

Friends of St Annes Library



NEWS

SPRING 2011

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Reading with a View

How an idea blossomed into a beautiful garden

THE concept of the Reading With a View garden was born three years ago. The original idea, which has now been realized, was to transform the existing green spaces around the library into an area fit to be used by the community for reading and communal activities, and as a place where people can simply relax and enjoy the garden.

The Friends of St Annes Library took on this project, secured the funding and saw it through to completion. Community views were sought and a draft plan was drawn up and put to the public for their ideas, which were then incorporated into the final design.

The side garden features a pergola with a storyteller's chair and a seating area that can be used by the library to conduct reading sessions with young ones, and by reading groups. This area also has benches arranged along a pathway that has been specially laid for ease of use by people with disabilities and wheelchair users.

The sculptor Thompson Dagnall was commissioned to create a sculpture for this area (*see overleaf*). The garden in the front of the library has activity tables and comfortable benches for everyone's use, and an open area which can be used for community activities for adults and children.

The garden has been completely redesigned to

incorporate seasonal and sensory planting, and also features two solar-powered spheres out of which recycled water bubbles up and out and over, creating a pleasing and peaceful sight. Around them are flagstones carved with quotes provided by the library's reading groups.

The result is a beautiful garden to complement a fine Carnegie-endowed library for the whole community and visitors to use and enjoy.

The garden launch party will be held on Saturday 7 May, from 1.30pm to 4.00pm. The grand opening will take place at 2.00pm.

A word on funding

FUNDING for Reading with a View has come principally from grants awarded to the Friends by:

- The Community Spaces programme, which is managed by Groundwork UK as an Award Partner to the Big Lottery Fund. Community Spaces is part of the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces initiative.
- Lancashire Environmental Fund, which utilizes the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme to support environmental projects.

Considerable support for the project has also come from St Annes on the Sea Town Council, Fylde Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and Fylde Local Strategic Partnership.

And the people of St Annes have donated most generously.

“There is no them, there’s only us”

AS part of the Reading With a View project, the Friends of St Annes Library commissioned sculptor Thompson Dagnall to create a centrepiece for the garden. We wanted something that would make use of natural materials, that would be in keeping with the historic context of the library, and that would include a degree of interactivity. It would also have to be able to stand up to the gales that come off the Irish Sea!

When one of the elm trees in the library grounds was found to have Dutch Elm disease and was felled, Thompson suggested that he could use the timber – once treated and made safe from the disease – to create a piece for the children’s reading area. The resulting sculpture certainly meets the brief and brings the tree back to its original home.

The sculpture has been shaped from a single section of the tree. Rising up from the trunk is an open book into which are deeply inscribed the words, “There is no them, there’s only us”. The book’s pages fold back like the wings of a bird about to take flight.

A group of students from St Thomas’ Primary School recently met Thompson in the Library garden to talk with him about the sculpture. The children immediately commented on the phrase carved into the wood. The sculptor explained that for him the words meant that all the division in the world was artificial and that really everyone on the planet is the same. He said, “We’re all one people; we’re all human beings. And this is my anti-war piece.”

Given where they were, there was general agreement that depicting a book was fitting.

Thompson went on to explain that the book was



open to indicate the life in it, because “books aren’t just bits of paper; they come alive in your mind”.

He then let the children in on one of the garden’s secrets. He has carved more books into the furniture throughout the reading area, some in the form that we know today and others in forms that are less familiar. A letter in Morse code accompanies each book.

The game is to find the books, decipher the code, and assemble the letters into words and the words into a phrase. It won’t do any good asking the librarians – they’re sworn to secrecy. Clover, that means you too!

Stories from St Annes on the Sea

A LAUGHING Buddha, a pair of Derbyshire clogs, glass slides documenting a journey to India, a memento of a grandfather’s role in WWI; these are a few of the objects that have inspired entries on the “Stories from St Annes on the Sea” community website.

The aim of the website, a Friends

of St Annes Library project, is to create a picture of the local community through the tales that residents have to tell about an object that is precious to them. With each story we collect we’re learning more about who we are as a community.

To find out more about this project, visit the blog, at <http://an->

[neslibrary.wordpress.com](http://an-neslibrary.wordpress.com), or email us at friendsofstanneslibrary@gmail.com.

