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78 DERNGATE NEWS

! LETTER FROM KEITH BARWELL !

Chairman of the Trust

Well, we did it. Well done to everyone. Looking at the final result of 78/80 made the whole effort worthwhile. Rather than write a self-congratulating piece- I'd prefer to do a de-brief.

We started the whole process in 1995, when Maggie my wife supplied the finances to enable the Borough Council to purchase 78/80. We have half completed the job nearly nine years later. Why did it take so long? The system of getting grants is far too long and complicated and must be made simpler and user friendly. We had spent £300k by the time we had put in the grant proposal. This is because you have to put in a detailed architectural and conservation plans, together with a mass of financial figures. The accountants and the architects, structural engineers and experts don't do this work for nothing of course. This in itself is far out of the reach of most small groups, like The Friends. How can such groups of good citizens expect to clamber over these hurdles when all they are trying to do is something worthwhile in their community? All I can say is it's a good job the Trustees had the staying power to last the course. OK, in fairness you do get your money back if the scheme is given approval, but there is no guarantee that this will happen.

Does this sound rather negative well I'll try to be more positive and let us look at the good things that have happened in those nine years. Firstly and foremost, Les Patterson, the Trust's secretary, did a magnificent job for the Trustees. Particularly mention should be given to the builders who were wonderful anyone who has seen the videos done by i2i will verify this, Sylvia, the Curator,

has at long last got something to curate and her work over the last period has been invaluable. Finally, of course, The Friends of 78, probably the most positive thing to have come of the decade.

What's next? Well for the Trustees it's back to work. We need to raise the finances to complete the work at 82 Dergate to make the project complete. This time I promise it won't take nine years!

For The Friends, you have played a major part in the restoration- now we need you to help us look after the place. Like me, your only reward will be the smiling faces of the visitors. I think we can settle for that, don't you?



*Janet Bassett-Lowke and 78 Dergate Trustees
Maggie Barwell, Patricia Douglas
and Ros Harwood cut the ribbon for 78.*

! CHRISTMAS GREETINGS !

The Committee of the Friends would like to wish the membership Christmas Greetings and share the celebrations for the opening of '78'. The editor of the newsletter would also like to thank all the contributors over the year and invite new contributions, contact Rob Kendall on 01604 711317

: The Friends of 78 AGM :

Chair's report

Rob Kendall, as Chair of The Friends, began by welcoming the large number of Friends present many of whom were new members and also celebrating the actual opening of 78.

Rob began his report by reiterating the pledge that The Friends had made to the Trust that they intended to raise £6,000 each year. The Friends had already made the purchase price donation of £8000 during the last year for the lighting fitting and corona for the hall lounge which is now in place. The Friends have also given other ephemera such as Bassett-Lowke business letter headings and a selection of 1940's Penguin children's books, such as *Marvellous Models*.

Rob was also pleased to report that Janet Bassett-Lowke, Honorary Member of The Friends, had recently given to The Friends two sepia photographic portraits, one of her Uncle Whyne and one of her Aunt Jane. These were on view for The Friends to see at the AGM.

The Friends have continued to have an active year with a number of day visits and residential trips. Rob went on to thank Joy Saville, Chris Sherlock, Ann Mayhew and Peter Stirling for their work organising these visits. Again The Friends' stall at the Northampton Festival in August also proved to be a very popular attraction and its success was very much due to the administrative skills of Peter MacIntosh and the display work of James Bassett, among others. The Friends also look forward to residential trips to Barcelona in March and Glasgow in October of next year.

The Friends have also continued their activities in providing speakers and illustrated talks for local groups about 78 Derngate, and the Chair was pleased that this in itself as well as spreading the 'word' had brought in new members. The Friends were also part of the volunteer guides and helpers that had been organised by the house curator, Dr. Sylvia Pinches, for the first open season of 78. Rob was also pleased that the newsletter had continued to be published bi-monthly and that members of The Friends were invited to submit articles and/or photographs that covered our area of interest. The Friends of 78 Derngate have also become Friends of the Glasgow School of Art.

