



NEWSLETTER

Friends of Harlow SCULPTURE COLLECTION

Number 4

June 2008

Friends Watching Brief

This year has seen damage beyond repair to two of the works in the Town Park; Children on A Rock by Hilary Frew and Aphrodite by Ernest Adsett. As reported in the local media "Aphrodite is owned by the Harlow Art Trust and has sat in a quiet location within the Town Park since its donation to the Trust in 1957. The extent of the damage will prevent the work from being repaired: vandals have removed the head and arms as well as destroying the torso."

Jenny Lushington in reporting the vandalism to the Press and Radio described her feelings "Last Monday I visited the Town Park to show the photographer the damaged Aphrodite sculpture. From the bridge overlooking the lower lake and looking into the copse, she hardly looked damaged but somehow shorter. After being helped over the fence and across the stream I was able to approach her and the full effect of the damage was horrifying to see. Her head was missing and it was evident that a sustained attack, possibly with a hammer had damaged both her arms and chipped dents all over her body. She had also been sprayed with red paint. Who ever these vandals are who show so much aggression to our sculptures, that have given so much pleasure for so long, they need to be stopped."

It is essential that we get to grips with keeping a more watchful eye on the condition of the works of art in the town.

Since a third of our sculptures are in the Town Centre, which most of us visit regularly, casual observations would be heavily biased towards these 20 or so works whilst others, in the industrial estates for instance, could end up with no cover. So, to make the task as easy as possible Kelly has produced a form which will help us to collect the information she needs for The Art Trust (or other owners) and

Albert Storey has volunteered to co-ordinate the task. So, if you live near to a sculpture, pass one regularly or have a particular favourite you would like to "adopt" please tell Albert. You can send an e-mail, with "Sculpture Watch" as subject, to albert.storey@ntlworld.com; 'phone him on 01279 830784; or snail-mail him at 47 Bynghams, Harlow, CM19 5NS. We will provide you with proof that you are an accredited representative of



the Friends, who have been asked to undertake this work on behalf of The Art Trust.

Some words of advice. If you see a work being misused or abused, a (discreetly taken) photograph can be worth a thousand words. However, please take them before you make yourself known to any owners of locations. Recently at one of the Health Centres, notices had been pinned to a work of art damaging it. Our representative asked for them to be removed and received a very unfriendly reply and thus missed the opportunity to provide proof of the damage.

Paul Mount Exhibition

2 August - 28 September 2000

This summer the Gibberd Gallery in partnership with the Friends of Harlow Sculpture presents an exhibition of sculpture and paintings by Cornish artist Paul Mount. Each summer the Gibberd Gallery profiles new work of artists who are represented in Harlow's public art collection and this year's show celebrates Paul Mount's longstanding relationship to the town.

One of the first sculptures to be sited in the Gibberd Garden was a Paul Mount sculpture of interlocking forms in cast iron and when Harvey Centre was being designed in the 1970s Paul Mount was commissioned to design a piece for the central space. Paul has also participated in gallery exhibitions in Harlow throughout 1970s and 1980s.

Paul Mount's sculpture and paintings are mostly conceived in St Just, a small Cornish town a few miles from Land's End and facing the vast Atlantic. Here the landscape is reduced to its bare essentials; moors with granite outcrops and small fields hedged with stone walls and windswept bushes, and Paul Mount's work has a timeless integrity which seems to reflect this elemental nature.

There are several themes to which he returns; dense interlocking forms or open linear works containing multiple spatial relationships, which are sometimes made infinitely variable by being mobile. There is a great variety of surface (shiny, matt or patinated) and scale, but a constant feeling for form with power, tension, grace or elegance.

His painting, which has been a parallel activity since the early days, often explores the same themes but has also derived inspiration from townscapes, most recently in the Mediterranean.

This exhibition will be accompanied by a children's activity day and a programme of adult sculpture trails and talks.

