

In the Picture

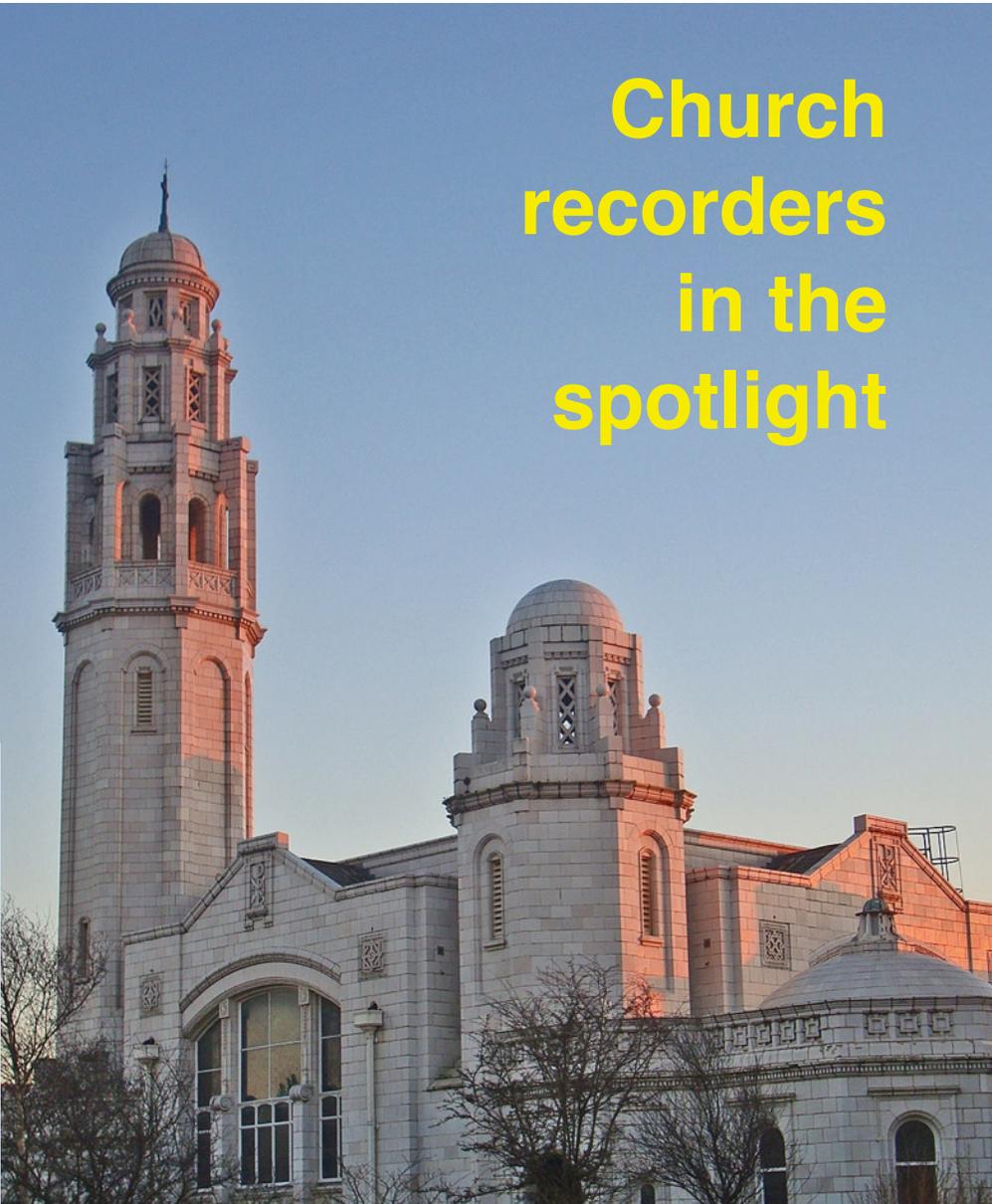
Church recorders in the spotlight

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Lectures and other dates for your diary

See our website at www.fyldedfas.org.uk for further information on all our future events

Wednesday 6 Nov

Salute to the Holiest – Lutyens, churches and the commemoration of war

Clyde Binfield

The focus is on the commemoration of the Great War. The heroes are the Imperial War Graves Commission and Sir Edwin Lutyens. The context is Lutyens in Rome, Oxford, Norfolk and Hampstead Garden Suburb, and visions of an England that never quite was.

