

TWINCKLEY SQUARE TIMES

Friends of Winckley Square

2023 was a very busy year for FoWS, we were very lucky to have beautiful weather for both Jazz concerts in June and for the Gala in the Gardens in August. Hundreds of people came with picnics and suntan lotion and thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment. A big 'thankyou' to all our volunteers who enable all FoWS events to happen.

We look forward to finishing 2023 with a very special Winckley Square Christmas. Due to last year's great success of **'Three Victorian Christmases'** talk, Susan Douglass will be thrilling audiences once again with a new Christmas talk **'Three Georgian Christmases in Winckley Square'** on 14th December. *N.B it is being offered twice because the 7th December sold out within a week of it going on Eventbrite.* BUT it is much more than a talk – it will be a Christmas Experience to get you in the mood for Christmas as will our very special annual **Christmas Concert in the Gardens on 10th December** when Mulled wine and of course Peter's Parched Peas will be waiting for you! We have an excellent entertainment programme planned. See page 4 for details.

The support we get from Preston City Council and local businesses enables us to put on the large family events. The last few years have not been easy for many of us, this includes some of our small independent businesses, so please consider shopping local as we approach Christmas.

Thinking of what to buy as a present? Why not a **'FoWS Gift Voucher'** for lovers of local history. £5 and £10 vouchers are available that can be used on any of our guided walks or talks. Or contact me for details.

We wish you a **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year** **HoHoHo**

Patricia Harrison

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

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Issue 30 | Christmas 2023

Meet Jade Barson

In 2020 I made a huge decision to leave my role as a paramedic after 15 years to open my own business. I was looking for more creativity and a better work life balance, so I turned my passion for interior design into my work by opening a brand-new independent business unlike any other in Preston. I could not have chosen a worse time!

I opened **Green Pheasant Gifts** in March 2020 in Winckley Street, two weeks before COVID and LOCKDOWN! So not off to a great start but for every disappointment there is an opportunity. Covid allowed me to concentrate on my e-commerce website which has allowed me to keep up with the depressed economic climate.

I chose the Winckley Square Quarter because it brings a touch of the country to the city, which is exactly what I wanted to achieve in Green Pheasant Gifts. I am pleased it is a conservation area, having the beautiful Winckley Square Gardens, Miller and Avenham parks on our doorstep is such an asset in the centre of the city. Both Harvey, my black Labrador, and I love to stretch our legs on five-minute walks during the day.

Customers often come into my shop after being on a Friends of Winckley Square guided walk. They enjoy reading the Winckley Square newsletter which I stock. The guided walks and other events in the Square bring the community together, all that was lost through Covid.

With Christmas round the corner, choosing a small independent like mine, you aren't just buying a product, but investing in Preston. It significantly helps us thrive and fosters a sense of community, with the personal touch it brings in repeat custom, especially in the holiday season.



greenpheasantgifts.co.uk

Interested in volunteering? Or being placed on our mailing list to receive newsletters and details of events Please email enquiries@winckley.org.uk



@WinckleySquare



Friendsofwinckleysquaregardens



We love seeing your photos of the Square; tag [#friendsofwinckleysquare](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofwinckleysquare) on Instagram.

Friends of
Winckley
Square

ART MATTERS

by Michael Akers

In Issue 28, Vicki Dixon told of the important role played by her ancestor, Richard Newsham of 1, Winckley Square, in the Art collection of the Harris. Here Michael Akers explores later developments in the Harris' collection and finds Winckley Square still had a role to play.

While visiting the Atkinson Art Gallery in Southport I recognised a handful of other instantly familiar works, all currently on loan from the Harris. Yes, paintings can seem like old friends.

It was Laura Knight's 1942 *'In for Repairs'* painting that caused my immediate distraction. Knight was a pioneering female artist, whose successful career did much to gain greater recognition for women in the art world. Over a long and prolific career, she produced an astonishingly varied range of work. One of her ground-breaking achievements was becoming the first woman, since the C18th, to be granted full membership to the Royal Academy (RA) during the Second World War. Laura was an official war artist; one of very few females in this role. *'In for Repairs'* is from this period and depicts a group of women mending the tears in a barrage balloon. In its demonstration of the collective labour efforts of the country's workers in the Home Front, the painting achieves the requisite propaganda objective. But it's so much more than that.



In for Repairs (Laura Knight (1877-1970): Harris Museum & Art Gallery

The part-deflated barrage balloon dominates the foreground, the billowing skin skilfully rendered by Knight in dazzling shades of silver and chrome. Light almost seems to radiate from the fabric, it's quite beautiful. The blue uniformed workers, in contrast to the voluminous fabric, are less prominently depicted - yet Knight is celebrating their endeavours. They appear undaunted by the meticulous and precise work that lies spread out in front of them. They're engaged in a herculean task, arguably endowing the painting with a heroic and timeless quality.

Thirty years earlier Knight had painted a self-portrait in which she depicted herself in the act of painting a female nude. It's an unusual composition and an even bolder statement. As a female art student in Edwardian Britain, Knight was banned from attending life classes and required to work from plaster models instead. It just wasn't considered 'seemly' by the male dominated art establishment. Her self-portrait wasn't sold until her death in 1970, but you won't find it at the Harris, it's now at the National Portrait Gallery in London.