Given the opening of 78, the membership proforma for The Friends had also been revamped by Ann Mayhew and Rob and, with agreement from the Trust, the postal address for membership to the Friends is now 82 Derngate, Northampton. Memberships will continue to be annual and in the main from April 1st with a reminder being sent out to current members. Subscription rates will be held at the current level.

The work of The Friends over the last seven years in raising public awareness about 78 had also been recognised when Rob was invited to the Mayor's Parlour on behalf of The Friends to receive a Mayoral award given by Cllr. Michael Boss.

After Rob Kendall had concluded, Bill Turner, Treasurer to The Friends, gave his report to the AGM and showed that the



Portraits presented to The Friends at the AGM from Janet Bassett-Lowke of her Uncle Whyne and Aunt Jane.

: The Friends of 78 AGM :

Chair's report continued

balance of accounts was over £11,000 in the black. Rob thanked Bill for his ongoing work as Treasurer. Those present adopted the report.

A new committee was elected on block for 2003/4: Conny Bailey, James Bassett, George Fenning, Barbara Floyer, Jennifer Jones, Rob Kendall, Ann Mayhew, Peter McIntosh, Ian Riley, Joy Saville, Sabina Schaebitz, Chris Sherlock, Len Simpson, Peter Stiling, David Thomas, Bill Turner.

Shirley Curtis and Pat Roll retired from the committee after

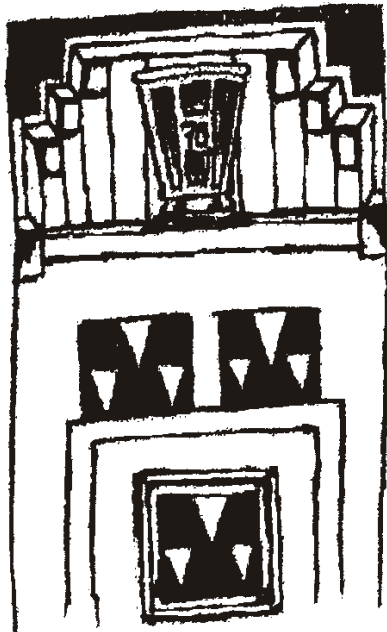
being part of the original steering group and serving on the committee for seven years and were thanked by Rob Kendall. Rob also welcomed the two new members to the committee, Barbara Floyer and Jennifer Jones.

At the conclusion of the AGM Les Patterson spoke on behalf of Keith Barwell to The Friends and Dr. Sylvia Pinches thanked The Friends who were also volunteers in 78 and made a plea for even more to come forward for the new season from March 2004. Dr. Pinches then introduced the short i2i video that forms part of the tour of 78.

: DRAWING WORKSHOP :

Twenty GCSE Art students from Daventry William Parker School (DWPS) recently took part in a morning's drawing workshop at the school. Using the work of CRM as their starting point, the students used a wide range of different techniques and materials to explore mark making, pattern and form. Anthony MacRae, a local artist and friend of 78, and NIAS Art Inspector, Ian Middleton, led the workshop which lasted for four hours, assisted by the art teachers at the school.

Photographs of the various items from the house at 78 Deringate were projected on to a large screen and then the students made a series of drawings, translating what they saw into line and tone. The students were strictly limited in the time they could spend on any one piece. The most they had on any one item was 15 minutes but many were less. The group could only work in black, grey and white and were restricted in the materials they could use but had the choice from charcoal, sharpened sticks and ink, soft pencil, black pens and collage using torn and cut paper. The reason for using monochrome was because some of the drawings are going to be reproduced in the CRM Educational Resource Packs that are being devised for school children to use. Ian has been working with local art, design and technology teachers from across the county to design a set of exciting booklets for use in 78 and the classroom. They are based upon a variety of themes; Geometric, Natural Forms, Typography, Buildings, Furniture, Architectural Detail and Mackintosh Inspired.



Front door of No. 78 by Hayley McBeth.