Tuesday 28 Nov

Theatre Visit to The Mousetrap at the Grand, Blackpool

Wednesday 4 Dec

Tantrums and Tiaras – Behind the Scenes at the Royal Opera House

Nigel Bates

Nigel Bates takes a look at the life backstage at London's Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the tribulations and

triumphs of working with the Royal Opera and the Royal Ballet companies.

Wednesday 18 Dec

Christmas lunch at the Grand Hotel, St Annes

Wednesday 8 January 2014

The Age of Jazz!



Art Deco Fashion and Style

Sally Hoban

Art Deco swept across Europe and America in the 1920s, bringing with it a transformation in design. From brightly coloured, geometric patterns on fabrics, wallpapers

and in book illustration to the soaring, elegant lines of New York skyscrapers, Art Deco helped to introduce Modernism to a mass audience. Fashion design too was affected by the new style, bringing with it beaded 'flapper' dresses, fabulous handbags and bias cut dresses. This lecture gives an overview of Art Deco style and design and also looks at the movement's legacy today.

Wednesday 5 Feb

Fabergé at the Court of the Tsar

Nicholas Merchant

No jeweller since the time of Benvenuto Cellini in the 16th century has captured the imagination of the cultivated world like Peter Carl Fabergé. Taking over his father's somewhat hum-drum jewellery business at an early age, he created a reputation which, within a very

short period, made his wares some of the most desirable known to the fashionable world in the last years of the 19th century. This lecture looks at some of the works created by this genius, which range from personal jewels such as tiaras, through hardstone figures, cigarette cases and writing accessories to the Easter Eggs which were created mainly for the Imperial family.

Tuesday 18 February

Special Interest Day:



Bess of Hardwick and her descendants

Roger Mitchell

Popular lecturer Roger

Mitchell will give two lectures, which will provide insights into the Cavendish family of Haddon Hall and Chatsworth in Derbyshire.

Wednesday 5 March

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera – the Golden Age of Mexican Painting

Chloe Sayer

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera have achieved iconic status in Mexico. Arguably Mexico's most original painter, Kahlo made herself the principal theme of her art. Her paintings reflect her experiences and dreams. This lecture surveys the work of both artists, chronicling their turbulent marriage and Mexico's history after the 1910 Revolution.

Wednesday 30 April

A day trip to Port Sunlight, the Lady Lever Art Gallery and Liverpool

Fylde Decorative and Fine Arts Society

A Member Society of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies.

Members pursue a mutual interest in the arts through lectures on a wide range of decorative and fine arts topics including art, sculpture, jewellery design, architecture, garden design. Lectures are on the first Wednesday of every month at 2pm in the Hall of the St. Annes-on-Sea United Reformed Church, St. George's Road, St. Annes FY8 2AE.

Chair: Hilary Alcock 01995 670563
Vice-Chair: Marie Riley 01253 713003

In the Picture is edited by Pam Foster. It is published twice a year in March and October. Contact the Editor via inthepicture@iwcom.co.uk

Cover: *The White Church, Fairhaven, where our Church Recorders are busy. See page 6*

Wanted: Volunteers for our sound system

As members probably know, we invested in a new sound system for our lectures a few months ago. Having our own equipment means that we are not dependent on the hall's system, which was sometimes unpredictable, and it also means we can take it to events held at other venues.

Having our own equipment also means that we have to set it up ourselves before each lecture. At the moment there are three or four people who manage this but we could really do with more volunteers to ensure adequate coverage.

Would you be willing to help out? It doesn't involve any lifting, so ladies can volunteer as well as the gentleman. All it requires is some instruction as to which bits fit together. If you think you can help, please get in touch with a member of the committee.

