

KNOX



NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ARCHIBALD KNOX FORUM

ISLE OF MAN REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1221

ISLE OF MAN COMPANY NO: 131101C

Newsletter No. 2

April 2017

Dear Friends,

It has been an exciting 3 months since the January launch and there are 84 recipients of the newsletter. The Archibald Knox Forum is fully registered as a charity, it has its own Facebook page and work is progressing on creating a website.

Auction houses, dealers, The Manx Museum and Manx National Heritage have been written to and permission has been obtained to use photographs and descriptions from many different sources. A big thank you goes to them all for their help, and the Facebook page has many wonderful photos and descriptions thanks to these relationships.

Three drop-in centre events have taken place and these have been well attended, well received and two workshops have been held on:

- a) Silver and Liberty and Co. hallmarks and b) The origins of "Cymric" and "Tudric" ranges at Liberty & Co.

As the weather is improving, visits to a few "Knox sites" on the Isle of Man are being planned. Knox's birthplace, grave and a wonderfully designed and executed gravestone in Old St. Runius churchyard were visited on 9th April – Knox's 153rd birthday anniversary. Thanks go to Braddan Commissioners for making the key to Knox's house available.

Attached with this e mail is a list of the books, publications and other resources available at the drop-in centre. Several new titles have been added since the last update.

A talk was given to the Santon W.I. on the Isle of Man, together with the showing of the film of Anthony Bernbaum's lecture at Olympia in 2014. Over 20 examples of Knox's metalwork and jewellery were also shown to, and experienced hands-on by, those present. The room buzzed with excitement for the whole presentation. Further talks will be taking place in June (a ladies' group) and August (The Friends of Manx National Heritage at the Manx Museum).

On 22 February it was Knox's 84th death anniversary and a pot of miniature daffodils were put on his grave in Braddan cemetery, on behalf of the Forum, – pictures can be seen on the Facebook page.

On 16th March a meeting was held with Braddan Commissioners and any future developments resulting from that will be reported back in due course. One direct result of the meeting was Knox's house being opened on 9th April.

On 20th March I met with fellow Knox enthusiasts in London in order to discuss what could be done by the AK Forum to make them more part of the process. They made good suggestions and offered valuable help to further the work of the Forum including distributing information at UK events, seeing if Liberty & Co. would allow use of pictures from their sketchbook archives and the setting up of an Instagram account for The Archibald Knox Forum.

Chris Hobdell

So what are some of the things that have happened or have been discovered/rediscovered since January 2017:

A silver caddy spoon not seen since 1983?



An exceptional caddy spoon by Archibald Knox. This appears in the Liberty sketch book, Westminster Archives, design number 500/83. The stone handle is made of a richly veined dark green Connemara marble or serpentine. The silver wire work is similar to that seen only rarely on other special Knox pieces (see Archibald Knox by Stephen Martin pages 179 and 180 for other examples). The spoon is wonderfully tactile and has a jewel like quality. It epitomizes, better than almost any other piece, Knox's "radical modernism" as a designer that puts him in the lineage of Dresser to Hoffmann.

This spoon will appear in Stephen Martin's forthcoming revised third edition of his book and he has said of it:

"The wirework designs of Archibald Knox are among his most modern, distinctive and innovative. Knox has elevated this humble spoon to an object of rare beauty, reminding us that even the small, in the hands of genius, may capture what is great"

Photograph and description courtesy of The Peartree Collection.

The spoon was last seen in the "Liberty Style" catalogue which accompanied the exhibition in Japan in 1983. At that time, it was described as possibly by Archibald Knox but as more research has been carried out and the archive records have been analysed Knox can now be shown to be the designer. Like so much of Knox's (The Ghost Designer's) work it has taken this long to give him the credit.

Silver dish discovered

In February an unknown piece of silver designed by Knox in 1904 was discovered in private hands in the Isle of Man. It is hoped that permission may be obtained to publish photographs of the piece in due course.

Ongoing research

Research is ongoing into Knox's time at St Matthew's church in Douglas, the village of Sulby and other places in the Isle of Man so that a very accurate timeline can be established, and more can be discovered about Archibald Knox the man. At this stage it would appear that Knox moved to Sulby in late 1901 and stayed there until at least late 1905. However, he may have rented in Sulby before the purchase of his house and studio in December 1901. More research will hopefully answer such questions by the time of the next newsletter.

Knox sketches from 1880s

Six pencil sketches by Archibald Knox made in the 1880s have been rediscovered. One is shown below and the other five are being published on the Facebook page thanks to their new owner. All the sketches are wonderful and show Archibald Knox's talent in his early twenties. In the 1881 census he is already a pupil and teacher of drawing at 16.



This is a sketch of old St. Matthew's church which stood near the current bus station in Douglas until it was demolished in 1900. The sketch is dated 1885.

Below is a picture of an old postcard showing the old church and the market which used to stand next to it.

Knox was an active member of the current St. Matthew's which is an Anglo-Catholic church. He was a sides person at the church and he designed the war memorial and the noticeboard for the church.

Also shown below is a rare oil painting of the old church by Archibald Knox which is shown courtesy of Manx National Heritage. The picture is held on the imuseum.im website.





In future newsletters there will be updated news on:

How the drop-in centre is progressing.

Latest news regarding the new Knox book by Dr Stephen A Martin.

“Industrial espionage”, the lack of business conscience and use of others’ designs by Liberty & Co.; and of Knox designs by others in the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Talks about Archibald Knox to be given on the Isle of Man and further afield.

Plans for possible roadshow tours in UK to raise the profile of Archibald Knox with the general public.

Your input

It is important that The Archibald Knox Forum listens to, and responds to, you and the public to discover what people wish the Forum to be and what topics they would like to be covered and discussed in the future.

To this end we would be delighted to receive any ideas, information, help and suggestions from the public in order to make this venture interesting, relevant and, above all, reflect the needs and wishes of everyone.



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