

ULEMHAS

Birkbeck Continuing Education History of Art
Society

www.ulemhas.org.uk

Review Two

December 2009

In order to update news and supply fresh information, we are again publishing this supplement to the main issue of the *Review*, which goes out with the mailing in August

ULEMHAS and the Birkbeck Students' Union

Up until this academic year ULEMHAS received a contribution from Birkbeck College towards the cost of evening lectures. We also had free rooms for committee meetings (a not inconsiderable benefit in central London). I was told that that with the changes at Birkbeck this would end but that by affiliating to the Birkbeck Students' Union (SU) ULEMHAS could make up this shortfall. Although ULEMHAS does not live or die through the lecture subsidy and we could have committee meetings in somebody's home the SU affiliation appeared an option worth exploring.

At first I was told that to affiliate to SU it was necessary for 80% of members to be current students and all the officers had to be current students. I argued that ULEMHAS had a strong Birkbeck connection because many of our members had been diploma students and were very keen to maintain a connection with Birkbeck. The Birkbeck community should not be diluted at a time that adult education was facing a crisis. Clearly the SU had a rethink and decided that alumni should be included because we were

told that that provided we had at least 20 current students we could affiliate and they did not insist that officers be current students, a recognition that this would disrupt the continuity that has been a strength of ULEMHAS.

What the SU ask is that we supply the student number and email addresses of current students. So the co-operation of ULEMHAS members who are current students is requested. The SU assure us that they conform with data protection legislation and that email addresses will not be passed to third parties. What it does do is to enable the SU to advise people on the email list of the activities of other Birkbeck societies in the belief that adult education should not be compartmentalized.

The advantages are that there is money available to subsidise ULEMHAS lectures. ULEMHAS members can use the students' bar at Birkbeck. Rooms for meetings and lectures can be booked for free through the SU although there is a great pressure on rooms on weekday evenings and we cannot be book rooms for evening lectures with the lead in time that ULEMHAS find necessary to attract lecturers of the stature and quality that our members have come to expect. However, we are told that we should be able to book well in advance for Saturday study days. Given the size of Birkbeck lecture theatres this will enable us to accommodate more people and avoid the disappointment of being put on a waiting list, as well as the obvious financial benefits that can be passed on to our members.

Officers and committee members of ULEMHAS had two meetings with officers of the SU and found these to be positive and helpful. I believe there are many benefits to be gained from affiliation. **Bill Measure**

ULEMHAS study tour to Toulouse

John McNeill started the ULEMHAS April tour to Toulouse at St. Sernin, a great church that incorporated many of the themes of the trip. It is an important stop on one of the pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela, the choir is very early Romanesque, consecrated in 1096, and Toulouse's Roman and Late Antique origins can be seen in the sculptures around the apse and the Miègeville portal. We found the classical inspirations for these occasionally acrobatic figures with their bubble curls next door in the refurbished Musée Raymond which houses local Roman art and artefacts.

Exploring the effects of these classical influences continued with our visit to the Musée des Augustins, where medieval sculptures from the collapsed or rebuilt churches and abbeys of Toulouse are assembled in an old Augustinian convent. Although I recognise the concept that we can only truly appreciate these pieces in their context, the opportunity to see so many remarkable capitals and carvings at eye level and in bright light is wonderful. The next day at Moissac we had the opportunity to see such work in its proper place, around the cloister and portal of the Abbey church where John's brilliant slides had made the little musicians with upturned heads on the west portal old friends. The athletic angels from the Porte Miègeville turned up again at our next visit, to the domed cathedral at Cahors, where they tumble around the enthroned Christ on the north portal.

After spending time at Albi cathedral, with its fortress like redbrick exterior contrasting with the flamboyant South entrance and interior, we visited the church of Lescure d'Albigeois in the Albi suburbs, where the local art club

had opened the doors wide to mount an exhibition, so we got sufficient light to see the lively early carvings in the nave and apse. The day finished in Monesties, a town straight out of central casting, with locals playing petanque under the lime trees. As well as being preposterously charming, Monesties houses a touching 15th century Passion cycle of remarkably preserved painted limestone figures in its chapel of St-Jacques.

Carcassone, our next visit is wonderfully picturesque, despite its rather clunking 19th century restorations, and the Cathedral has some notable sculpture and stained glass. On a sunny Sunday the town is probably a nightmare, but on a slightly grey Saturday the winding streets were not overcrowded and there are even some bookshops tucked away among all the Provencal lavender bags.

On our return journey to Toulouse we stopped at the round church at Rieux-Minervois which houses some distinctive sculpture by the mysterious Master of Cabestany and his workshop. The work is just as influenced by the antique as that in Toulouse but the figures, with their almond eyes and enormous hands, are very different.

