

LINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTER MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Number 315

April/May 1984

EXHIBITIONS

- Continuing to July 29th "THE CHOIRBOY" by Georges de La Tour (1593-1652). First display of this major new art acquisition (with background information). Gallery 11a.
- Continuing to June 24th DOWN TO EARTH. A National Touring Exhibition on soil prepared by the Leicestershire Museums and Art Galleries. David Bellamy says in his foreword to the exhibition guide book:-
"Know about soil? But soil is boring." "Whoever said that, please read this book, and take in the Down to Earth Exhibition. I think that you are going to find it one of the most fascinating subjects on Earth." Gallery 11b.
- Continuing to June 1985 VASNA: Inside an Indian Village. Major Exhibition from the Museum of Mankind. (British Museum) London. Showing aspects of life in a reconstructed Indian Village. Gallery 1.
- Continuing FAMILY PORTRAITS
The Biology Section's particularly fine primate specimens illustrate a selection of the various species that go to make up Man's own family tree. Gallery 5.
- TIMBER BEETLES
A display showing the wide variety of beetles which make use of wood for food. Gallery 5.
- Continuing to July 29th GRAPHIC ART OF THE THIRTIES - from the art collections.

PERMANENT GALLERIES

Various selections from the permanent and loan art collections are always on view in the New Walk building, including Old Masters, Victorian and Edwardian pictures and the important holding of German Expressionists works. From time to time selections from the collection (e.g. contemporary prints, topographical works) are displayed in part of the large first floor exhibition area. The new Decorative Arts Gallery is in preparation and will open later in 1984. Natural Sciences collections are on view in the "Lost Worlds" and "Birds" galleries, as well as Gallery 5, all on the ground floor.

GALLERY TALKS

A further series of Thursday lunchtime talks will be held after Easter - the first meeting will be on 3rd May 12.45 - 13.45, at New Walk Museum on the new art acquisition "The Choirboy." Admission free; coffee/tea available. (Separate leaflet in preparation).

BELGRAVE HALL

Repair work on Belgrave Hall has been completed. It will be open to the public from 18th April.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

Thursday 5th April 7 p.m. Upper New Walk and its Buildings. Guided walk with Richard Gill as our guide. Meet in front of the New Walk Museum - if it is wet meet in the Council Room. Member of the Leicestershire Museum of Technology Association join us for this meeting.

Saturday 19th May 10 a.m. Cotswold Countryside Collection at Northleach.

Thursday 7th June 6.15 p.m. East Midlands Aero-Park, Castle Donington.

The programme giving details of all the summer excursions is enclosed, also bookings slips.

Thursday 28th June 7.30 p.m. Annual General Meeting - New Walk Museum. The formal part of the meeting will be followed by a social gathering and buffet. We hope there will be a good attendance of members - please return the enclosed slip.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held in the Council Room, New Walk Museum on Monday 4th June at 7.30 p.m.

"JOHN FERNELEY 1782-1860 HIS LIFE AND WORK"

A new booklet, with thirteen illustrations and much unpublished material, on the Leicestershire sporting artist, John Ferneley, is announced, just published by Leicestershire Museums, price £1.25p.

Ferneley's paintings have become increasingly popular in recent years and the Leicestershire County Museums and Art Galleries collections demonstrate the full range of his talents and also include work by his family. The artist's painting practice at Melton Mowbray is discussed and the splendid Ferneley oils acquired in 1982 by the museum are illustrated, amongst others.

The booklet has been compiled by Robin M. Paisey, Keeper of Fine Art at Leicestershire Museums.

VASNA
Inside an Indian Village
at the Museum, New Walk, Leicester
Late Spring, Summer, and Poss. Autumn Terms '84

A superb exhibition coming straight to us from the Museum of Mankind, London. Vasna is a partial reconstruction of a typical village in Gujaratin western India. The lives of its two thousand inhabitants are influenced by contemporary changes. Neighbouring villages and small towns are easily reached by bullock cart or bicycle and the great textile producing city of Ahmedabad is only twenty miles away.

Yet many of the old ways persist in Vasna. Caste communities occupy separate parts of the village. Pots, woven loincloths and baskets are still produced by traditional methods for local needs.

In the exhibition, a weaver's house can be entered through its heavy ornately carved wooden door. Nearby is a potter's working area with a wheel. On the outskirts of the village a small, whitewashed temple dedicated to a local goddess faces the tank or pond, and the ancient heritage of the Indian village is symbolised by a massive traditional bullock cart.

NOTES FROM BELGRAVE HALL GARDENS

In spite of the cold winds and cloudy skies of the last few weeks, many spring flowers are slowly appearing in the gardens. Notably the hybrid crocuses growing beneath the branches of the old mulberries, are making a particularly fine show this year. Nearby in the peat beds the varied blues and purples of the Iris Reticulata Cultivars continue a display which has lasted now for over a month. Close by the clear pale blue flowers of Hepatica Triloba have only just begun to show. At the far end of the Herbaceous Garden the tulips and fritillarias are pushing their way through the protective bark mulch and promise a fine display in May.

In the Monument Garden the scent of the evergreen Daphne X hybrida is making a welcome return. We have several other daphnes, two of which are in flower at the present time in the Alpine Garden. They are the deciduous D. mezereum with purple flowers and the white flowered form D. mezereum 'Alba'. Most daphnes are scented and although the previous two plants are of european origin, the distribution of the seventy species extends eastward through north Africa into temperate and subtropical Asia, Australasia and the Pacific. Apart from their ornamental value, particularly as alpines, only one species is of economic importance and that is D. papyracea. This unusually tall species (for a Daphne) grows over ten feet tall and comes from northern India where the bark is used for paper making.

In the Alpine House the crocuses and dwarf irises have given way to the tulips, Muscari species and the later flowering varieties of Narcissus. In the Woodland Garden the bright red foliage of Photinia X fraseri 'Red Robin' and the early rhododendrons, R. X cilipense with pink flowers and the lilac pink flowers of R. X praecox show that the spring season is well under way.