PRESS RELEASE
Thursday 13 May 2021

Ripon Museums Launch New Exhibition to Mark Their Reopening

Three popular Ripon museums are getting ready to open their doors to visitors, after being closed since December 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The Workhouse Museum, Prison & Police Museum and Courthouse Museum will reopen on Monday 17 May, with a brand-new exhibition open to visitors.

*Lives Unravelled* is a series of textile installations created by Yorkshire-based textiles group 6-Ply. It will be on display at the Workhouse Museum from Monday 17 May to Sunday 5 September.

Inspired by historical research into the theme of workhouse women, the artists have used a variety of materials and techniques to convey the real experiences and imagined emotions of being a woman in Ripon Workhouse. Together the installations form a unique and beautifully-crafted exhibition that has been entirely curated by 6-Ply with the support and guidance of Ripon Museums’ curator.

Pieces installed as part of the exhibition are *Room for Mother and Infant*, by Hazel Waite; *Jane Button’s “Fancy Apron”*, by Sarah Lowe; *Veg, Glorious Veg*, by Mary Exelby; *Apron of Feelings*, by Jenny Bradbury; and *Fragments*, by Eileen Sweeney.

Helen Thornton, Director at Ripon Museum Trust said: “It’s so exciting to be able to reopen our museums with this very moving and powerful temporary exhibition by local textiles group 6-Ply, inspired by the lives of women who lived and worked in Ripon Workhouse. We’re delighted to share these works with visitors and I hope they encourage people to consider the lives of people who lived and died here.”

Following the reopening on Monday 17 May, the museums will be open Tuesday to Sunday, plus selected Bank Holidays, including Monday 31 May.

Entrance to the exhibition is included in the cost of museum entry. All tickets to Ripon Museums are valid for repeat visits over a 12-month period. Visit riponmuseums.co.uk for bookings or telephone 01765 690799. Ripon Museums have COVID-19 safety measures in place and have been awarded the Visit Britain We’re Good to Go industry standard.

-ENDS-
Notes to editor

Image caption: Artist Sarah Lowe and her work, which was inspired by stories of medical care in the Workhouse.

For more information or interviews, please contact Amy Lord, Marketing Manager at Ripon Museum Trust, email amy.lord@riponmuseums.co.uk.

Opening hours

In line with government guidance, the Workhouse Museum, Prison & Police Museum and Courthouse Museum will reopen on Monday 17 May.

Our regular opening hours are:

- The Workhouse Museum & Garden is open six days a week (closed Mondays) 11am - 4pm.
- The Prison & Police Museum is open six days a week (closed Mondays) 1pm - 4pm.
- The Courthouse Museum is open six days a week (closed Mondays) 1pm - 4pm.

The museums also open on selected Bank Holidays and will be open on Monday 31 May.

About Ripon Museum Trust

Ripon Museum Trust manages three museums: the Workhouse Museum & Garden, the Prison & Police Museum and the Courthouse Museum.

The Trust is a volunteer driven organisation with volunteering at the heart of everything we do. Our team of over 140 dedicated, enthusiastic and skilled volunteers look after the three unique heritage buildings, their collections and visitors.

Ripon Museum Trust has National Portfolio Funding from Arts Council England (ACE) for its exhibitions and learning programmes.

About 6-Ply

6-Ply are a group of six textile artists living in North Yorkshire. In 2017 and 2018, they were involved in a Slow Art artist-in-residence project based on Swaledale, called Fabric of Place, run by Chrysalis Arts. Three members of the group were already involved in Snape Textiles Group, with the two new members they created 6-Ply. The artists have different interests and skills in the area of textiles but have a collective aim to develop their own practice and work together with integrity and honesty.

Hazel Waite absorbed textile skills from her mother and grandmother, and still continues to enjoy handicrafts and creativity. She seizes opportunities to try both new and familiar
techniques, exploring dyeing, embroidery, felt, papermaking, fabric printing and knitting, both hand and machine.

**Sarah Lowe** has an interest in textiles and crafts, mainly sewing and embroidery, and completed a City & Guilds course that allowed her to develop existing skills while trying out new techniques and materials. She also uses mixed media techniques, incorporating paper and paints into her textile work.

**Mary Exelby** has a lifelong interest in fabrics, embroidery and a range of crafts. She has completed City & Guilds courses and organised workshops with local and nationally renowned tutors. Her current work includes machine embroidery incorporating dissolvable fabric on commercially printed and her own dyed fabrics.

**Jenny Bradbury** believes creativity is an important part of her life. She sees her surroundings made up of a series of marks and patterns within patterns and uses this method in her pieces by breaking down and interpreting the separate elements and then reconstructing them using different techniques and methods to form the whole. Each component has a meaning and the more you look into the collectivity of these, the more you see and understand what the entirety conveys.

**Eileen Sweeney** has a long-standing interest in the arts and took several creative crafts and textile modules and a certificate in Stitched Textiles with City and Guilds. She joined the Embroiderers' Guild and through attendance there she came to appreciate the wide range of Fabric Art that encompassed both what she thought of as 'embroidery' and a whole lot of other media and techniques.