Our last day took us to the Pyrenees and St-Lizier, once a great town now a village, perched halfway up a steep hill. The shrine church dedicated to St-Lizier has survived and it holds a remarkable cycle of 11th century murals by the Master of Pedret. Our final images from this revelatory tour were these solemn figures ranged around the choir. **Jackie Leigh**

I shall be standing down as Chair at the AGM. I should like to thank the committee and members of ULEMHAS for all their support and encouragement during my term of office. **Bill Measure**

The V& A opens the new Medieval and Renaissance Galleries

Just open on December 2nd are these magnificent Galleries, the V&A's largest project since the British Galleries opened in 2001, and their completion marks the end of the first phase of the Museum's £120 million Future Plan. Ten new galleries occupy an entire wing of the Museum covering the period from 300 – 1600. On show are some of the V&A's most remarkable treasures including the Becket Casket, the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, and magnificent Renaissance sculptures by such masters as Giambologna and Donatello.

1800 objects are brilliantly redisplayed to tell the story of European art and design from the fall of the Roman Empire to the end of the Renaissance period. The new displays place objects thematically in their original social and cultural context. In a gallery of religious artworks, light filters through translucent onyx screens, evocative of medieval churches. Dramatic sculptures stand next to trees and water to recreate a Renaissance courtyard. There are two Discovery areas providing a range of activities.

Hurry along – you won't be disappointed.

We hope to bring you further news of the Future Plan in the next issue of Review.

The William Morris Gallery redevelopment appeal

The London Borough of Waltham Forest has successfully bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a first stage grant to draw up plans to further develop the William Morris Gallery. The aim is to create a first class visitor facility and a centre of excellence for the study of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. It is an exciting

Liz Newlands

Birkbeck History of Art Society and ULEMHAS

ULEMHAS and the Birkbeck History of Art Society (HoAS) have agreed that members of can attend the lectures of the other society free or at members' rate. We will each do our best to advertise the programme of the other society and to endeavour to ensure that our programmes complement each other and lectures do not clash. HoAS members will be required to pay the non-members' rate for study days and study visits and it will still be necessary for HoAS members to join ULEMHAS for study tours for insurance purposes.

ULEMHAS study days at the Institute of Historical Research

I was disappointed and embarrassed to receive a complaint from the Institute of Historical Research (IHR) that at the November study day an unidentified ULEMHAS member had arrived at 9.15 and asked to be admitted, arguing with the person on reception that they had been allowed in at 9.15 on a previous occasion and refusing to leave the premises, despite the fact that we only have access from 9.30. The staff at the IHR are invariably helpful and if they are in a position to open before 9.30 they will do so but we have no right to insist. Patience and forbearance would be appreciated.

Bill Measure

opportunity to see the development of the Gallery with extended exhibition space, better storage facilities for the reserve collection, improved visitor facilities, an enhanced educational space and programme of activities. The Friends of the William Morris Gallery fully support the bid and are helping raise the money needed to turn the dream into a reality, see the Friends website www.friendsoftheWMG.org.uk Substantial matched funding is necessary if a second stage HLF grant is to be obtained which would enable a more extensive redevelopment to be undertaken, but a project will go ahead in any event even if not on the scale that the HLF grant would allow. As a demonstration of support the Friends have already donated £10,000 from the Friends' funds and will be making approaches to a variety of funding bodies. However individual donations are essential if we are to reach the target. The money raised through the Friends will be paid into a ring-fenced account administered by the Friends to be paid to the Project at the appropriate time. The charitable status of the Friends will enable extra funding to be made available through Gift Aid.

Bill Measure (Chair Friends of the William Morris Gallery)

email measure@btinternet.com telephone 020-8558-5491

 Please send donations to **John Philpott, 50 Cranston Gardens, Chingford, London E4 9BQ**

Details of donor

Title..... Forename(s)..... Surname.....

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If you pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year. The charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 you give on or after 6 April 2008. The Government will pay to the charity an additional 3p on every £1 you give between 6 April 2008 and 5 April 2011. This transitional relief for the charity does not affect your personal tax position.

GIFT AID DECLARATION – optional

Name of Charity: The Friends of the William Morris Gallery (Registered Charity No. 800513)

I would like the charity to treat all payments I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations.

Signature..... Date.....

Notes:

1. You can cancel the declaration at any time by notifying the charity
2. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 28p for each £1 you give)
3. If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration (see note 1).
4. If you pay tax at a higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return
5. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask the charity. Or ask you local tax office for leaflet IR 113 Gift Aid.