

the HARRIS

Spring Guide

HARRIS YOUR PLACE

SPRING 2025



Immerse yourself in creativity and culture with this comprehensive what's on guide, offering an insight into the exhibitions, events, and community initiatives taking place at The Harris during the transformative Harris Your Place project.

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How To Get Involved With The Harris

Whilst we are closed for the Harris Your Place project, there are still plenty of ways to get involved and keep up to date with what's happening behind the scenes.

Follow the links below to find out how you can get involved!

VISIT THE LIBRARY, IT CENTRE & GIFT SHOP

Preston Guild Hall, Monday - Saturday, 9am - 5pm



[Click here](#)

PURCHASE FROM OUR ONLINE SHOP

[Click here](#)

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VISIT THE HARRIS' WEBSITE

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UPDATES**

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OUT ABOUT HARRIS EVENTS**

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YOUTUBE

Harris Museum & Art Gallery



LINKEDIN

Harris Museum, Art Gallery & Library

Harris Your Place

Harris Your Place is a £16 million project set to restore and re-imagine The Harris for 21st Century audiences as a cultural learning space. This project will protect the building, its collections and the stunning architecture for future generations whilst enhancing accessibility and positioning The Harris as a community hub for Preston and Lancashire.

Harris Your Place Updates

We are pleased to announce we are in the final phase of the Harris Your Place project, marking a significant milestone for the project and setting the stage for a 2025 reopening.

Since February, work has progressed with the installation of basement storage, floor sanding and polishing, and ongoing decoration on the second floor. The project is now entering the fit-out phase, led by The Hub Consulting Limited, the newly appointed fit-out contractor. They will oversee the fit-out team and bring Ralph Appelbaum Associates' vision to life.

This final phase will see the refurbishment of 18 galleries, accessibility enhancements, a new café, shop and event space as well as custom-made exhibition displays that blend collections, library and community spaces seamlessly together.

We are also in discussions with our movement contractor, Restore Harrow Green, to plan the final task - carefully moving our collections back into The Harris in preparation for reopening!



The Harris Receives £25,000 Towards Alexander Frieze Conservation from Pilgrim Trust, Henry Moore Foundation and Friends of The Harris

We are pleased to announce successful awards totalling £25,000 from the Pilgrim Trust, Henry Moore Foundation and Friends of the Harris to support conservation and redisplay of the Alexander Frieze.

The plaster frieze depicts classical hero, Alexander the Great, leading his army into the city of Babylon in 331 BC after defeating the Persian king. The original version of the frieze was made in 1812 by Danish neoclassical sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, with several copies made in his lifetime. The Harris' version was brought to England in 1862 and was gifted to the Harris by the V&A in 1987. It has become a visitor favourite over the years and fits perfectly with the neo-classical design scheme of the building. The sheer scale and intricate details of this masterpiece present a substantial challenge for the conservator and specialist installation team involved in its preservation.

Conservation specialists Mareva Conservation have begun the process of assessing, stabilising, and conserving this historic masterpiece. The conservation project, from March 2025, will involve meticulous work to ensure the frieze is preserved for future visitors to enjoy. The funding will enable The Harris to address the complex needs of this significant piece, ensuring its structural stability and visual integrity.



The Harris Shop

Spring has finally arrived and as the days get longer and brighter, why not treat the special ones in your life to gifts from The Harris Shop? Visit today and browse unique gifts from local artists, including Harris and Preston merchandise, as well as gifts for children too.

Visit us at our temporary location in The Guild Hall, Preston, open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5pm, or follow the link below to shop online. By shopping at The Harris Gift Shop, you're supporting our work and helping ensure the continued operation of The Harris.



Ding Ding Designs

By Jenna



William Morris

Honeysuckle Range



Dave Rob Design

Coasters

[Click here](#)

The Harris Library

We're so much more than a place to borrow books! We are open Monday to Saturday from 9am - 5pm. Our IT Centre is open all day for drop-ins, but if you would like to book ahead, you can book at The Guild Hall IT Desk. You will be able to log on for up to 2 hours from 9am onwards. **Please note** that over the Easter period our opening hours may differ due to the bank holidays. We are closed on Good Friday & Easter Monday. Before visiting we recommend you check the library page on our website or The Harris social media for updates on our opening hours.

Baby Bounce and Rhyme

Join us for baby Bounce & Rhyme every Wednesday, at 10.30am and 2.30pm at The Harris library. Sharing songs and rhymes is a fun way for babies and toddlers to develop their language skills! We now have a loyalty scheme - collect eight stars on your loyalty card and receive a free book!

Little Steps and Library Explorers

Little Steps and Library Explorers are both library initiatives aimed at under 5's and further details can be obtained from the library. The Junior Library reading schemes encourage children to read with the help of various fictional character stickers including the Lancashire Reading Dragon and the Dream Fairies.

