

FOXLOWE arts centre

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Foxlowe Arts Centre Co-ordinators

All co-ordinators are volunteers. Each has a number of volunteers helping with work in their area.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering at the Foxlowe, please contact Volunteers' co-ordinator Marion Fenton on 07974 063674 or email volunteers@foxloweartscentre.org.uk

Building Maintenance

Cliff Deighton - 07789 362179

Exhibitions: Gallery

Charles Walker - 07708 421574

Cafe Gallery

Andrew Gale - 07950 610 779

Films

Maureen Wiskin - 01538 385799

Gardens

Alison McCrea - 07753 172564

GatewaySHED

Cliff Deighton - 07789 362179

Health & Safety

David Barnes - 01538 388478

Marketing

Marc Briand - 07799 175909

Music & Theatre

Andy Norton - 07974 063674

Talks

Cathryn Walton - 01538 388429

Volunteers

Marion Fenton - 07938 226469

Web Site

Alison McCrea - 07753 172564

How to support the Foxlowe

THERE are many ways in which people can help to support our community-run arts centre in Leek. Every bit of support helps us to make the Foxlowe what it is today.

Volunteer: The Foxlowe Arts Centre is run by volunteers with support from a small number of paid staff. Volunteers help with a range of activities, including administration, working in the café, stewarding exhibitions, gardening, decorating, serving on the bar, helping on film, comedy, theatre and music events, maintenance, and much more.

Pledge: A regular contribution as little as £2.50 a week provides valued financial support for the upkeep of the Georgian arts centre building and development of the arts programme.

Legacy gift: With the support of a legacy gift, regardless of size, you can be part of the Foxlowe Arts Centre future. Each legacy is an enduring reminder of how an individual's life may be transformed through creativity.

Visit: Just by simply visiting our arts centre, you are supporting the sustainability of our community venture. And there's so many reasons to visit the Foxlowe including: The Drawing Room Cafe, the main Art Gallery, the Cafe Gallery, the Foxlowe Gardens, Fox & Crow Gallery – and there is an ever-packed programme of events and activities from film and documentary nights, creative workshops, comedy gigs, talks, live music, theatre, as well as a number of community events throughout the year. See our What's On section on the back page to see what's coming up over the next few months.

Drawing Room Cafe & Catering for Private Functions

Welcoming and relaxed ambience Monday to Saturday: 10am-4pm and every first Sunday of the month. Good selection of vegetarian meals and daily meat option. We cater for all kinds of private parties.

Contact Centre Manager, Vicki Heath: 01538 386112.

The Foxlowe Arts Centre Ltd, Market Place, Leek. ST13 6AD
01538 386112 www.foxloweartscentre.org.uk

**The Foxlowe Arts Centre is a Limited Company by Guarantee:
0775732 and a Registered Charity:1144382.**

Trustees: Chris Thompson (chair), Belinda Hargreaves (secretary), Andy Norton (treasurer), Dave Bell, Marc Briand, Colin Broome, Peter Kent-Baguley and Claire Parton.

Festival was one big HuG for the Folxowe



THE first ever HuG Green Arts Festival took place at the Foxlowe Arts Centre this Summer.

The successful event, hosted in conjunction with the Moorlands Climate Action Group, saw the unveiling of our new Foxlowe Garden Dragonfly sculpture situated next to a designated picnic area in the garden; there were stalls hosted by a variety of organisations; a range of activities and workshops including children's craft workshops, Yoga, Qigong, Shiatsu, a dance rehearsal for a flashmob (ER 'Stayin' Alive'), and the screening of several short environmental films.

PhD students and working scientists also attended to host a Climate Question Time; and there were many presentations and demonstrations such as from a willow artist, a bee keeper, local poets, and much much more.

Our chairman of the Foxlowe Arts Centre Trust Chris Thompson said a few words to those attending the festival. He said: "Flash Gordon only had 14 hours to save the Earth

from Ming the Merciless and we don't have that much longer to save the Earth from ourselves.

"This event is the first of its kind in the town to inform and spread the word about our responsibilities to the planet we live on and to make a change, it also requires positive action such as raising money to hug this community building with insulation, better glazing and stopping precious energy escaping and when we've hugged this building we can go on to hug the next.

"On behalf of the Foxlowe Arts Centre trustees I want to say a massive thank you to our team at the Foxlowe, Moorland Climate Action for organising HuG and in particular Teresa Pattison for leading on this much needed event - well done Teresa."

An amazing £500 was raised at the HuG event which has been donated towards the Foxlowe's insulation fund. Thank you to all involved in the event.

See our Foxlowe Gardens News on page 6 for more pictures and information about the HuG Festival.



Scaffolding is up

FOXLOWE visitors may have noticed the scaffolding which has appeared in front of the Foxlowe Arts Centre.