Laura Knight Self Portrait: *National Portrait Gallery, London*

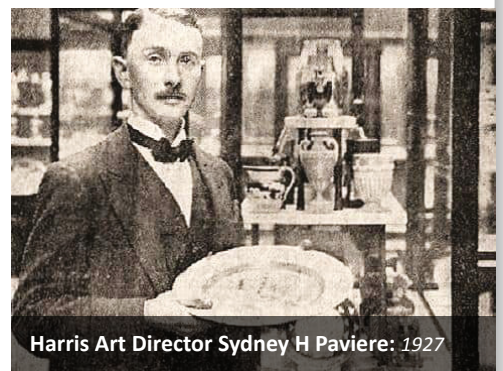
The Harris has several other fine works by Laura Knight. She represents a generation of very determined women who led the way for professional female artists.

The largest bequest of Art to the town occurred before there was even a proper gallery in which to hang it. Richard Newsham's bequest to the Preston public in 1883 consisted of over a hundred paintings immediately propelling the Harris collection, in terms of both size and significance, to the forefront of local galleries. But there was a problem: where to put it?

Back in 1845, the Museums of Art Act (shortly followed by the Public Libraries Act 1850), had given town councils, should they so wish, the power to establish free museums and libraries. Some towns responded quickly to the Act. Bolton had a museum and library by 1853, but the Preston public were in for rather a long wait. Preston's first free municipal library finally opened for business on 1st January 1879 in a room in the town hall. The museum followed in 1880 - but set up in the former Literary and Philosophical Society on the corner of Cross Street and Winckley Square.

Fortunately, by 1883, what was to become the Harris was beginning to rise from the ground. Robert Harris of Whinfield House in Ashton was even wealthier than Richard Newsham. On his death in 1877 he'd left the astonishing sum of £300,000 to the Corporation, now the money was being put to very good use. By 1896 Preston's nascent art collection had been transferred from their temporary home in Winckley Square to a magnificent new 'temple to the arts'.

'In for Repairs' was acquired for the Harris during the gallery's long stewardship by Sydney Paviere. As Art Director and Curator (1926-59) he did more than anyone to establish the Harris art collection as one



Harris Art Director Sydney H Paviere: 1927

of the finest to grace any provincial town. He improved and widened the range of the collection and established the long running annual exhibition of local artists. Paviere was a regular visitor to the RA's summer exhibition in London, often acquiring pieces by contemporary artists, 'Pauline in the Yellow Dress' perhaps being the best-known example. He certainly had an eye for publicity, now the life blood for any gallery. The very first painting he recommended the Harris should purchase was in 1927, and it created quite a fuss. The painting, by George Spencer Watson, was simply called 'Nude'.

Not everyone in Preston was happy with Paviere. For the trustees of the Harris, 'Nude' caused considerable soul searching about what was appropriate for the general public to view. Voices were raised about the corrupting influence such a picture might have on the townsfolk of Preston and others warned of the potential damage to the gallery's reputation. One concerned councillor somewhat reluctantly assented to the purchase, so long as it was given a different title. Probably Paviere knew full well what he was doing. He won the day, and the faint whiff of controversy he'd generated ensured good business for the Harris when the work was hung.



Re-imagining the Harris: *A new vision | The Harris*

The quality of art displayed in the municipal galleries of Lancashire is an enduring legacy of the wealth and ambition generated by the county's pivotal role in the Industrial Revolution. For the industrial towns of the north, these buildings and the collections they housed were a source of intense civic pride. Doubtless for some, an art gallery was simply a welcome escape from the cold, for others, a first glimpse into a world of glorious landscapes, exotic adventures and awesome beauty. The commitment to acquiring and exhibiting good quality art at the Harris has continued to this day. I'm very much looking forward the Harris re-opening, but in the meantime, can I suggest a trip to Southport?



THREE GEORGIAN CHRISTMASES IN WINCKLEY SQUARE

1860, 1865 & 1880

TALK by Susan Douglass

Thursday 14th December • 1.30 - 3.30pm

Susan will once again fascinate you with the outcomes of her research. She discovered how three different families celebrated Christmas. Their stories will make you laugh, cry and possibly shock you.

Come and enjoy a cosy Christmassy experience with the Friends of Winckley Square. Be greeted by Christmas music and a Georgian Christmas slide show whilst you enjoy a mince pie, mulled wine (0%) or hot chocolate, sitting in the very comfortable seats from the former Odeon Cinema.

£6.50
on the day

To ensure a place book on [Eventbrite](#) or buy a ticket in the Olive Grove Coffee Shop inside the Central Methodist Church.



The talk will take place at
Preston Central Methodist Church, Lune Street PR1 2NL



WINCKLEY SQUARE Christmas Concert 2023

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER
3pm – 5.30pm



Pop up
licensed
bar

PROGRAMME

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 3pm | Welcome from Mayor Yakub Patel |
| 3.10pm | St Stephens Choir
– join in traditional Christmas Carols |
| 3.45pm | Jago Juggling Arts |
| 4.10pm | Preston Ukulele Strummers
– sing along with your favourite songs |
| 4.45pm | Finale Flame Oz Spectacular |
| 5pm | Raffle Draw |
| 5.15pm | Kenny on Bagpipes |

It wouldn't be Christmas without mulled wine and a mince pie, hot chocolate, hot dogs and of course Peter's Perfect Parched Peas, soft drinks and ales.

To find out more visit:
www.winckleysquarepreston.org
or: [Eventbrite](#)