Lancashire Reading Trail

Join in with the Lancashire Reading Trail at The Harris Library. The Lancashire Reading Trail turns reading into a challenge! Follow a map through an enchanted Lancashire and collect special cards and characters along the way. The trail has been created to encourage children (up to the age of 12) to read more.

BorrowBox

If you are unable to access our library services at The Guild Hall, you can borrow books via the BorrowBox app. BorrowBox is the eBook and audiobook library for Lancashire libraries. You'll find a wide assortment of books available and you can sign-up in minutes. All you need is your library card number and pin.



50 Objects From Lancashire Museums

The Lancashire County Museum Service is 50 years old this year. To celebrate, they are exploring the history of Lancashire, its people, places and traditions through 50 objects in our collections. Covering 9000 years of history and spanning the geography of the county, they will tell the story of Lancashire's origins including its settlers and invaders, our industries, our military heritage, our food and our famous seaside!

Each week they will release a new object representing a different aspect of the county and its history, celebrating the wealth and diversity of our heritage.

You can also see selected objects on display in libraries and museums including The Harris Library, located in Preston Guild Hall, where Horrockses sheets will be on display from Wednesday 19 February until Thursday 1 May 2025.



[Click here](#)

Inclusive Mannequin Project

Early last year, our Decorative Art Curator, Scott, teamed up with BA Fashion Design students from The University of Central Lancashire to research different skin tones for the mannequins which will go on display in The Harris.

The students created a collective mood board for the project, shortlisting four skin tones that best represented the different communities of Preston. The four examples were taken to Windrush Festival, where attendees could vote for skin tones they felt best represented them.

Voting was evenly split between the four examples, so we decided to go with all four! The mannequins have now been reupholstered, using conservation grade and Oddy-tested fabric, and will join our existing mannequins on display throughout the building.



Gallery Two

Our programme advisory group has been busy behind the scenes. This group has been chosen to make sure that the views of the community are reflected in our programming decisions.

This group has gone through the first round of applications for the new Gallery Two exhibition space and have chosen the first two shows. The next round of applications will open in July 2025. We are excited to announce the first exhibition in Gallery Two when we re open will be...



Ocean Mother

Saroj Patel is a Preston-born artist who creates intricately detailed, tactile sculptures that invite playful audience interaction. She works with a diverse range of materials, drawing from Indian and Hindu traditions, alongside found objects such as bicycle wheels and high chairs to build structure. Born and raised in Preston, Saroj has traveled to India with her family since the age of three and continues to be captivated by its sensory richness - vivid colours, textures, tastes, and sounds.

Her sculptures celebrate Indian culture, and also serve as a means of exploring her relationship with her upbringing. Through her work, she seeks to create an empowered space that embraces all aspects of her identity, bridging seemingly conflicting perspectives. She challenges rigid notions of ethnic identity through an open-minded exploration of her own experiences. Seeing her practice as inherently spiritual, she strives to foster connections between people, place, and culture.

Saroj has fond memories of visiting The Harris Museum as a child - exploring the library, wandering through the art galleries, and being captivated by the paintings on the stairwells.

One piece that left a lasting impression was *The Golden Gates* by William Shackleton, a painting featuring a magical underwater scene where vivid blues and greens spark her imagination. Now, she is deeply honoured to return to her hometown to present *Ocean Mother*, a profoundly personal and important exhibition.

Ocean Mother explores the untold stories and rich experiences of South Asian mothers, delving into how these women navigate identity through the lens of motherhood. Many of the mothers interviewed were either born in or currently live in Preston, making this exhibition a heartfelt tribute to the community. Through sculpture, texture, and form, Saroj weaves together narratives of strength, love, and heritage, inviting audiences to connect with these deeply personal journeys.

Through intimate conversations with British South Asian mothers, Saroj Patel asked how histories, traditions, and culture shape their identities and discovered the active role they play in embracing and teaching their cultural heritage to their children. These extraordinary mothers break boundaries and craft new narratives for South Asian women.

This exhibition also delves into Saroj's personal connection with her mother, Sushila, who was born and raised in Gujarat, India. Aged 19, Sushila embarked on a transformative journey, migrating to the UK and becoming a mother to three children by the time she turned 22. Saroj's mother faced struggle, loneliness, and conflict. Yet, her stories are woven together with threads of resilience and courage. Like many women of her era, her experiences inspire the next generation to forge new opportunities and create more inclusive futures for themselves and their children.

Ocean Mother celebrates heritage and the enduring power of maternal stories. These stories resonate across generations, weaving into the fabric of our shared human experience.



Q+A with Becki, No.9 Mural Artist



Tell us a little bit more about the current piece that you're working on.