This is so that much-needed maintenance works can be carried out on the windows of the Georgian building.

This will be yet another tick off our long bucket list of maintenance and development work on our much-loved community arts centre.



Keeping up to date

OTHER than this, our bi-monthly newsletter, we also have a website and Facebook page keeping everyone up-to-date with what's coming up, as well as



the goings on at the Foxlowe Arts Centre.

Find us at www.foxloweartscentre.org, uk and www.facebook.com/foxloweartscentre.

Memories of yesteryear at the Foxlowe

By Phil Edmeades

FOR Leek-born and bred Andy Birch-Machin, *pictured below*, mention of The Foxlowe brings back memories of a smoke-filled snooker room, children being told to stay off the hallowed bowling green - and his grandma Nellie enjoying a glass of stout.

Former postman Andy, 58, was brought up in Glebeville, Leek, and remembers being taken to The Foxlowe every weekend from when he was just four-years-old.

"All our family lived in and around Glebeville and on a Saturday there would be loads of us walking through town to The Foxlowe.

"In those days it was the headquarters of the Amalgamated Union of Textile Workers and Kindred Trades. But it was also a busy labour club with all sorts of events and activities.

"I used to go there with my family every Saturday. Gran would sit with her Mackeson and some peanuts and there would be lots going on. There was a real community feeling to the place - it was like one big family.

"There would be singing, dancing, bowling and bingo among other things. For us kids it was like a great big playground. The only place we weren't allowed to go was on the bowling green - that was for the grown-ups only and if we wanted to watch we had to sit on the wall around the outside. There would



even be someone from the club on guard to stop us from going on the green.

"Upstairs I remember there being a huge snooker room. It was always full of cigarette smoke and men with pints of mild, waiting their turn to play. The snooker table seemed massive to us small kids and it was wonderful to watch the players reach across it to make their shots."

Andy, who now lives in Ashbourne Road and works as a prescription delivery driver for a local pharmacy, recalls couples holding their wedding receptions at The Foxlowe.

"My grandad Sid used to call them 'open weddings'. The happy couple would be married in church and then come to The Foxlowe for the wedding breakfast. But it wasn't like hiring somewhere for a private 'do' because anyone who was a member of the club could be there and join in, even if they didn't know the bride and groom personally.

"Everyone would have a drink to congratulate the newlyweds and there was always extra food put out for the buffet so that everyone could help themselves."

In later years Andy also visited the textile union offices at The Foxlowe.

"I remember Alf Hitchmough, the union general secretary, having a big office on the first floor. His deputy was a chap called Peter Meharg, a really nice guy."

Andy is delighted with the latest reincarnation of The Foxlowe as an arts centre and community hub.

"I think what has been achieved so far is fantastic and I really hope it goes from strength to strength. It is a huge asset to the town and we should all be doing everything we can to ensure it keeps growing and developing. If we don't use it we'll lose it and that would be a great shame."

Do you have memories of the Foxlowe from years gone by? Email our Editor Belinda at hargreavespr@outlook.co.uk.



Textile focus for latest exhibition

THE Midland Textile Forum is currently exhibiting in the main gallery at the Foxlowe Arts Centre.

The textiles exhibition, entitled ‘Discoveries’, started on August 21 and is running through until October 1.

Artists showcasing their latest creations are: Ann Paterson, Judith Rowley, Claire Cooper-Walsh, Janet Gilbert, Jane Arthur, Sarah Cage, and Sylvie Millen.

A spokesman for the forum said: “We are a group of artists who predominantly use textiles and/or mixed media in their practice.

“We live and work in central England. Our aim is to develop our individual practice, and support and encourage textile based activity in the region, primarily through exhibitions.

“The exhibition Discoveries is about our creative journey as textile

artists. The starting places are many and various and the results may not be what we expected or anticipated.

“Some use the theme to produce a body of work based on ‘discoverers’, whether scientists, writers, explorers, or on events or places. Others explore their ideas through internal thoughts, feelings and reflections. By research, chance find or personal search we also aim to discover and explore new techniques and find new ways to work. Join us on this voyage of exploration and see what we’ve discovered.”

There are Meet The Artist events taking place during this exhibition with the remaining meets scheduled for: September 11 with Judith Towley and Ann Paterson; September 18 with Claire Cooper-Walsh; September 25 with Janet Gilbert.

All change for cafe art coordination

THE coordination of the exhibitions for the Drawing Room Cafe has changed hands.

We thank Georgia and Clare for their amazing coordination of the creative displays which many cafe users have enjoyed over the years, and we welcome Andy Gale who has kindly stepped in to volunteer his time to ensure that local art continues to be displayed on our cafe walls.