At DWPS, the students will continue to develop their initial studies into a finished piece of work for part of their Art GCSE coursework. Some will do fabric prints, some paintings; others will use silk paints and clay or Plaster of Paris. Ian is hoping that their final outcomes may be used as exemplar material for other schools who visit 78. Anthony and Ian were very pleased with the attitude and commitment of the students at Daventry and Anthony commented "They worked extremely hard throughout the workshop and I was impressed by their commitment and the quality of their work. It was a pleasure working with them all." Ian said "I am delighted with the outcomes and I am sure they will enrich the visual impact of the packs."

Jane Milward, Head of Year at DWPS, and one of the art team there, selected students that she felt would gain a great deal from the experience. She commented "A lot of our students are already keen on the work of Macintosh and were delighted to be chosen to take part in the workshop. To start with they thought that four hours was going to be a really long time as they are used to one hour lessons but the way the workshop was run meant that their interest and concentration was maintained the whole time. The experience was both challenging and rewarding for them and we are extremely pleased with the results. We are now looking forward to going to number 78, to see the 'real' objects. It's such a treat to have this resource so close by."

Dianne MacRae.

: VOLUNTEERS FOR 78 :

Although there is a steady growing number of volunteers for 78, now over 80, Sylvia is always looking for more. Between six and eight are needed each morning or afternoon. Also during the closed season we hope to 'clean' the volunteer's room in 82. Clean is not quite the operative word as it needs some plastering skills too! If you are a dab hand with the plastering trowel or know of someone who is and who can volunteer their skill and expertise please contact Sylvia. Equally if you would like to sponsor the work in the volunteers room so that it is ready for March 2005 contact Sylvia Pinches on 01604 603408.

THE ART OF GESSO

Joy Saville

As most of you know Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh worked in gesso for many of the panels that she produced and I have always been intrigued as to how they were executed. When I saw a weekend course advertised to learn about gesso I jumped at the chance to uncover the mystery. I enrolled and went up to Rufford Craft Centre near Nottingham to attend a course entitled 'Decorative relief with raised Gesso'. Over the weekend we were taught how to mix and apply the gesso and then to paint the panels that we had prepared.

Originally the gesso would have been made by mixing whitening with rabbit skin glue, which I should imagine smelt rather pungent. We have moved on from there to another ingredient and smell, that of varnish. We were instructed to mix a small amount of traditional varnish (Sue the instructor had found the one sold by the 'cheapy' shop Wilkinsons to be the best) with equal amounts of whitening and a colouring ingredient called Kremer pigment. These are all stirred together until they resemble thick cream that will just run slowly off the wrong end of a paintbrush.

We used small panels of MDF for our base. These are primed with MDF primer and then varnished all over including the back and

sides. One lady brought a plain glass panel to use and this also worked very well but without the primer and varnish of course. The instructor said that her recipe for gesso would practically stick to anything and we were to experiment with it at home!

The gesso is applied to the prepared surface by dribbling the mixture off the end of a paintbrush to make the required raised decoration of lines and swirls etc. according to your design. There are many other methods of applying gesso you just have to experiment to find the one most suitable to the project (an icing piping bag perhaps?). A steady hand is needed and we found that we had to have quite a lot of practice to get the gesso to go where we wanted it to go. After about 2 hours drying time we could then indent the gesso with anything to hand to make a pattern in the gesso or stick beads or other objects into it.

The gesso panels were left overnight and then finished by painting with acrylic paint. Some of us applied gold and silver foil. Everyone's finished panels were totally different but we all came away with a 'work of art' after a most enjoyable weekend.

Now to try a Margaret Macdonald design!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2004