A grand night to remember

Intrigued by news of a new series of DFAS At Night events in London, we decided to try holding an evening event for ourselves. And what a success it was. Here on the Fylde we are lucky to have access to one of the country's finest legacy theatres – the Grand in Blackpool. What better way to kick off the new Fylde DFAS At Night events than an evening devoted to the history of this important and beautiful Matcham theatre.

After the success of Afternoon Tea With Josiah Wedgwood at the Glendower Hotel in St Annes, we decided to use the venue again, this time offering a variety of cheeses and wines as refreshments.

Curtain Up: The Story of Blackpool's Jewel in the Crown: Matcham's Grand Theatre was the talk provided by the Grand's Honorary Archivist, Linda Tolson MBE, supported by the theatre's Vice President, Geoff Tolson, who provided a fascinating display of just a small part of the theatre's archive. Fylde DFAS members themselves, Linda and Geoff play an important role in our organisation, not least by supplying tea and biscuits at our lectures.

The Grand was opened in July 1894 by Thomas Sergenson, who was Blackpool's first successful theatrical manager and who immediately dubbed the

And a unique glimpse backstage

Following our DFAS At Night event, Linda and Geoff Tolson organised two Sunday morning tours of the Grand, including backstage areas not normally open to the public. We climbed upwards past dressing rooms and ticket offices used in the past and eventually found ourselves in an



Geoff and Linda Tolson

theatre 'Matcham's Masterpiece'. The theatre opened with a performance of Hamlet, but it wasn't long before it was presenting hit musicals straight from the West End and Broadway, starring such names as Sarah Bernhardt and Lillie Langtry. Linda went through each of the decades of the theatre's history, littering her talk with anecdotes of some of the biggest stars of the time. The roll call read like a celebrity Who's Who – Sybil Thorndike, Jack Buchanan, Gracie Fields, John Gielgud, Edith Evans, Peggy Ashcroft, Noel Coward and many more. By the 1960s the theatre was struggling and it was only through the efforts of a few hard working individuals that it was spared from demolition. In March 1981, the Grand opened again with performances from Timothy West and Prunella Scales in an Old Vic production of The Merchant of Venice.

Linda's talk was vibrant, entertaining, amusing and informative. We hope to have her back to hear more. Pam Foster

unexpected and complex scenery store, high above the stage itself, with an array of heavy machinery and technical equipment. Finally, the curtain lifted and there we found ourselves looking out in awe across the stage into the auditorium. Kate Cartmell

Letter from our Chair

This newsletter brings us to the end of my inaugural chairmanship of Fylde DFAS. And what an eventful four years it has been, not to mention the year prior to that, when a small steering committee of six got together to make it begin to happen.

We didn't know one another very well at that point, but over the months we grew close and friendships blossomed. As the Society evolved, thankfully more enthusiastic recruits joined us, and I have benefited from having a committed, talented, hard-working team alongside me. It has been great and I have enjoyed every minute of it; I hope you have too.

This autumn you will be voting in a new Chair and I am sure the newly constituted committee and you the members will give her your full support. To a certain extent, Fylde DFAS has been my baby and I am protective of its future. I am convinced, however, that I couldn't be handing over to a better successor, one who will actively develop our society and its central role in the local community. After all, art and culture in all their diversity and variety of outputs should have no barriers, and can calm and soothe all manner of social ills and divisiveness.

The new season's programme reflects the diversity too of our ever changing national identity, and with it our plurality as a nation. The majority of lectures will be in the daytime but there will be some evening events too. Farther afield, there will be trips to the theatre, stately homes and places of interest, including Budapest, one of Europe's most enchanting cities.

What more could you wish for? Do come, join in, have fun. Raise a glass with me to a great new season - Cheers!
Hilary Alcock

From Ruskin with love ...

As our group waited for the coach to arrive, it started to snow. The previous weeks' weather had been unseasonably poor and we knew that snow was still covering much of the Lake District.

