

LINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTER MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Number 312

October/November 1983

EXHIBITIONS

- October 16th to November 20th **Divali**
An exhibition and educational event to both demonstrate and interpret the traditional delights of Hindu new year festival.
Gallery 1.
- October 22nd to November 27th **The National Exhibition of Children's Art** sponsored by Cadbury Ltd.
This exhibition is the leading medium in Great Britain for the encouragement of artistic ability in children and for presenting the work of young artists to the public.
There were more than 100,000 entries for the exhibition.
800 examples of art and craft will be exhibited - including work by 17 children from local primary and secondary schools and students from Gateway Sixth Form College.
Gallery 11.
- Continuing to October 30th **Hats by David Shilling**
Costume Museum, St Nicholas Circle, Applegate
- Continuing to October 9th **Leicester Society of Artists - Annual Exhibition**
Gallery 11
- Continuing to October 9th **Geoffrey Beasley**
Paintings and drawings by a local artist - Leicester city and its people
Gallery 1

OPEN EVENING

- Thursday November 17th
7 - 9 pm. **Leicestershire Museum and Art Gallery, New Walk.**

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

Thursdays 12.45pm to 1.45pm. Soup, coffee and tea served in the Council Room from 12 noon

- October 13th **Pepe Martinez - Flamenco Guitar**
November 17th **Cantamus Girls' Choir**
December 8th **Anna Markland - Piano**
BBC Young Musician of the Year 1982-3.

Admission £1. 20p Series of six concerts £5.

EVENING CONCERTS

Tuesdays at 7.30 pm.

October 11th Alberni String Quartet
November 15th Ralph Holmes - Violin
Richard Burdett - Fortepiano
December 20th Hilliard Ensemble

Admission £2.50p Series £14

A free leaflet giving the programmes for both lunchtime and evening concerts is available at the Museum bookshop.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

Thursday Nevill Holt
October 6th A talk on the surviving records of a medieval estate by
7.30 pm. Heather Broughton, Keeper of Archives, Leicestershire
Record Office.

Thursday Divali, the Hindu New Year
November 3rd A talk by Sudha Daniel of the Museum Education Section
7.30 pm.

Thursday Launde - portrait of a Parish
December 1st An illustrated talk by Ian Evans, Assistant Director,
7.30pm Natural Sciences, Leicestershire Museum.

October 6th is the start of our winter programme and we look forward to a good attendance of our members at the meetings.

We are indeed grateful to the members of the Museum Staff who so readily come to talk to us.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held in the Council Room on Wednesday, November 2nd at 7.30 pm.

DIVALI - Festival of Lights Exhibition - 16th October to 20th November

"Divali" is the first of a series of exhibitions focussing on the major religious festivals celebrated by different communities in Leicester. The contents of the exhibition are intended to be a medium for explaining different religious beliefs in a simple, direct and festive way. For although most people are familiar with items from religions other than their own (through shop windows, calendars, home decoration etc.) they rarely are aware of their significance or context.

Divali literally means "cluster of lights" and illuminations (lamps, and nowadays fairylights and fireworks) are the main attraction of this New Year Festival. Oil lamps, known as 'Divas' are lit in every household because Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, Happiness and Learning will visit every lighted home with her blessing.

The origin of this "festival of lights" lies in the ancient mythological and religious story of the "Ramayana". This epic recounts the life of Rama, the greatest of the hero-kings of India, who destroyed the demon King Ravana. On the night of Rama's coronation lamps were lit all over India to celebrate his return home and victory over the evil Ravana.

Today, by lighting lamps and fireworks at Divali people celebrate and remember Rama's victory and coronation; the triumph of light over darkness.

The episodes of the Ramayana story have been a subject for artists over many centuries. In our exhibition therefore the story is re-told through pictures, ranging from Pahari miniatures on loan from the Victoria & Albert Museum, to the illustrations of the B.B.C. "Jackanory" series on the Ramayana.

The Ramayana has also always been a favourite theme for folk drama in India. But because men could never 'play' the gods, puppet shows were used instead of theatre. We are fortunate in this exhibition to have on display some dramatic South Indian shadow puppets depicting characters from the Ramayana in almost life-size dimensions. These are part of an unusual set which the L.M.A. are kindly purchasing for the museum's permanent collection.

The exhibition will also emphasise the way in which Divali is celebrated in Leicester today. A reconstruction of a Hindu shrine has been made and filled with religious items loaned by Shree Sanatan Temple. The local Hindu population, especially the temples, are keen to act as "ambassadors" for their community by supporting exhibitions and events which will explain their culture and religion to others.

The exhibition material is aesthetically very varied - ranging from plastic images of deities to an eighteenth century copper image of the Goddess Lakshmi. As such it is a realistic reflection of Indian art styles, where sophisticated temple sculptures and gaudy popular prints sit side by side.

As Divali is a time when people "do" things we have had plenty of scope for arranging activities linked to the exhibition. School parties will be able to try making masks of the Ramayana characters, and designing traditional Divali floor designs "rangoli". At an Open Evening on 17th November members of the public will also be able to try their hand at Rangoli making, helped by some expert Indian ladies.

Over the Divali weekend (5th and 6th November) there will be a slide show on "How the Ramayana is expressed through Indian classical dance"; and at the Opening Event at 3 pm on Sunday 16th October Mrs Niliuia Devi will be giving a live dance demonstration on the same theme.

All are welcome to attend these events.

J.H.N.

FINE ART NEWS

As mentioned in the last 'LINK' part of the work of the Fine Art section involves preparing and sending various pictures from the art collections to exhibitions, elsewhere - three major works are currently 'on the road' in important exhibitions. The typically Dutch landscapes by Salomon Ruysdael and Aert van der Neer painted in the 17th century are both at the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne in a pioneering show "Dutch Landscape Painting", the van der Neer's splendid skating scene being used for the catalogue cover.

One of the gallery's most beautiful French paintings, the Winter Scene by Alfred Sisley, acquired in 1935, is on view at Sheffield from 19 October in an Arts Council touring show on the subject of 'Light' - naturally including several such examples of Impressionist art, where the rendition of light in paintings was thoroughly explored in a variety of exciting ways.

Gallery news - New Walk Museum

Galleries 14 and 15 (German, British, French art collections) are being redecorated early October. We regret any inconvenience caused - several key works have been moved to Gallery 11a on display. The successful