Foxlowe Arts Centre Trust chairman Chris Thompson said: “A big thanks to Georgia and Clare for being the Cafe Gallery Coordinators and for organising inspiring exhibitions.

“I for one as a regular visitor to the cafe have thoroughly enjoyed the exhibitions. I hope the local art scene doesn’t lose your talents for curating exhibitions in the future.”

Chris added: “Many thanks to Andy for taking this role on.”

Andy said: “I shall do my best to continue

the strong tradition.

Thanks Georgia and Clare for a good handover.”



The current exhibition on display within the Drawing Room Cafe is by Pauline Simcock who works with different medias including painting, textiles, collage and photography. Pauline studied at Stoke-on-Trent College of Art and Hammersmith and Chelsea Art School.

Pauline, who has exhibited widely in England and across Europe, said: “My intense interest in colour is revealed in subtle unusual patterns and images that draw on the natural world – geology, plants, the sea.”

Pauline’s work will be on display at the Foxlowe until September 11.

Foxlowe Garden News

ALISON McCREA, Foxlowe Garden co-ordinator, reports on the latest greenfingereed developments.

What a glorious HuG day we had in the garden, and the rest of the Foxlowe, especially after the postponement from 2020 and last minute uncertainties due to changes in Covid regulations. Finally our socially distanced Green Arts Festival went ahead with glorious weather, lots of stalls and activities and an excellent turnout. Garden-based activities included the Circus Academy, a singing workshop, drumming sessions and flash-mob dancing. There were also outdoor stalls from Cottage Garden Plants, The Woodland Trust and Curlew Art, which invited people of all ages to paint and learn about the Curlew bird, plus a willow weaver and beekeeper on the patio. The garden also hosted the official opening by Leek Town Mayor, Lyn Swindlehurst, in tandem with the dragonfly unveiling, which was supervised by the Foxlowe's very own Peter Kent-Baguley. The event was organised on the Foxlowe's behalf by Moorlands Climate Action, building on earlier collaborative activities such as this year's Plant Share. The Foxlowe gardeners have been practicing climate-friendly gardening for some years and are keen to promote it via joint activities with MCA's Nature group. A description of climate friendly gardening can be found on their website '21st Century Ways to make your Garden Climate-friendly' but it could perhaps be considered as the garden version of regenerative agriculture, which has been in the news a lot lately.

Thanks to all who responded to our request for



help with AppleFest this year. We're now optimistic that it can go ahead on Saturday 16th October, along with a separate juicing workshop on a Sunday (tba) for those who have large quantities of apples to press. If you'd like to join the team, it's not too late to get involved – just contact me. For more details, keep an eye on Events listings on our website and FaceBook page.

The gradual return to normality has brought the added bonus of new garden volunteers. We're delighted to welcome Pauline Dickinson, Sylvia Bennion and Alex...., who have joined us in the last month, and we're finding lots of garden tasks and neglected areas to keep them all busy. Finally, thanks to those who've made donations to our Dragonfly fund. We still have a way to go to meet our target but are looking forward to reaching lift off. If you would like to donate, please leave your donation in an envelope labelled 'Dragonfly' in one of the wooden donation boxes in the building or in the Plants to Share box on the patio. Alternatively, you can it leave it with one of the Café staff.

If you would like to become involved with the garden, please contact Alison McCrea via alison_mcc@btinternet.com or email volunteers@foxloweartscentre.org.uk.

Tea in the conservatory?

THE two Chris's have been at it again – refurbishing yet another area of the Foxlowe making it usable for visitors. This time it is the small first floor conservatory area which overlooks the beautiful Foxlowe Gardens where our chairman Chris Thompson and fellow volunteer Chris Ramsey have been working hard to make it a usable space.

It has been painted throughout and is now available for small meetings, or for dining for four.



FOCUS ON one of our much-valued supporters

By Peter Kent-Baguley

THE Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Ian Dudson and Foxlowe Pledger, Geoffrey Mathews, have at least one thing in common: they are each the fifth and final generation to head their respective companies both of which no longer trade. Such generational longevity in family-owned companies is increasingly rare in the globalised financial world that dominates international present-day production and service industries.

The founder of the Mathews' business dynasty was John Mathews, Geoffrey's great, great, grandfather who for reasons unknown left his two water-powered flour mills at Boxford, near Reading and migrated northwards to Leek in 1846 during the first decade of Victoria's reign. Interestingly, not to continue flour milling but to establish a totally new business, manufacturing wooden bobbins for the burgeoning silk industry in Leek.

Intervening generations, led by a John, a couple of Jabus, and an Ezekiel broadened their business to include joinery and building. Geoffrey has vivid memories of his grandfather Jabus having six dray horses bringing timber, felled on the Sythamley estate, to their timber yard in Portland Street at the corner with Buxton Road, where it was sawn into planks and stacked for weathering before being used, perhaps for the three chapels the firm built in Leek.