The piece I've been working on for No.9 is representative of some of the ideas from the young people that I've spoken to. What I noticed when I was speaking to them is that they were quite caught up in their identity, it means a huge deal to them, as it does to a lot of people. With this piece, I'm trying to represent the fact that we're all different, yet we're all the same in a lot of ways as well. There's no reason why we can't stand shoulder to shoulder and be together.

Tell us a little bit more about the process of collaborating with the young people.

We had a session where we talked about what was important to us, and what message we wanted the piece to convey.

One of my favourite things to do is create protest signs, so we did that, and talked about different artists and different art styles. This gave me a really good idea of what the young people wanted to see. The discussion and ideas around identity came about accidentally, but this became a big topic of discussion at the session and the consensus was that identity was very important to the young people. Part of me felt a bit sad hearing that as it's quite separating isn't it, and I really want to promote togetherness rather than 'us versus them'.

I also took direct suggestions from the young people about themes / collection items that they would like to see in the artwork, like Horace the Elk - I find that part of archeological history really fascinating, and I'm glad they do too! Another person had asked for elements from my previous pieces to be included, as well as some symbolism of the city itself. I didn't want to be too obvious by adding the lamb or references to football, so I added a nod to the row of Red Phone Boxes.

Have you ever visited the Harris before, and are there any particular reasons you were keen to have your work on display at the Harris?

A few of my friends messaged me when they saw this opportunity advertised, and the process of applying was really inclusive and relaxing compared to the very formal application process of some institutions. And the Harris is just amazing, isn't it? When you're from Leyland and you don't go to many places, and then all of a sudden you come to Preston and there's this big art gallery, you find yourself saying 'cool, I want to be an artist'. The last exhibition I came to was 'Look, Listen, Make Things' by the artist Bob and Roberta Smith, who's one of my favourite artists. I went with my friends who brought their children along, and they were getting involved, holding the signs and taking pictures. It's a really great memory because we could all get involved with the exhibition.

Could you tell us a little bit more about your art style, are there any artists that inspire your work?

I would say that my art style isn't very abstract, and I was thinking about creating something more abstract when I was thinking about this piece initially, but realised I am a little bit more figurative. I'm definitely inspired by artists like Bob and Roberta Smith and Keith Haring. I'm inspired by everything I see day to day, from films to street art, nature to graphic design, art inspiration is everywhere!

Do you have any other projects on the go at the minute, or after this?

After this, I'll be going to work at an apartment building to create an organic-style mural, and I'll be working to a precise brief, whereas with the piece for No.9, there was no brief. The process of creating this mural has been so free and scary in a way, because it's been so liberating to be able to do exactly what I want!



About No.9

At The Harris, we think that young people's views matter, which is why we have created a multifunctional space designed by young people for young people.

We're excited to share that No. 9 will be a place to reflect on feelings, emotions and thoughts freely surrounded by bright artworks and collection items handpicked by a panel of young people.

The Harris Volunteers



Cleaning up at The Harris!

A dedicated team of Harris volunteers have been back in the museum getting the place ship shape for reopening this year. Now that there are less hazards in the building, volunteers were able to join a cleaning team to help spruce up things that haven't been cleaned in 3 years! Here's what our volunteers have been doing so far:



They have unwrapped, dusted and moved approximately 100 of The Harris' wooden heritage chairs that visitors would have used in the Reading Room or around the galleries and balcony spaces for a sit down.



Dusting and wiping down the marble columns that hold sculptures like Clytie.



Giving some love and attention to our ornate heritage radiators.



Removing our beloved Horace the Elk red footprints that have been leading visitors from the ground floor up to our Discover Preston Gallery for years. Don't worry, you'll still find Horace in there!



It's dirty work but it's rewarding. Volunteers have said that they feel happy to be doing 'hands-on' work and said it feels 'special' to experience being in the building before it's open to the public. We'll be continuing to keep on top of cleaning jobs like these with our eager volunteers until reopening.

Become a Harris Volunteer!

Are you over 16? Looking to gain skills and experiences in the arts sector? Wanting to get involved in the community? Sounds like you'd be a great Harris volunteer! Our voluntary roles are quite varied, some are fairly permanent whilst others can be a one-off. We usually have a range of things to do during the year – some periods are busier than others, for example Summer can be a very busy period for our volunteers.



We encourage all ages and abilities to get involved with us. We are looking to diversify our volunteer cohort to better reflect the local population. Age, ethnicity, sexuality, socio-economic status and disability should not be a barrier to getting involved.



Follow the link below to find out more about how to get involved!



[Click here](#)

The Harris Art and Wellbeing Project



Could you see yourself having a stroll down this tree-lined path? Students at Preston College have chosen this painting to go on display in The Harris' new wellbeing-themed art gallery when we reopen. They said the piece made them feel 'safe', 'free' and 'calm'.