We set off optimistically up the M6, accompanied by flurries of snow. Our first stop was for tea or coffee at the Strickland Arms at Sizergh, where we were able to admire the panelled walls, old prints and an extensive collection of Staffordshire pottery dogs. It seemed that the nearer we got to Coniston the more it snowed, but our intrepid driver steered us carefully through the narrow lanes into Coniston's central bus and car park, whence it was just a short walk to the Ruskin Museum, passing his memorial in the parish church graveyard on the way.

The museum is divided into three sections – Ruskin, the Lake District and an extension devoted to the history of Donald Campbell's ultimately fatal pursuit of land and water speed



Brantwood viewed from Coniston

records. The main items relating to Ruskin consisted of his beautifully detailed architectural sketches and landscape paintings, along with many of his written works, explanations of how he championed the paintings of Turner and an audio-visual presentation expounding his opinions on Industry versus the Natural World.

Due to the weather we were now running late, so lunch was a rather hurried affair – some still eating as we boarded the coach for the short run down to the boat jetty. Unfortunately further delays ensued, as the steam yacht Gondola was suffering from a tight thrust bearing, which could have

caused serious damage if ignored. Luckily, help was at hand and we were soon on our way by diesel launch across Coniston to Ruskin's house, Brantwood, on the opposite shore. On disembarking, we made our way up through the gardens, past snow lying like blankets on the hedgerows, to the door of Brantwood, where we were met by our guides.

A short video presentation gave us an overview of Ruskin's life and times in the Lake District, before we were given a guided tour through many of the rooms of the house. It was explained that most of Ruskin's possessions had been sold or given

away after his death, though many had since been kindly returned for display at Brantwood. These included Ruskin's invalid chair, his piano and much of his library / study furniture. There was even a second piano, which visitors were encouraged to play, one brave visitor attempting a rendition of Satie's *Gymnopédie*.

We were told how Ruskin had extended the house and incorporated interesting features, such as a waterfall opposite the main entrance that could be turned on for the entertainment of younger visitors. One of his first additions to the house was a spectacular turret room, opening off his bedroom and giving panoramic views of the lake and fells. The view was particularly beautiful on the day, as the sun was shining and the fells were covered in snow, with occasional flurries enhancing the effect. After the house tour, there was a short time left to explore part of the extensive gardens up the hillside behind the house, but snow-covered paths made this a precarious adventure.

The question arose – would Gondola be repaired in time to ferry us back across the lake? Admiring the view, there appeared a wisp of steam from a distant vessel approaching. Yes, it was Gondola. We all waited on the jetty as she made her approach, and then we were welcomed aboard this most beautiful yacht – could any royal barge be finer? She was built in Liverpool in 1859 and shipped in sections by rail to Coniston where she was reassembled and started life as a private yacht, eventually becoming derelict before being saved and restored in 1980 to her former glory. It was a smooth and quiet voyage – quite a change from the raucous diesel launch we had used earlier.

Bob Fielding

Charismatic Andrew Davies was the ideal tour operator. He divided his lectures into three separate parts and was happy to proceed at the pace of the audience, answering questions as we travelled the city's streets, stopping to point out less familiar landmarks, and to explain how the local geology shaped the development of the city. Andrew does in fact act as a New York guide to small groups and a lot of the chatter at lunch time was centred on how much people would like to take part in one of these special trips.

This really was an excellent day – fun, educational and informative. It left most of us with a strong desire to fit a visit to New York into our future holiday plans. Pam Foster

A window on the world in the Dales

A visit to Austwick Hall was suggested by our Chair as an option for this year's annual committee outing. None of us had heard of it before; it sounded a bit different, so we all agreed it would be an ideal venue to explore. And what a gem it turned out to be.

Austwick Hall is a country house hotel near Settle in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales. It is owned by Michael and Eric, who between them have collected a range of eclectic artworks, antiques and artefacts from their travels round the world.

One of the most striking pieces is a beautiful, contemporary stained glass window in the entrance hall, created by Judi Stark. Interestingly and co-incidentally, Michael pointed out a family portrait, painted by the Lancastrian artist Claude Harrison, who in the 1960s was commissioned by Booths to create the mural above its shop in St Annes Square. Booths has now gone but the mural has been preserved over what is now Tesco Express.

