

What's On 2026

Exhibitions
Library
Events
Shop
Cafe



Welcome!

FREE
Entry

We're proud guardians of our founders' intention, inscribed on the outside of The Harris 'The mental riches you may here acquire abide with you always.'

Edmund Harris' vision was that the Harris Free Library, Museum, and Art Gallery would be the focal point of culture, the arts, and learning in our city. And today that still stands true.

We're here to serve as a cultural hub, bringing together communities and promoting creativity and learning through exhibitions, events, resources and spaces. We celebrate the diversity of Preston and beyond, and make culture accessible to all free of charge.

We're an inclusive and welcoming environment where people of all ages and backgrounds can come together and experience the richness of arts, culture and knowledge, explore new ideas and connect with a community.

Come and explore. Be curious. Take part. Share stories. Be inspired. This is your Harris.



Join the Friends



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. Call **01772 258248** or visit theharris.org.uk/friends to join.

Volunteer with us



Are you over 16? Looking to gain skills and experiences in the arts sector? Wanting to get involved with the community? Sounds like you'd be a great Harris Volunteer! We encourage all ages and abilities to get involved with us. Visit harris.volunteermakers.org to find out more and sign up.



2016

Open Exhibition

Celebrating local creativity

21st February - 3rd May

The Harris, Market Square, Preston, PR1 2PP
theharris.org.uk



Supported by Arts Council
ENGLAND

Lancashire
County Council





21 February to
3 May



Gallery One



Free

The Harris Open

An exhibition by the community of Preston

After a five-year break, The Harris Open Exhibition is back! Celebrating creativity, community, and local talent, this beloved showcase is open to artists of all ages and abilities across Preston.

We accept all entries (unless offensive or inappropriate), making the exhibition a true reflection of Preston's diverse creativity. Entry forms are available from Monday, 19 January 2026 and it is free. Submissions are open to anyone living, working or studying in PR1 - PR4.

Each artist may submit one artwork in any medium or style including drawing, painting, print, photography, sculpture, digital art, film, sound, fashion, illustration, experimental practice, traditional forms, sketchbooks, zines, and works in progress.

Highlights for 2026

The Harris is pleased to welcome group entries in this year's exhibition. Confirmed submissions already include projects from Preston-based community groups such as The Foxton Centre, Places for People, and Wot Wud U Do.

Throughout the exhibition, visitors can attend a range of free activities, including artist-led workshops, celebrations for International Women's Day, an exhibiting-artist networking event, and the People's Choice Award celebration. Further programme details will be announced in early 2026.

Artists can take advantage of new selling opportunities, including a pop-up shop inside the exhibition gallery which can be used to sell entries, prints, apparel, and jewellery.

Submission Dates

All artworks must be hand delivered to Gallery One, situated on The Harris' second floor during one of the following hand-in sessions:

Tuesday, 3 February, 1pm - 4.30pm
Thursday, 5 February, 5pm - 9pm
Saturday, 7 February, 10am - 4pm

Full details of how to prepare your submission for hand delivery will be available from **Monday, 19 January**.

Bring your creativity, share your work, and be inspired - everyone's welcome.





24 January to
12 April



Gallery Two



Free

Nostalgic Views of Preston

An exhibition by Edwin Williams

Following a rewarding career as an Engineer, HR Manager, and Quality Manager, Edwin Williams has turned a lifelong interest in photography, watercolour painting and history into a new chapter of creative exploration.

Now retired, Edwin finds great fulfilment in helping individuals and institutions including museums to connect with both social and personal histories, by aligning archival photographs and his watercolour paintings with the narratives that give them deeper meaning.

Edwin breathes new life into aged and often damaged photographs, transforming them into vivid representations that resonate with modern audiences while honouring their original context.

Watercolour painting has been Edwin's passion for over 65 years. Throughout this journey, he has found endless joy in exploring the fluid, translucent qualities of the medium.

There's a unique magic in the way watercolour allows colours to blend and flow, creating both subtle nuances and bold expressions of emotion. It's a balance between control and spontaneity, where each brushstroke holds the potential for unexpected beauty.

The photographs, paintings and stories included within this exhibition will spark memories, conversation and inspiration, and perhaps inspire you to explore your own creative journey.