Whilst we've been closed, The Harris has collaborated with six different Preston-based groups to determine which pieces from our fine art collection should be displayed in our new wellbeing-themed gallery. Groups have been connecting to paintings from The Harris by discussing what wellbeing means, why it is important, and how the art we look at can help.

The group from Preston College were drawn to this oil painting, 'Autumn in the Woods' (1930) by Preston-born artist Albert Woods (1871-1944), as they were inspired by the bright, autumnal colours in the painting. The path has no end in sight, and the group felt this could symbolise how *"when something goes wrong, it isn't the end"*.

Other paintings that have been chosen for our new wellbeing themed art gallery include: 'The Common Market' by William Patrick Roberts, 'Lytham Sandhills' by Richard Ansdell and 'After a Gale' by William Trost Richards.

A big thanks to everyone who took part from Preston Prison Library, Freckleton Library, Community Roots at Deepdale, The Blue Flamingo Café, Ingol Community Primary School and Preston College.

Friends of the Harris



Are you ready to embark on an extraordinary journey through art, culture, and community? Join the Friends of The Harris and become an essential part of our vibrant cultural hub. Discover enriching experiences and exclusive benefits that await you as a valued member.

[Click here](#)

Follow the link to complete the online joining form, or give us a call on our general number, 01772 258248, to join by post.

Supporting Conservation

Friends of the Harris have proudly supported the conservation of the Alexander Frieze, ensuring that people in Preston and beyond can continue to enjoy and be inspired by this remarkable piece of our shared heritage, as it is re-displayed at The Harris ahead of re-opening.

AGM and Membership Renewal

We are delighted to invite Friends of the Harris Members to our AGM in April where we'll be joined by guest speaker Prof. David Ferry PRE. David Ferry studied at Blackpool College and is now a leading printmaker and president of the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers (RE), with work in many international and museum collections.

All members are welcome to join the AGM, up to 30th April you can join or renew your membership of Friends of the Harris for £25 individual, or £35 joint membership (2 people living at the same address) or become a Life Member from £175.

From May 2025 onwards, membership will change to £36 individual and £60 joint membership, as we look ahead to the Harris re-opening and our continued support in future years.

Harris Youth Panel



The youth panel got their feedback from The Harris' Senior Leadership team with a green light to go ahead to help influence the next wave of staff recruitment at The Harris.

Their original ask was that they be involved in the actual interviews but the compromise and more balanced approach suggested to the panel was that they form part of a small team made up of other representatives from the community, for example, our friends from Disability Equality North West to give interviewees tours round The Harris on their interview day.

This way the youth panel members and other community representatives will get to chat informally whilst moving around which will give them a more authentic view of the interviewees. The panel want to make sure that all new staff that The Harris recruits, want to work with young people and have a good attitude towards them.

Keep a look out on Instagram for the Harris Youth Panel's new page! They feel it's time for a change with moving back into the Harris being on the near horizon, a fresh start.

Young People's Voices

We have a new part time, fixed term role specifically for young people aged 18-25 to apply for. We are working closely with Preston Job Centre Plus to make sure that young people receiving Universal Credit get access to this vacancy first, along with The Preston Youth Forum, which is made up of staff and volunteers that work with young people in Preston. This role will be a fantastic opportunity to support The Harris team as they begin to move the collections back into the Harris to create the dynamic new displays for our visitors.

Join the Youth Panel

The Harris Youth Panel is made up of 12-18 year olds who help to shape the #HarrisYourPlace Project. We meet on the first Wednesday of every month in Preston Town Hall (near the Harris) from 5pm - 7pm.

Each meeting revolves around the question: “*what needs to change for young people?*” Everyone gets a say, giving all of us young people the chance to shape the future of the Harris.

Fancy getting your voice heard and representing young people? Contact Kyra on: k.milnes@preston.gov.uk or ring her on 01772 905412 if you are interested in joining us.

Artist credit: Ian McCulloch, 'Near Quang Tri, Vietnam' (1973)



[Click here](#)

Harris on Tour!




 University of Central Lancashire
 UCLan

the **HARRIS**

CURIOUS CREATORS

Sessions for 3 - 9 year olds!

Monday 14th April | Ingol Library | 1pm-3pm
 Wednesday 16th April | Ribbleson Library | 1pm-3pm

Drop-in activities being run by staff and volunteers from The University of Central Lancashire and The Harris.

-  Nature creatives! Get inspired by the natural world and have a go at drawing with twigs, leaf rubbing, making your own 'found' poem and collaging
-  A Golden Dream: Use one of the Harris' most-loved paintings to inspire your own art. Have a go at printing with apples using shining gold paint!
-  Playtime in the past: Dress up like a Victorian and play with traditional toys!

Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.





Monday 21 April

11am - 4pm

Egg Rolling

at **Avenham and Miller Park, Preston**

#eggrolling



Preston
City Council

visitpreston.com/eggrolling

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