

LANCASTER JUDGES' LODGINGS

UPDATE

Newsletter of the Friends of Lancaster Judges' Lodgings

Issue no 44

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The Judges' Lodgings in August

The final decision for the Judges' Lodgings to reopen for Bank Holiday weekend was made at the beginning of the month, so although work had been going on to make the JL ready in itself, as well as covering all the Covid-secure requirements, the pace of activity quickened somewhat now that an actual date had been set. Staff had to be brought back into the JL as a team, volunteers confirmed, rotas set, new training provided, final tidy up of garden, collection cleaning – a flurry of excitement tinged with apprehension, with a new normal looming ahead so very different from the old.

By opening day, Friday 28 August, all was ready (at least unready bits didn't show),



the doors were opened wide and the new glass porch was revealed on the



way into the entrance hall. The porch has doors opening either to the right or the left, so was immediately the start of the one-way system round the building. Discreet Covid-secure signs were in place, guiding the flow, regulating distances and offering hand sanitisation stations. Even the display furniture was brought into use. Staff are wearing visors, visitors must wear face coverings, but none of it detracts from the charm of the JL itself.

Once through reception in the main hall the way led to and through the brand new Welcome Gallery.



The Welcome Gallery

This is an exciting initiative, now installed in what used to be the ticket and shop area. It has been beautifully set up, offering an overall history of the Judges' Lodgings and the various elements of its development. There have always been links to Lancaster Castle, since Thomas Covell who built the Judges' Lodgings, originally as his family home, was the Keeper of the Castle, and involved in the infamous trial of the Lancashire Witches held in the Castle in 1612. All these links are highlighted along with the early use of the Judges' Lodgings as an actual lodging house for the Assize Judges as they travelled

round the various assize courts. The JL's final incarnation as a museum and display centre for the history and furniture of the Gillows family concludes the Welcome Gallery and leads the visitor on, now fully prepared, into the rest of the house.

This silver trumpet is one of the set which sounded the Judge on his walk from the Judges' Lodgings to the Castle for the day's work



The Opening Weekend

The Judges' Lodgings was open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the last weekend in August, 11.00-4.00 and hopes to be able to maintain this schedule for the remainder of the season, until November 8, barring any further lockdowns of a national or local variety. There was a respectable number of visitors over the three days – 55 on the Friday, 35 on the Saturday and 30 on the Sunday. Lynda, Museum Manager, reports "the safety measures worked well for the public and people are being very patient. However very few of the visitors through the doors actually booked but as many of the people that booked didn't turn up we fitted most people in." Lynda and her team would prefer visitors to book in advance and then they can monitor the flow of visitors more easily – you can book online <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/coronavirus-updates/museums/>

As things are at present it is not possible to run the Museum's programme of talks and events which were so popular last year. This could be the next challenge.

In the Garden

The gardening team was entered for the Marsh Volunteering Award for which they gained a highly commended certificate and very positive comments from the judges – *We were overwhelmed by the number and quality of the applications which we received, and selecting winners was not an easy process. The judges were particularly impressed by the contribution that the Gardening Team volunteers have made at Judges' Lodgings and wanted to acknowledge that by awarding the team a highly commended certificate. We only issue a very small number of these each year, so although I'm sure your volunteers will be disappointed not to have won the regional award, I hope that they will appreciate that the judges recognised that they have made an exceptional contribution.*

Congratulations from us all to the Gardening Team who have changed the JL garden from a bramble strewn wilderness into a place to sit and meditate. We hope that in the future we may be able to bring the garden into use for events, afternoon teas and special displays.

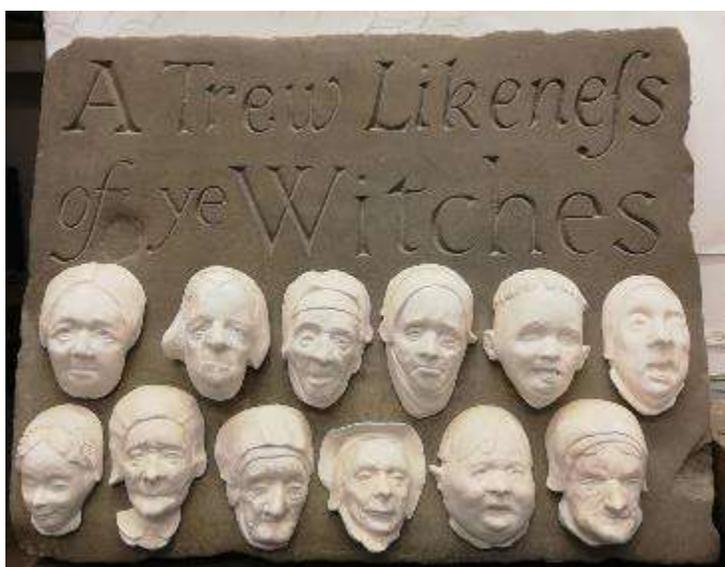
Friends of Lancaster Judges' Lodgings events

The Friends' Committee is still working on how to deliver something of a programme in the relatively short time we have left and hopes to launch an online concert later in the year by the trio who gave us such a successful concert last year. In the meantime here is a taster -

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vuky8duoah4ipt8/AAAPp4iayOjEUwDz1X4ntSgua?dl=0>

Afterthought on the Lancaster Witches

There appears to be no contemporary images of the Pendle Witches so we are free to provide our own visions – scary or otherwise. Perhaps they looked just like ordinary people – you or me. Perhaps they were just ordinary people. Alan Ward, who has a studio in the Castle, has put down his own ideas and created a gallery of faces which you may or may not be happy to meet on a lonely pathway.



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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