Outside the gardens are a delight. A series of steep interconnected terraces provides a home for fountains, pergolas, and mature shrubs and plants. A woodland sculpture trail winds its way from the lower terrace to the top. An hour wasn't long enough to explore the terraces and identify the garden artworks.

Renovating the Hall has been a labour of love for Michael and Eric, who have tastefully created individual guest rooms decorated and furnished with antiques. It's well worth a visit – or why not treat yourself to an indulgent night or two in what is a beautiful part of the Dales?



Stained glass window by Judi Stark

Big Apple comes to town

Blackpool Football Club Hotel was the venue for the New York, New York Special Interest Day in June. It was the first time we had used this new and impressive four star hotel and it didn't disappoint. Easy access to plentiful parking, conference rooms overlooking the stadium and catering by Paul Rowley are all reasons why it should become a regular venue.

We were treated to an American-style lunch (no it wasn't burgers or hot dogs) and a tour round the hotel's suites and bedrooms. You could almost hear the roar of the Blackpool FC crowd as our guide opened the bedroom windows which led directly into a spectator box. You could actually watch the match from your bed if you were feeling specially lazy!

The focus of the day was New York's architecture. Lecturer Andrew Davies took us on a delightful voyage from the great beginnings of the city, through the age of the skyscrapers, right up to modern New York and its art.

We began by being processed as immigrants at Ellis Island, sailing past the Statue of Liberty, and arriving in Manhattan to marvel at familiar sights such as the iconic Chrysler, Flat Iron and Empire State Buildings. We flew round the city into the twentieth and twenty first centuries to view the new cathedral, the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, the Frick Collection, Central Park, Guggenheim and lavishly restored Grand Central Station.

Church recorders in the spotlight

NADFAS Church Recorders promote recognition and preservation of the rich artistic heritage in places of worship by recording the contents of churches of all religions. The nature of the role means that recorders work behind the scenes, so we thought it was about time they were given some well deserved publicity.

The principal aim of Church Recording is to produce a

permanent record of the artistic heritage of churches for the benefit of the public. This information is used for research and is useful in the event of theft

or damage to artefacts and furnishings.

Fylde Church Recorders are a small group of volunteers working at the White Church, officially known as Fairhaven United Reformed Church. Its distinctive white faience exterior, influenced by Byzantine and Moorish architecture, is a local landmark; however it is the interior that is the subject of our study. Although relatively plain inside, the extensive woodwork is of high quality and the magnificent stained glass windows are a most attractive feature and a challenge to the recorders. The pulpit also deserves mention as it serves as a First World War memorial.

Our work involves dividing furnishings and objects into categories, for example memorials, textiles, woodwork, etc. A detailed description is made of each item, together with any further information which can be gleaned, such as manufacturer, designer, dates and measurements.

Most volunteers began this task

as novices but we soon found ourselves discussing architectural and ecclesiastical terms and asking: 'Do you think that table has casement moulding or ogee?' or 'Is that an alisee patee cross or a patee cross?' We do have access to reference material to help with our task.

The beautiful stained glass windows each tell a story - the Calvary window portrays the



Stained glass at the White Church

Crucifixion and Ascension, prophets and disciples, others the trials and persecution of Christian martyrs and the story of the Pilgrim Fathers. They are large and detailed but have

proved to be most interesting and rewarding to the recorders.

We have been working (slowly) for over two years and hope to have our first draft completed shortly. Photographs have yet to be taken which will greatly enhance the finished article and then, after consultation with the Area Representative, a compilation of the final record has to be produced following strict NADFAS guidelines. Copies of each record are held by the church, the V&A and official church archives.

This project has taken the volunteers some time but we hope to finish in the new year. Sadly, we lost one of our contributors to illness: Trevor Saunders, who even during his treatment turned up at our meetings with positive ideas and valuable knowledge.

We meet regularly on Thursdays at around 2pm at The White Church and anyone interested in joining us will be warmly welcomed. Dare we contemplate a second assignment next year?