A free drop-in children's activity day will take place on Thursday 7th August, 10-12 am and 1-3 pm. Come and make your own three dimensional models inspired by Paul Mount's sculptures in the Gibberd Gallery. The workshop will be led by local Artist Philip Melling.

Evening viewing will be on Thursday 7th August, from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m.

Kelly Lean

Have some time to yourself

Invigilate in the gallery this summer

As with the very successful exhibition last year, we intend to invigilate the Paul Mount show. However, as we found out last time, there are very few people in the Gallery at certain periods, and to lessen the strain we have decided to restrict the hours from 11am to 3pm. Another reason is the fact that there will be no portable Henry Moores on view, so the risk will be less.



Last year we arranged the sessions in 2 groups of 4 hours each day. A lot of people thought that a bit excessive. This time, with only 4 hours total invigilation per day, we could divide it into 2 daily sessions, or keep it to 1 per day. As the person who organised the rota last time it would be easier for me to do the latter, but if you feel strongly that 2 hour sessions is the way to go, please phone me on 427244, or email to b_a_burge@yahoo.co.uk. I promise to abide by the majority decision.

Please also let me know in advance if you would be willing to do a turn or two. I will be contacting everyone nearer the time, and putting pressure on, so be prepared. To be positive, lots of people enjoyed sitting in a beautiful space with beautiful objects, passing the time with interested and curious visitors, getting on with their correspondence, or knitting, in peace, or just reading.

Barbara Burge

Harlow's best kept secret

Someone once said that the sculpture in the town was its best kept secret. The Friends have been arranging tours of the sculpture for some time but because they were on foot, they have centred around the Town Centre. So this summer we are going to highlight the sculpture that is scattered around the town and very rarely seen. So come along :

Sunday, August 10th A tour by coach for the less agile. This includes the guide, Jackie Storey.

Sunday, August 17th A tour by bike guided by John Curry with Nick Bullions bringing up the rear.

Sunday, August 24th A walking tour guided by the ever energetic Nick Bullions.

All tours will start at 2pm at the Museum of Harlow car park. We hope that whole families will come along for an unusual afternoon out – Come and cuddle the Donkey, see the bicycle Sun Dial and find the Sheep Shearer.

To book a place, ring 01279 830784.

Window Works

Have you seen it? Did you like it? Does it make you smile? Well, for all of us who participated in making the Tree of Life art work that is now in the window of the old Clarks shop in the Harvey Centre, it was a fun activity that had us smiling and enjoying a creative morning in the Gibberd Gallery. We will be reminded each time we go into town of the why and how of the activity and hope it brings a bit of joy into the day of everyone who catches a glimpse of it.

It all started with a call to have a meeting with the Harlow Renaissance team, they wanted to brighten up the Town Centre while we are waiting for all the plans for refurbishment to come to fruition. They had found the artist – Anna – now they needed to find some people in Harlow to make the picture. The first decoration appeared in an empty shop window just before all the Christmas frills – Window Jewels made by children under the umbrella of Creative Space. So the regeneration team thought we could go to the other end of the spectrum and get some of us with 'maturity' to have a go. So we, a representative each from the 50 club, the magazine group from the college and me from the FoHSC met with Anna and were inspired enough to encourage the rest of our groups to come and get involved.

We knew we would be making a large picture in the style of North American native art and we didn't have to be 'good at painting' as we would be cutting

out shapes but otherwise we could let ourselves go and follow the inspiration instilled in us on the day by Anna. And very inspiring she was too! So enthusiastic and clear on the how and why that she was explaining to us. She had some examples of Native American art and some templates of animals, birds and leaves. We were told the characteristics of the animals and that we could show the true nature of the animal in our decoration as by cutting out successive shapes each smaller than the one before we would in effect be making an X-ray picture of our chosen creature or plant (to show the inner being not just the bones).

