management for our wide range of events much easier."

She adds that feedback on using the system from Friends members is welcome. "We are always looking to improve on the ways we manage events and I'm sure members will let us know how they get on with Ticket Tailor."

Friends are warmly invited to the annual Christmas party where there will be fizz, canapes and a raffle and, of course, the chance to celebrate the festive season with fellow members and other art lovers.

As well as the seasonal drinks and nibbles, there's an amazing opportunity to win a superb festive hamper worth £150.

And be sure to wear your finest jewellery, as Ogden of Harrogate will have a team on hand to give it a professional clean and polish, leaving it looking resplendent in time for the festive season.

The party is being held on

Thursday 12 December from 6.30pm – 8.30pm at the Mercer Art Gallery, 31 Swan Road, Harrogate HG1 2SA. Tickets are £25 for Friends and £30 for guests.

Please book by Friday 6th December 2024 preferably using the straightforward and worry-free new ticketing system (see story to the right), Ticket Tailor, which is the organiser's preferred method.

All the details are contained in the Christmas Party flyer, which was sent out last month.

Have a wonderful evening and Merry Christmas.

GLASGOW'S ART GEMS IMPRESS

In early September, 29 Friends headed to Glasgow for four days of uninterrupted culture, visiting the city's art and heritage gems, writes Julie Goldsmith.

The first stop was Dumfries House with its eye wateringly valuable collection of Chippendale furniture. An intrepid few managed to fit in a whistle-stop visit to the garden before our guided tour and lunch served by regal footmen.

Inevitably any trip to Glasgow will feature the architecture and interiors of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his wife Margaret. Hill House, House for an Art Lover and the excellent Mackintosh House at the Hunterian gave us an excellent overview of their work and the way that the city of Glasgow rightly celebrates their achievements.

Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery impressed us all and while we mostly headed for the art collection, there was an eclectic mix of displays to keep us entertained for hours. Fortunately, the impressive and challenging Salvador Dali Crucifixion had returned from the Bowes Museum.

Without a doubt the highlight of the trip was the afternoon at the Burrell Collection. After a substantial lunch of soup, sandwiches and cake, many Friends went on the guided tour which was hailed as outstanding while others decided to explore independently at their leisure.

Our blue badge guide provided a steady stream of information and anecdotes about the city and I feel sure many will return to once again enjoy its incredible cultural offering.



Reflections by Scottish colourist FCB Cadell



Friends at the Kelvingrove Museum, awed by its majesty

ONE MAN AND A DOG

Many Friends and at least one dog attended Royal Academician David Remfry's In Conversation event held in July, writes Marion Hancock.

It coincided with the Mercer Art Gallery's exhibition of David's spare, colourful portraits of



people with their dogs, *We Think The World Of You*.

The show ran throughout the summer, attracting many enthusiastic and appreciative visitors - with canine companions permitted on Sundays.

For the event, David was interviewed by curator Courtney Spencer and he explained that the collection of portraits had evolved from friendships made while living in New York's Hotel Chelsea.

Having been a curator of the Royal Academy Summer Show and a Professor of Drawing at the Royal Academy Schools, he was asked for his views on the teaching of drawing. He replied: "You can't teach drawing, in my opinion, you can only encourage it."



Following the success of the recent exhibition of works by David Remfry (see left) we were delighted to be approached by a donor who wished to donate a work by David to the Friends and were pleased to support our decision, in turn, to donate the gift to the gallery to be added to its permanent collection.

2025 AT THE MERCER

May Catt, North Yorkshire Council's senior manager - creative and cultural hubs, contributes to the Friends newsletter with a look ahead to events at the Mercer.

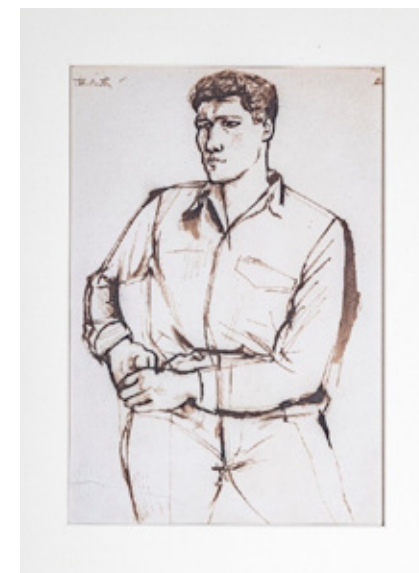
2025 marks our first full year as North Yorkshire Council. Much has been going on behind the scenes over the past few months, as we've got to know each other as part of a larger culture and archives team.

We've also been looking at our collections in a new way, in the wider context of Skipton and Scarborough's collections and cultural venues, all of which are now owned by North Yorkshire Council.

Exciting

Our first exhibition of 2025 highlights this exciting new connection.

Look, Look Again! Opens on 22 January and brings together works from four very different collections. It centres on the wonderful donation of 25 works by artists including Prunella Clough, John Minton, John Piper and Graham Sutherland, from collector David Morgan Rees.



The Friends generously funded the conservation work for this new collection, enabling us to show it publicly for the first time. Sadly, David died in November, but we

hope the exhibition will be a fitting example of his love and support of 20th century art and of a life well lived.