Linda Hynes

Harewood's delights

A warm welcome awaited us in July at Harewood House, a magnificent Georgian mansion built by John Carr of York in the mid-18th century, overlooking beautiful Capability Brown landscaped gardens.

A magnificent Gallery, designed by Robert Adam, contained a vast array of pictures, including works by El Greco, Bellini and Titian – and all surrounded by examples of Chippendale furniture made exclusively for the family.

After our tour we were free to explore the glorious gardens with meticulously kept Italianate parterre and with breathtaking views across the valley and the surrounding grounds of the estate.

We finished our day with tea in the courtyard, a delightful social occasion to end a most thought-provoking visit. Kate Cartmell

The Beast of Blackpool

A spectacular exhibition took place this summer at the Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool. Entitled *Aping the Beast*, by Serena Korda, it formed a comprehensive exhibition including film and photographic works alongside a large-scale sculpture.

The central work was a 15ft tall latex puppet dinosaur, created to recall B-movie horror films such as *Godzilla*. This generally dormant sculptural presence was 'awakened' for performance events, culminating in an outdoor procession on the Golden Mile.

Led by the Gallery's newly appointed Director Richard Parry, suitably attired as a life-sized monster figure, the dinosaur was installed at the ringside of the Blackpool Tower Circus as a splendid water feature unfolded. Kate Cartmell

Twenty eight Fylde DFAS members and friends set off for a five-day trip to see the art and history of Bath and Bristol on Monday 27 May, with our tour coordinator Elaine and trusty coach driver Mark.

On the way we called at the National Trust's Hidcote Manor Gardens at Chipping Camden in Gloucestershire. Although probably not at their resplendent best, they were nevertheless very beautiful with their tulips and spring blossom and lovely views.

The next day in Bristol we were joined by our Blue Badge guide, Val, who was with us throughout our visit. Our first trip was to the American Museum at Claverton Manor near Bath. What a fascinating place it is, arranged in lots of rooms, each furnished as it would have been at different periods from the first settlers onwards.

We learnt much, including the origins of minding your Ps and Qs - in Conkey's Tavern you got a pint if you were not well behaved and a quart if you were! Presumably everyone ended up on pints.

The weather precluded walking

Minding our Ps and Qs in the West Country



Fylde DFAS members on tour

round the grounds, so we embarked again for a guided tour of Bristol by coach. Val was a most informative guide and we had a comprehensive tour, including walking across the Clifton suspension bridge in the rain.

On Wednesday we went to Tyntesfield, another NT property since 2002 when the family ran out of money (shades of our own Cliftons, where the money was gambled away). This Victorian

Gothic mansion has had a chequered history and we wandered round in our own time, with very knowledgeable guides in each room for those of us who wanted to know more. We then went to Wells to visit the cathedral, again magnificent, and we would have liked to spend more time exploring the smallest city in the country.

The next day was Bath day! We had a guided tour in the coach, seeing among other sights the Royal Crescent and the Assembly Rooms. This was followed by a guided tour of the Roman Baths, which had been much developed to show the surrounding wash rooms and treatment rooms, as well as the baths themselves and the spring source of the water which bubbles up from deep underground at 46 degrees C. The afternoon was spent at the Holborne Museum of Art, where we saw superb collections of artefacts and paintings.

Leaving for home on Friday we visited Shugborough Estate in Staffordshire, where there was plenty to see with the beautiful mansion house, walled garden, Georgian farm and extensive grounds. Grateful thanks to Elaine and Ray, who put together a wonderful programme. A truly memorable trip. Marilyn Smith

Look out for DFAS gift cards

We have had a number of requests about purchasing Fylde DFAS membership as a gift. This has inspired us to think about how we could enable people to give some element of our programme as a present, an issue particularly pertinent as Christmas is fast approaching. We would like to offer this facility for a variety of budgets. You may, for example, want to buy an admission for somebody to attend a single lecture, or perhaps you would like to pay for a special interest day, a trip out, or a year's membership on their behalf. We hope to have bespoke cards and vouchers on sale from October onwards.