78 RE-OPEN March 1

Barcelona
March 29 - April 2
Details 07787 158778

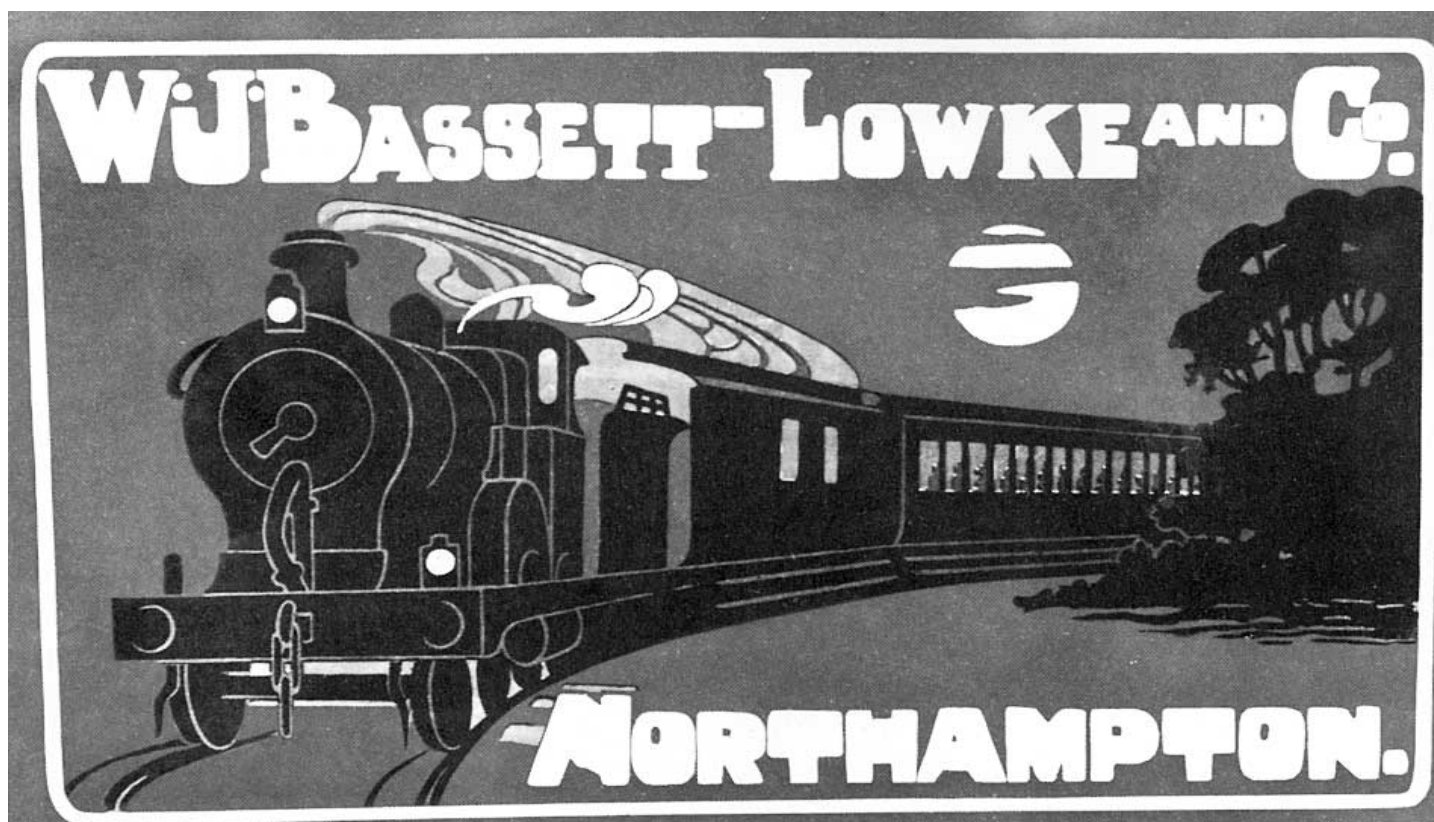
Redhouse/William Morris
May 20 (Limited places)
Details 01604 469281

Glasgow
Saturday 23 - 25 October
Details 01234 781648

Membership Renewal
April 1 2004/5

CRM FLOWERS & ART LOVER.

Dr. Sylvia Pinches was very pleased to receive from Mr. William Hiller on long term loan a limited edition facsimile of CRM's Walberswick flower drawings and a second facsimile folder of the architectural drawings for The House for an Art Lover. An 'C gauge sleeping car and guards van from the Bassett Lowke factory were also part of the loan plus the gift of the History of the High School and a copy of 'The Collector's Colour Guide to Toy Trains.'



Bassett-Lowke mail order catalogue cover c1916. The World of Model Trains by Guy R. Giffiths. Pub. Andre Deutsch.