His collection dovetails beautifully with existing holdings in Harrogate's Fine Art Collection and also the Roebuck Collection at Craven Museum, at Skipton Town Hall. The Town Hall will also show an exhibition of works from both collections, a great excuse to visit if you haven't already been!

Inspired

Many of you will be familiar with the mysterious landscape paintings by Chris Wood, 'The Erratics' and 'Tree Dance' that were generously donated to the Mercer's collection by the artist. His latest series is inspired by Grimm's Fairy Tales and will be on show at the gallery from 22 January to 6 April 2025.

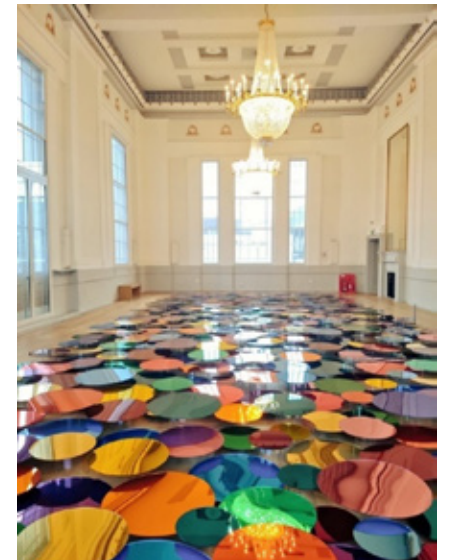


It's 25 years since Chris Wood's major solo show 'Echo Moments' was staged at the Mercer, and we're delighted to be able to mark this anniversary with a show of his latest work.

Burst

In the spring will be introducing a burst of colour and light with work by Liz West from 12 April to 5 October 2025.

Through Our Eyes will occupy all three gallery spaces. The architecture of our historic Promenade Room will be transformed by Liz's wonderful, immersive installation *Our Colour Reflection*.



Finally, we'll be bringing back the screening room as a permanent addition in October, expanding our offer to this ever growing medium.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Mercer throughout the year and thank you for your continued support of our work.

May Catt

Gallery Dates for Friends' Diaries

Now showing until 31 March 2025:

The Secrets of the Majestic - comic artwork inspired by the famous Gents' washroom of the Majestic Hotel

Adrift on a Painted Sea - paintings and graphic novel art by Tim Bird and Sue Bird

22 January to 6 April 2025:

Look, Look Again - Mid Century British Art from North Yorkshire Council's Art Collections and Goldmark Gallery

22 January to 6 April 2025:

Christopher P Wood returns to the Mercer - marking the 25th anniversary of his major solo show Echo Moments at the Mercer with an exhibition of his latest work

12 April to 5 October 2025:

Liz West Through Our Eyes - the impact on our wellness of colour and light

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

Welcome to our winter/spring newsletter. It was good to see so many of you at our AGM in September and it was also heartening to hear that the number of Friends has increased over the past months. We are always keen to recruit new members to support our charity so please, if you can, be our ambassadors to prospective new members. The more we have the more we can do.

At our AGM, Julie Goldsmith stepped down from the committee. Julie joined the committee in 2017 and has been a force of nature during her time in office. She took over as Chair from Judith Thomas and then steered the charity effectively and imaginatively through COVID. Latterly Julie has been an incredibly effective organiser of popular trips. Those who have been on one of Julie's trips will know how brilliant she has been at making sure that no-one gets forgotten. This summer's trip to Glasgow was a wonderful

conclusion to her contribution to the Friends.

The gallery appears to go from strength to strength and it is always good to be able to offer support on your behalf when we can add value. You may have heard that the late David Morgan Rees had, prior to his recent death, donated a collection of British Neo-Romantic works to the gallery. We were delighted, on your behalf to meet, in full, the cost of the necessary conservation work to enable the works to join the gallery's collection.

You will, by now have heard that our ever-popular Christmas Party will be held on the 12th December at the gallery. The Mercer always looks at its best for the party and it is a really happy event. If you haven't been before I do urge you to buy a ticket and bring a friend – you will be very warmly welcomed and a highly convivial evening is guaranteed. As ever thank you to the cheerful and hardworking committee whose efforts across the year make the Friends what it is – a valuable charity that delivers



on its objectives year after year.

A very Happy New Year for 2025

Tom King

JOIN THE FRIENDS

We are always seeking new members of the Friends of the Mercer Art Gallery who share a love of art and have a strong desire to support arts and culture in Harrogate and beyond.

For as little as £15 a year, or just £250 for Life Membership, Friends contribute towards the success of the Mercer Art Gallery and, at the same time, enjoy the benefits of Friends of the Mercer Art Gallery membership.



FRIENDS OF THE MERCER ART GALLERY

Friends receive:

- Illustrated talks by guest speakers
- 10% discount on selected items in the Gallery Shop
- Private Tours
- Exclusive Visits to Art Filled Houses
- Informative Newsletter
- Exclusive Invitations to Exhibition Previews

If you have any family or friends who you think would love to join us, then go to our website for more information.

The Mercer Art Gallery, Swan Road,
Harrogate, HG1 2SA

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