

LANCASTER JUDGES' LODGINGS

UPDATE

Newsletter of the Friends of Lancaster Judges' Lodgings

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From the Patron of British Association of Friends of Museums, HRH The Duke of Gloucester

The Duke of Gloucester has asked me to convey his best wishes to all your members, staff and volunteers while we enter this unprecedented period of uncertainty and worry. He is very much aware of the concerns your people will have at the moment as this pandemic develops and would want you to know that you are all very much in his mind.

Alastair Todd

Private Secretary to TRH The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester

The Judges' Lodgings in April

Of course there has been lots to do in The Judges' Lodgings and Lynda and her team have been working through them as best they can.

Lynda writes –

Lockdown at the Judges' Lodgings by Lynda Jackson, Museum Manager
Myself and Jenny Dowell, Site Supervisor, are regularly checking the Judges' Lodgings for security, fire and environmental monitoring checks during the lockdown. While it is tempting to imagine each of us making the most of the change of scenery by eating our sandwiches at the mahogany dining table or having an afternoon nap in the Judge's bed, the reality is a bit more mundane. As we check all the rooms in the house, including the various collection stores, we complete insurance checklists, empty dehumidifiers and run the taps to prevent legionella. The house remains full of atmosphere though and, having the place to yourself and so few cars outside, it's quiet enough that you can almost imagine what it may have been like in days gone by when the servants first stirred in the morning and



started preparing for the day ahead. Let's look forward to the day when the whole JL team of staff and volunteers can do the same!

The kitchen handling objects donated by the national Trust from one of their properties are starting to move into place in the kitchen and Natasha, the Lancaster University student who worked on them during a placement at the JL invites us to share in her experience -

As a second year History student at Lancaster University, working with the recent delivery of kitchen objects from the National Trust was a truly exciting opportunity. From ornate figurines to a pair of billows and a wooden mouse trap, the collection was absolutely beaming with nineteenth century history. After receiving database training at the Judges' Lodgings, my task was to unpack the delivery objects, assess their condition, take photographs and log this information into the heritage database 'EMu'. This process was particularly important for storage purposes and future reference to the objects. Unpacking the boxes delivered was a delight. Peeling back each covering of bubble wrap and tissue paper felt as though I was discovering snapshots of history, layer by layer. While the database work I completed taught me much about how the heritage sector functions, it was the objects which I enjoyed interacting with most. As I held the items, I wondered, what stories could they tell us: who had owned them? Were they handmade? Where were they made? What had they seen in their previous homes? In this sense, the new Victorian Kitchen display can offer people a snapshot in time, allowing us to glimpse into the nineteenth century.



Perhaps the most intriguing object to occupy the new display is a wooden mouse trap. Stretching up roughly 30cm from the base to the top, with a box and a square handle, the trap is perplexing to say the least...how would have such a thing managed to catch mice? I think the trap will be an excellent tool to link visitors with the past, as we consider how pest control has changed over time and how our ancestors navigated kitchens rife with mice.

Interacting with the kitchen objects lifted my head from the secondary literature of my degree and showed me how tangible history can be. This experience was a real privilege. I hope when the Judges' Lodgings opens after lockdown that the public enjoy glimpsing into the nineteenth century as much as I did.

Natasha
Robinson



Kitchen handling items



The new retail area has been partially fitted out, as much as was possible before the shut down, but with promise of things to come. There will be plenty of goods with emphasis on items which parents will want to buy for themselves as a memento of their visit to the JL.



Finally this month Lynda has been notified of the award of a grant of £1000 from Museum Development North West from their Sustainable Improvement Fund for the work of the Green Team – congratulations. Obviously the work to implement the funding will not be able to start until after the lockdown has been lifted, but we look forward to some very interesting initiatives.

April in the Garden



This month, especially with the amazing weather for the most part, has really brought spring into



the JL Garden. There is a fine display of golden tulips and a host of other colours displayed in the beds. Congratulations to all the gardening team for the hard work they have put into it.

The Friends' Christmas Appeal

This is an update on the very successful appeal run by the Friends last Christmas (not a foretaste of another one to come). The Friends, through their generous donations, raised the money for the conservation of an 1820 (or thereabouts) painting of the Judges' Lodgings building as it was then, and we had hoped that the completed work would form the centre piece of the JL reopening for the 2020 season. The situation now is that the painting is safely in store at the Conservation Studios in Preston. The conservator has been working remotely so the final tasks haven't been possible. He says 90% of the treatment has been done. There is some final retouching to do followed by varnishing and reframing. The frame is in Preston too ... So – come the lifting of the lockdown, it's just about ready to go.

The Friends' Website

Again, it was hoped that this would be ready to go live when the JL reopened at the end of last month – and it is so very nearly there. The Friends' Committee decided that we would go live with it as soon as it's ready and not wait for the reopening – that way, people already beginning to plan what they might do when free to go visiting again, will be able to see what the JL has to offer as part of the heritage of Lancaster – so watch this space. Thanks very much to Catherine one of our very active friends for all the hard work she has put into it.

Volunteering at JL

You can volunteer at JL through the LCC Volunteering Programme either to act as a Room Steward or to join the Gardening Team – follow the link <https://lancsvp.org.uk/opportunities>

Join Us

If you have not yet joined the Friends, or you have friends and neighbours who would be interested in supporting our work to ensure that Lancaster Judges' Lodgings remains open and accessible to the public, please contact me, and encourage them to do the same – sue.widden@outlook.com – and I'll send joining details.

Please feel free to forward these newsletters to your friends and relatives and encourage them to join us in our work.

Comments and ideas from everyone are always welcome and we are happy to share them widely. If you have a view or a comment to contribute to UPDATE, please email me at the address below.

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