Look out for details of the forthcoming “Collecting History Day” taking place at the library on 4 June, 11am to 3pm. As part of this event there will be an opportunity to share your story, too.

Together Wii Play

FOLLOWING the success of the first “Together Wii Play” event, sessions are now held on the third Tuesday morning of each month, from 10.00 am to 11.00 am. The free hourly sessions, which are aimed at all ages, are based on using a Wii Fit machine to promote social cohesion, knowledge of new technology and keeping active in a fun way.

The “Together Wii Play” project is funded by a grant from UnLtd Engage. Anne Fielding, the Chair of FOSAL, successfully bid for funding for Wii Fit for use by older people. Anne has set up the scheme in conjunction with the library.

Anne has also established good links with Lytham St Annes Technology and Performing Arts College, which sends two students to help with each monthly session. Volunteers from the college, Reece Medcalf and Jordan Jessop, are shown here with Margaret Horsfield and Meg Greenfield during a recent activity session.



The sessions are great fun (many of the library staff have also joined in!) and it’s wonderful to see all age groups working together.

As numbers are limited to 10, booking through the library is essential. If you’d like to get involved, call on 01253 643900 or email StAnnes.Library@lanca-shire.gov.uk.

Jenny Eclair endorses FOSAL

THE Friends have just heard that locally born comedian Jenny Eclair has agreed to be a patron of the Friends of St Annes Library.



Library News

Gough map presented to St Annes library

Following a consultation with Community History Manager Andrew Walmsley, the Friends have obtained, as a gift to the library, a copy of the Gough map, plus an accompanying book, from the Bodleian Library. This is a fascinating map of Britain painted in the early 1300s. The map has been laminated and endorsed with the text “A gift from Friends of the Library”.

THE introduction of self-service machines in St Annes Library has had unexpected benefits.

As well as giving the library a more spacious feel, it is encouraging staff and customers to talk to each other. Self-service was viewed with excitement and trepidation by staff and customers alike, but we needn’t have worried. With staff on hand to offer help and advice, there has never been so much chatting between the two.

The library was closed for two weeks while improvements were carried out. As well as the self-service machines, these include new flooring, carpeting in the foyer, and some redecoration, all of which have prompted positive comments from library users.

THE library staff, as well as coping with the upheaval indoors, have been eagerly watching the progress of the reading garden outside.

With the addition of seats for the children we can now really start to picture the wonderful opportunities the reading garden will give us. I would like to thank the Friends of St Annes Library for their support, both practical and financial. In these days of economic constraints this really does make a huge difference.

Sheila Woodburn
District Manager



Joining the Friends of St Annes Library

Subscription is £5 per person per annum

It's easy to join! Just provide the information requested below and return the completed form to the library. Cheques may be made payable to 'Friends of St Annes Library'.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

Phone _____

How I would like to be involved

Sustainability grant ensures future

THE Friends have been awarded a Sustainability Grant of £3,500 by Community Spaces. Over the next 12 months we will use this to organize community events, focusing on seasonal activities in the garden and the support of other library events. The grant will also be used to purchase gardening equipment and to pay for volunteers to be trained in horticulture and in first aid.

Forthcoming events

Garden Launch Party

AN afternoon of fun for all the family is promised for the opening of the library gardens on Saturday, 7 May. Storyteller Laureate Taffy Thomas will open the gardens at 2.00pm, and then thrill younger members with his stories and riddles. There will be all sorts of other entertainment too, and, of course, refreshments!

The Graffiti of Lancaster Castle

ON Thursday 12 May Lancaster Castle guide Dr Colin Penny will present a fascinating talk on the graffiti found in the castle, and on the insight that it gives into the lives of those who have literally left their mark on this magnificent building.

The talk will take place at 7.30pm; admission is £2.50. Please contact the library for tickets.

Reading with a View needs you

CALLING all gardeners! Whether you have lots of experience and know-how or just aspire to acquire a green thumb, you're invited to join the Reading with a View Garden Crew.

Members of the Crew will receive:

- three workshops with a horticultural expert
- free t-shirt
- free refreshments
- access to tools and equipment.

In return, every other month you will be asked to help out in the garden for a few hours doing seasonal planting and tidying.

To find out more, call Paula on 01253 720191 or email friendsofstanneslibrary@gmail.com.