Special Events

Watercolour Workshop with Edwin

Sunday, 8 February at 12pm in The Studio

For Adults

£10 per person





The World of Martin Brown

Horrible Histories and Other Dazzling Drawings

Get ready for a display of cartoons and art by best-selling children's book illustrator Martin Brown!

Martin Brown is among the most accomplished cartoonists of his generation. Since 1993, Martin has illustrated *Horrible Histories*, working with author Terry Deary to create one of the best-loved series of children's books ever published.

Underpinning all his work is Martin's wish to use the power of illustration to entertain and educate, and his belief that everyone should pick up a pencil and draw.

Visitors will journey through Brown's artistic world, tracing his career from his early humorous cartoons to global publishing successes. Original art from *Horrible Histories*, illustrations from *Lesser Spotted Animals*, and exclusive content from his latest books, including *Nell and the Cave Bear*, bring Brown's imagination vividly to life.

The World of Martin Brown: Horrible Histories and Other Dazzling Drawings is an exhibition from Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children's Books, developed by the South West Heritage Trust in collaboration with Martin Brown and Events of Wonder.

Horrible Histories® is a registered trademark.
Illustrations © Martin Brown

an exhibition from
seven stories

ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

Supported using public funding by
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ENGLAND**

HORRIBLE HISTORIES

SW
SOUTH WEST
HERITAGE TRUST



23 May to
31 August



Gallery One



Free



The Problem Lies Upstream

Nerissa Cargill Thompson explores environmental issues like climate crisis, plastic pollution and waste through textile art using recycled materials, particularly old clothing, and mixed-media sculptures of textiles and concrete cast in the plastic packaging that we use and discard on a daily basis. She aims to make people consider the world around them and their responsibility to the environment.



Horrockses Fashions Everyday Glamour and the Art of British Ready-to-Wear

Celebrating the 80th anniversary of the iconic label, this exhibition reveals how Horrockses combined couture principles with high-quality cotton textiles to redefine accessible elegance for women from mill workers to royalty. Through vibrant floral prints, innovative textile collaborations and a commitment to craftsmanship, Horrockses not only shaped 1950s fashion but also reflected and influenced changing ideas of femininity and women's roles in post-war Britain.



25 April to 5 July



Gallery Two



Free



19 September to 31 January



Gallery One



Free



Lancashire
County Council



The Harris Library

Step into a world of stories, knowledge, and discovery. Whether you're looking for your next great read, a quiet corner to relax, or a place to explore rare texts, our library spaces are perfect for you.

We have a massive selection of books for everyone, from the latest novels to loved classics, useful non-fiction, and even historical, specialist works. Our family section is a magical space full of colourful picture books, entertaining stories, and fun activities to spark imaginations.

Become a Member

It's easy to borrow our books, and free. Come along to the library and we'll set up your library card. You can then borrow books and audiobooks.

You can also meet up and take part in events in our libraries including Baby Bounce & Rhyme sessions, every Wednesday at 10:30am and 2:30pm.

Explore our Collection

The Harris has dedicated library and reading spaces, but you'll find books woven throughout the museum and our galleries. As you wander around our exhibitions, you'll notice carefully chosen books connected to the objects and artworks on display.

Check out our handy map to familiarise yourself with the locations of our lending stock.





The Harris Café

Get ready for fresh flavours in the heart of a cultural icon! The brand-new Harris Café is a relaxed, stylish space to take a break, meet friends, and enjoy delicious food and drink in the heart of Preston's most iconic building.

Whether you're grabbing a quick coffee, catching up over lunch, or soaking in the atmosphere after a gallery visit, The Harris Café is where you can refuel and refresh.

So, what's on the menu? Expect fresh, seasonal ingredients, artisan drinks, plant-based and gluten-free options! Wherever possible, we use locally sourced ingredients to support producers across Lancashire.



The Harris Shop

Discover gifts that give back at the Harris Shop! Explore unique gifts, locally made treasures, and art-inspired finds; all carefully chosen to reflect the beauty of The Harris.

From exclusive prints and thoughtful books to creative gifts and handcrafted homeware, every purchase helps support our collections, exhibitions, and community programmes.

Whether you're treating yourself or finding a perfect present, there's something special waiting to be discovered.