A resounding Olé for our tapas evening

A Spanish Tapas Evening got the new season off to a lively start in St Annes on Tuesday 10 September. An illustrated lecture by Hugh Ellwood on Kings and Caliphs was the main attraction – together with delicious food and wine.

The speaker focused on architecture, reminding us that some of the greatest designs came from Spain's unique fusion of Christian and Muslim culture

following centuries of Arab occupation. 'Where the Christians and Arabs co-operated they produced a unique style,' he said.

Giving us a foretaste of October's Fylde DFAS Spanish Tour, he commended many of the buildings to be found in Segovia, Toledo and Salamanca, often designed and built by people who could neither read nor write. Iain Williamson

Join us Tagging the Treasures

How many art works can you name from the Lytham St Annes Art Collection? Earlier this year, we compiled a mini-survey about the collection which included this question. The answer from most people was 'Not many'. And this was among our own members, who are already enthusiasts.

We asked because we were compiling evidence for a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application. At the end of May we received the news that our bid had been successful. The HLF were impressed with the number who said they were willing to get involved and awarded us a grant of £24,000 to catalogue the collection and raise awareness about it.

We have now embarked on our exciting Tagging the Treasures project, working closely with the Friends of the Collection; Fylde Borough Council, who are its custodians; the County Museums Service, who provide curatorial services; and other bodies such as the Library Service and Civic Society.

The history of the collection has been chequered. The first donation, Richard Ansdell's *The Herd Lassie*, was given by John Booth of the grocery chain in 1925. Six years later, Alderman James Dawson donated another Ansdell painting and, over time, gave many more artworks including an outstanding work by Henry Fuseli. Others followed their lead and, inspired by philanthropy, idealism, and civic duty, envisaged that a gallery would be built to house all these wonderful works, which grew to include ivories, bronzes, marble sculptures and furniture.

The idea for the gallery gathered momentum over the years but the political will was never quite there and the collection began to gather dust. Some artworks were on display in the town hall where they couldn't be seen except by staff and many more lay neglected in the basement.

A collection of artworks of this calibre, consisting entirely of donations and bequests, is extremely rare, but they were inadequately recorded as well as poorly stored which meant there was plenty of scope for items to go missing.

The dream of a permanent gallery didn't go away and things came full circle when Booths, in 2007, built

the Fylde Gallery above their new supermarket in Lytham. This provided a long-term home for *The Herd Lassie* and a bright modern space for a series of exhibitions by local groups, including our own Young Arts project. Thanks to the work of the Friends and others, awareness and appreciation of the collection is growing and its future is looking much brighter.

There is now real commitment and support for the collection from both Fylde Council and the Museums Service.

Conservation work continues slowly on a limited budget.

Sadly, many local residents don't realise that this collection exists, and what an amazing asset it is. We hope to change all that. We plan to recruit a team of researchers who can fill the gaps in our knowledge and add interest and colour to the basic facts we have already. The painting shown here is by an



Bird's Nest and Flowers, by M.A. Ensor

artist listed as Mary Annie Ensor (1837-1886). A Google search reveals no information other than two images – one of which is from our collection. Could you help us to find out more?

We will be putting on roadshows and displays, lectures, heritage open days and exhibitions. All these activities will be free to ensure that they are open to everybody. We hope the project will act as a catalyst for people to increase their knowledge about wider aspects of art, so we will provide sessions on curating skills, conservation and collection care, and even on filming and uploading video so that we can document what we are doing and produce a DVD about the project and the collection. The culmination of our combined efforts will be a comprehensive visual catalogue with information on the artworks, artists and donors.

Our project co-ordinator, Richard Marshall, has set up a website where we can publish ongoing research. You can find more information there. So if you haven't yet volunteered, please think about joining us. We will know we have been successful if, at the end of this project, when we ask you again how many art works you can name, your answer comes back: 'Lots!' To find out more about the project please visit www.lythamstannesartcollection.org or telephone me on 07709 175776.

Marie Riley