Any way we didn't have to think too much but just choose our animal choose our coloured paper, and get cutting. Very soon silence reigned as concentration took over but after a while as we each saw our x-ray picture staring to work conversation flowed and we became quite animated even drawing in the visitors to the gallery, some even promised to come and join in the next day. We gathered in mixed groups from Tuesday to Friday each of us making one or two animals and leaves. When we had mastered the cutting and sticking we had a go at wool winding; just trailing the wool over a sticky surface to make a pattern. Its is amazing the variations you can achieve with such a limited medium. As each creature was completed Anna placed it somewhere on the huge sheet of paper with the skeleton of the trees on it.

Gradually the colourful trees, full of birds and surrounded by animals appeared and I am very pleased with the finished product and the brightness it brings to that busy corner of the Harvey Centre. If you haven't seen it yet do go and have a look. Keep your ears and eyes open for the next project – I am sure it will be just as vibrant – much better than an empty shop window.

Jenny Lushington



Antanas Brazdys

Anatanas Brazdys was born in Lithuania in 1939. He and his family were Second World War refugees moving to Germany before ending up in the United States. His parents' (his father was an architect and his mother a cultivator of the Lithuanian folk dance) creative dispositions influenced Brazdys' decision to become an artist. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago where he earned the Edward L. Reyerson grant for foreign travel and study. As a result, he ended up in London at the Royal College of Art, taking on the roles of both student and part-time tutor. During his time at the RCA his work came to the attention of Sir Phillip Hendy who was director of the National Gallery and Chairman of the Harlow Art Trust. Hendy went on to introduce Brazdys work to the other Trustees and in particular Lady Gibberd (at the time Patricia Fox-Edwards) who, as she would go on to do with so many sculptors from Harlow's collection, took him under her patronage. The Trust bought their first Brazdys sculpture in 1967, *Metal Sculpture*. It was originally sited in the water gardens but later moved to the Museum of Harlow.



Echo was commissioned by the Trust in 1970 and marked a departure in Brazdys' work; the crude welding and painted surfaces of earlier sculptures like *metal sculpture* were replaced by a seamless highly polished stainless steel. Despite this material departure his work remained abstract. In 1978 he said of his sculpture.

"It's strange, when I was a child my mother made me learn all those Lithuanian dances of hers, and I hated it. Now, from time to time, I see the sort of rhythms I learned then coming out in my handling of the metal, so I suppose nothing we ever learn is ever wasted."

High Flying was acquired by the Trust in 1978 following its inclusion in a mixed exhibition of sculpture organised by Lady Gibberd at the Playhouse. It was later moved to its current location in the Harvey Centre on the wall of the stairway near Marks and Spencers. It accompanied Brazdys' fourth and final sculpture for Harlow *Solo Flight* which was commissioned by Harlow Council in 1980 as part of the Harvey Centre development. It was sited in a water pool in the middle of the shopping centre and quickly became a popular congregating area. For this reason it was seen by locals more as an elaborate water feature than a sculpture, a perception which changed when it was later moved outdoors along 1st avenue opposite St Mary of Latton's church. Despite its enormity *Solo Flight* is in fact smaller now than when originally sited in the Harvey Centre. The sculpture was never meant to be displayed outdoors and as a consequence of doing so its 'wing span' had to be reduced for structural reasons. On re-location the sculpture was dedicated to Sonia Anderson, a Harlow Councilor from 1956 to 1997 who also served for many years as the Council's representative on the Harlow Art Trust.

Nick Bullions

Tightening the Finances

In the Autumn we lose the advantage of the Awards For All grant. The followings steps will be taken. Firstly, visits will no longer be subsidized. We will have to meet the full cost; secondly the subs will be raised from April 2009 to members £8, concession £4. Finally, the newsletter will be sent out by email where we can. So if you have not provided us with an e-mail address, could you do so. Those who do not have this facility will still get theirs by post

Arts Conference

Harlow Arts Council will be organizing a major conference on Saturday, September 20 at the Harlow Study Centre. Keynote speaker will be Margaret Hodge, Minister of Culture, Media and Sport. The afternoon session will consist of workshops - one of those will be of particular interest to the Friends "The Role of the Visual Arts in the Regeneration of the Town Centre." So please book the date