The Milk Street chapel, off Ball Haye Road, is their only surviving chapel building, now converted into domestic accommodation. Both the Bethesda at the corner of Ball Haye Street and Queen Street and the Brunswick at the corner of Market Street and York Street were demolished several decades ago and the sites are now small car parks. Lest you are beginning to think the Town Hall, wontonly demolished several decades ago, was a Mathews' building too, it wasn't. In Market Street, opposite the Brunswick chapel, the building was held in great affection by the people of Leek and a

central venue for performances by the local amateur theatre groups. The site is now, yes you've guessed it, a car park!

Geoffrey's late wife, Pauline, was an enthusiastic member of Centre Stage, the local amateur theatre group and appeared in more than 70 productions, gathering many plaudits in the local press reviews. Geoffrey had difficulty remembering his lines so his second and final role was a corpse: "But the producer insisted I joined the line-up for a bow!"

Pauline's father was Herbert Lisle, JP, OBE, and general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Textile Workers and Kindred Trades, which owned its headquarters, the Foxlowe. Herbert Lisle succeeded William Bromfield, the first general secretary from the formation of the amalgamated union to his retirement in 1946.

For 36 years, Herbert Lisle led the union. He initiated the building of the now demolished garages at the lower, Brough Park end of the Foxlowe land, as a source of income for the union. Geoffrey was well acquainted with the Foxlowe decades before its chequered interregnum between the Union selling up and moving out and the launch of the Arts Centre in 2011. He was often involved with repairs and restorations at the building. Geoffrey has been a valued Pledger continuously since the inception of the scheme in 2011. He would dearly love to see the war-time cut-down iron railings restored to give the front of the building its original dignified appearance.



WHAT'S ON AT THE FOXLOWE ARTS CENTRE

Thursday, September 2

Leek Comedy Club
With Jonny Awsum, Freddy Quinne, Dan Tiernan, and compere Harriet Dyer.

Tickets £10. Doors open at 7pm for 8pm start.

Friday, September 10



China Crisis Music.
Tickets £22.50. Age 16 and over. Doors open at 7.30pm.

Saturday, September 11

Stephen Bailey: Can't Be Bothered. Comedy. Tickets £14. Age 14 and over. Doors 7.15pm for 8pm.

Thursday, September 16



John Bramwell (I am Kloot) Music. Tickets £20. Doors open at 7.15pm.

Friday, September 24



Robyn Hitchcock
Music. Tickets £17.50. Age 14 and over. 7.30pm.

Wednes, September 29



Jerry Joseph – part of the Leek Blues & Americana Festival Music. Tickets £14. Age 14 and over. Doors 7.15pm for 8pm

Friday, October 1



Son of Dave – part of the Leek Blues & Americana Festival. Music. Tickets £12.50. Doors 7.15pm for 8pm.



Saturday, October 2
Ian Siegal – part of the Leek Blues & Americana Festival. Music. Tickets £14. Age 14 and over. Doors 7pm for 7.30pm.

Thursday, October 7

Leek Comedy Club
With Martin Mor, Rob Mulholland, Ian Crawford, Tal Davies, and compere Dominic Woodward. Tickets £10. Doors open at 7pm for 8pm.

Sunday, October 17



Henge Music. Tickets £15. Doors open at 8pm.

Thursday, October 21



Gary Delaney: Gary in Punderland. Comedy. Tickets £20. Age 16 and over. Doors 7pm for 8pm.

Saturday, October 23



The Achievers – part of the Leek Blues & Americana Festival Music. Tickets £15. Age 14 and over. Doors open at 7pm for 8pm start.

Thursday, October 28



Attila the Stockbroker
Music. Tickets £10. Doors 7.15pm for 8pm start.

Friday, November 12



Limehouse Lizzy Live
@ The Foxlowe. Music. Tickets £18. Age 14 and over. Doors 7.30pm.

Saturday, November 13



Martin Mucklowe – The Full Works. Comedy. Tickets £15. Age 18 and over. Doors open at 7.15pm for 8pm start.

Thursday, November 18



Scott Bennett: Relax Comedy. Tickets £12.50. Age 16 and over. Doors 6.45pm for 7.30pm start.

Saturday, November 27



Mik Artistik's Ego Trip
Music. Ticket £12. Doors 7pm for 8pm.

To find out more about the above events, and to purchase tickets (some of which are subject to a booking fee) go online to <https://foxloweartscentre.org.uk/events> or call 01538 386112.

This newsletter is published by the Foxlowe Arts Centre Ltd, Market Place, Leek. ST13 6AD.

Produced by Belinda Hargreaves: 07941 806986. hargreavespr@outlook.com. Printed by HCM Printers, Strangman Street, Leek.