For Children & Families

From regular Baby Bounce & Rhyme sessions and Toddler Workshops for the little ones, to Film Screenings and Creative Workshops for older children, we have plenty of activities to keep everyone busy. Turn up anytime and enjoy a range of permanent activities available for families! For more information about activities, facilities for families and bookings, visit theharris.org.uk.

For Young People



From Future Skills Sessions, self-led creative sessions and wellbeing drop-ins, to Artist and Photography workshops, there's plenty on offer in our dedicated young person's space. No.9 isn't just a room. It's a response to what local young people told us they need most: space to be heard, to feel safe, and to express themselves. Whether you want to read, create, connect, or just take a break, No.9 is yours. Visit theharris.org.uk/whats-on to find out more.

For Adults



From Curator Talks and Creative Workshops, to Wellbeing Sessions with Community Roots and Film Screenings, there's plenty to get stuck into across the building. You might need to pay or prebook tickets for some of our events, make sure you do this well in advance as we often sell out. Visit theharris.org.uk/whats-on to find out more.

What's On: January Top Picks

Sun, 11 Jan | Life Drawing

1pm in The Studio

Pay what you feel

For adults, 16+

Thu, 15 Jan | Camp at the Cinema

7pm in The Reading Room

£5 per person

For adults, 16+

Sat, 10 & 24 Jan | Egyptian Balcony Tour

Meet at 1.30pm at the balcony entrance

£2 per person

For adults, 16+

Tues, 27 Jan | Historic Books Workshop

3pm in the Special Collections Gallery

Free

For adults, 16+

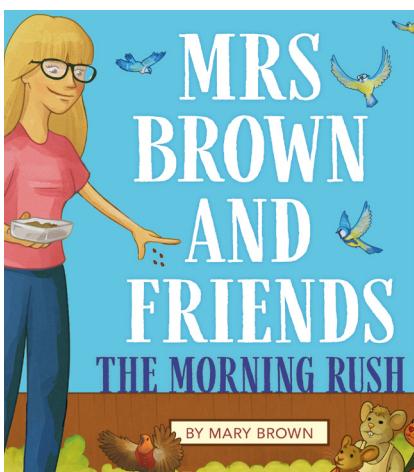
Sat, 31 Jan | Mary Brown Book Launch

11am in The Studio

Free

All ages welcome

Visit the website for all the latest Harris events and activities on offer!



What's On: February Top Picks

Thu, 12 Feb | Film: Unicorns (2023)

7pm in The Reading Room

£5 per person

Film rated 15

Mon, 16 Feb | JuniorSTEM Sessions

10.30am and 1pm in The Studio

£8 for a group of four (*including adults*)

For families

Tues, 17 Feb | Little Zoo to You

11am and 1.30pm in The Studio

£3 per person

For families

Wed, 18 Feb | Mad Science Shows

11am and 1.30pm in The Studio

£3 per person

For families

Thu 19 & Fri 20 Feb | Planetarium Shows

Various times in The Studio

£3 per person

All ages welcome

Thu, 19 Feb | Birley Artist Talk

6pm in The Art Gallery

Free

Adults, 16+

Visit the website for all the latest Harris events and activities on offer!



What's On: March Top Picks

Sun, 1 Mar | Life Drawing

1pm in The Studio

Pay what you feel

For adults, 16+



Thu, 5 Mar | Birley Artist Talk

6pm in The Art Gallery

Free

For adults, 16+



Sat, 7 & 28 Mar | Egyptian Balcony Tour

Meet at 1.30pm at the balcony entrance

£2 per person

For adults, 16+

Thu, 19 Mar | Film: *Bugsy Malone* (1976)

7pm in The Reading Room

£5 per person

Film rated U



Tues, 31 Mar | Curious Creators

12.30pm in The Studio

Free

For children aged 3-9

Visit the website for all the latest Harris events and activities on offer!



The Harris Museum & Library

Monday | 9am - 5pm
Tuesday | 9am - 5pm
Wednesday | 9am - 5pm
Thursday | 9am - 9pm
Friday | 9am - 5pm
Saturday | 9am - 5pm
Sunday | 11am - 4pm



You'll be able to come into The Harris until 30 minutes before we close

The Harris Cafe

Monday to Saturday | 9.30am - 4pm
Sunday | 11am - 4pm

Market Square
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 2PP



FRIENDS of the Harris

