

LANCASTER JUDGES' LODGINGS

UPDATE

Newsletter of the Friends of Lancaster Judges' Lodgings

Issue no 43

Date: June 2020



The Judges' Lodgings in June

The team have been working hard in the Judges' Lodgings this month, partly to keep the garden under control after all the warm weather and then some rain, but mostly concentrating on making sure the Welcome Gallery is ready for when visitors are allowed to return, although the date for that is not yet fixed. Government guidelines have only recently been received by the county, so county guidelines have to take those into account as well as local conditions.

Museum Manager Lynda says –

“The County Council is rightly putting safety first and has a multidisciplinary team working on making sites Covid-secure. We are planning signage and doing everything on site that we can to make things ready for you if we do get the go ahead.

“We now have 15 volunteers who are interested in returning this season so we are working on a draft rota and will be in touch soon. For anyone unable to return this season, Lancashire Volunteer Partnership have said that, assuming you want to, you will remain on the books and can carry on next year without having to get registered again which is good. We are now looking to start recruiting new volunteers from 8th June so please spread the word if you know anyone who might be interested.

“The JL will be featured in an international publication by a researcher in Germany who is using images of Lubaina Himid's 2007 installation 'Swallow Hard' set up on the JL Dining table in her book about the afterlife of Britain's involvement in the slave trade – seems particularly apt in the light of the Black Lives Matter movement at the moment. Another research publication featuring the Gillow collection is an article by Susan Solny, an art historian living in New



York City – ‘Some Unusual Stylistic Preferences in New York Cellaret Design 1810-1834’. Solny writes ‘Cellarets are “diminutive wine cellars....positioned in the dining room either en suite with, and under, matching sideboards or closely adjacent to the sideboard. The concept of the cellaret arose out of an eighteenth-century British design heritage.....A sarcophagus-shaped cellaret is illustrated in the manuscript Estimate Sketch Books 1803-1815 for Gillow & Co”’. “The JL painting which has been conserved with funding from the Friends group is being finished by Philip Bourne at the Conservation Centre at Preston but looks amazing and will be displayed about the fireplace. Hopefully it will be ready to install within the next week or so.

“You will be aware of the Black Lives Matters protests and may have seen that they have reached very close to home with the protest at the Rawlinson monument at the Priory

<https://www.facebook.com/lancasterpriorymusic/videos/929734580765232/UzpfSTEwNTU0NzI0Nzk6Vks6MzAzNTQ0NTU4OTg2Njc5OA/>

You may also know that this is very relevant to JL as Lancaster was the fourth largest slave port in Britain, many of our collections are linked to the Rawlinsons and both they and Gillows were heavily involved in the West Indies trade, trading goods made by enslaved Africans in the Caribbean. As a result Lancashire County Council are currently reviewing and updating the slave trade pages with Lancaster Slavery historian Melinda Elder.”

The Judges’ Lodgings and Black Lives Matter

It is widely known that Lancaster was the fourth largest slave port in Britain during the period of the three-cornered trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries between Britain, Africa and America. Much of Georgian Lancaster was built on the proceeds of that trade, and there are many reminders in the city of that shameful era of our history.

The recent killing of George Floyd in the United States and the subsequent protests and demonstrations of acute concern from the Black Lives Matter movement compel us all to consider how we can learn from this morally bleak period of Lancaster’s development.

The Judges’ Lodgings Museum is a showcase for many artefacts intimately connected with the West Indies trade, which was based on slavery in the Caribbean housing as it does a rich collection of Gillow furniture. While Gillows did invest in one slave ship, the Gambia, which made three voyages in the 1750s, they do not appear, like many other Lancaster merchants, to have been directly involved in the Slave Trade. Gillows, however, did use exotic woods such as mahogany procured through slavery in the West Indies to manufacture their acclaimed pieces of domestic furniture. These articles were usually made to commission for one or other of the Lancaster merchants, many of whom had grown prosperous through their slaving connections. Like all merchants in the Caribbean Gillows used enslaved Africans to load and unload their ships at port. The Museum also houses portraits of prominent Lancaster families such as the

Rawlinsons who made huge fortunes through the labour of enslaved Africans in the West Indies.

The history of Gillows is part of the history of Lancaster and its development as a national and international centre for trade. We cannot wipe these facts from our history however uncomfortable they are. We can consign statues to museums, we can change street name signs, but such factors as colonialisation, slavery and exploitation should remain part of our history, to be taught in schools and colleges. There are aesthetic considerations as well as moral and ethical ones. Much of the furniture commemorates the creativity and skill of the designers and craftspeople who produced the pieces – we can never have too much creativity and skill.

Recently there have been Black Lives Matters protests outside the Judges' Lodgings, as part of a link around Lancaster's most relevant sites. One person driving past shouted "vandals" at us, as we stood and knelt peacefully. Protestors should not be vandals – destruction or damage does not remove the fact from history, even when the message a statue sends is offensive. The protestors want an acknowledgement of the past and a learning process for the future. The Judges' Lodgings can supply that.



Sue Widden

June in the Garden

Jenny the JL Site Supervisor, keen eco-warrior and in charge of the JL Garden has sent some useful info from the Carbon Literacy Trust –

Have you spent lockdown clearing out cupboards and drawers, finding now-defunct mobile phones and IT equipment? Us too! One issue with recycling phones and IT equipment is that they may still contain stored information and data. Another issue is that simply throwing electronic equipment in domestic waste is potentially polluting whether it is landfilled or incinerated, and for commercial organisations potentially illegal. Now you can box them up and dispatch them en masse to Carbon Literacy partner ICT Reverse.

Based in Lancaster in the North of England, ICT Reverse handles millions of phones, tablets, laptops and even desktop computers and servers, and in an entirely secure and traceable way, securely wipes them, and strips them down for reuse in whole or in parts, or failing that the recycling of their metals and other materials. See <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=ICTreverse>

Almost nothing goes to waste or landfill, and, even better; when you are introduced as a partner of The Carbon Literacy Project, the waste disposal service is entirely free for both personal and commercial waste, (with item by item legal confirmation of wiping, traceability and waste transfer notices) and half of any income generated from your donation is shared with our parent charity The Carbon Literacy Trust, to support our work and the advancement of Carbon Literacy nationally.

In the meantime you can enjoy images of the garden in May.



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.

Sue Widden
Newsletter Editor
sue.widden@outlook.com