

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE MUSEUM OF NORTH CRAVEN LIFE, SETTLE

**Exhibition 30 March – 27 July 2010: A Malham Family of Painters**

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Paintings by three generations of women from a Yorkshire family are coming home to the Dales. The exhibition *A Malham Family of Painters* opens at The Folly, Settle after its first showing to great acclaim at The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery, University of Leeds in the summer of 2009.

Katharine Holmes (b. 1962) the youngest of the three is the daughter of Philippa Holmes (1921 – 1999) who in turn is the daughter of Constance Pearson (1886 – 1970). Katharine is known for atmosphere and weather filled paintings of her native Dales landscape. Alongside two large canvases about the limestone of Malham she will be showing an installation of small square drawings titled ‘Journeys around home’ and an accompanying series of paintings. She says of this exhibition:

“I am delighted to be showing my work alongside that of my mother and grandmother at The Folly for the third time. We took part in the “Connections” exhibition in 2006 and the beautiful interiors and atmosphere of The Folly lend themselves perfectly to the paintings. The mullion windows of The Folly are echoed along with other vernacular building features in many of the paintings and drawings. I grew up in a cottage in Malham surrounded by paintings and all the paraphernalia of painting. As a small girl I played in my elderly grandmother’s studio and was allowed to squeeze out oil paint onto her large wooden palette and paint with her brushes onto canvases. I also would often paint and draw outside alongside my mother. Over the years my mother made many sketches of our home and included in the exhibition is her painting of the traditional Dales pantry with its stone shelves and baking bowls which we have in turn all used and loved.”

Constance Pearson had trained in the early years of the twentieth century at Leeds college of art and after marrying and while bringing up a family had started on a lifetime of prolific painting and regular exhibiting. Born in Leeds, it was not until the second world war that she moved to Malham. For many years she was to be seen out and about with her painting equipment in all weathers in a tweed coat, her hat bound to her head with a scarf on windy days. She worked quickly and with great confidence in oils and watercolour. Capturing the look and feel of life in the 1940s and 50s her paintings show farming before mechanisation as well as depicting the ever changing light and beauty of the landscape. It was a world of milk carried in back cans, horses and carts at haytime and snow bound winters. She had a long association with The Dalesman, producing exquisite pen and ink drawings for publication and collaborated with Arthur Raistrick illustrating his 1947 book ‘Malham and Malham Moor’.

Philippa Holmes trained at Bradford School of Art and her first job during the second world war took her to a hospital in South Wales where she used her training as an occupational therapist. Her parents having recently moved to Malham wrote frequently and ‘Letters from Malham’ published in 2009 by The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery gives a glimpse of the life of the family and a Dales village during the final years of the war. This book and a fully illustrated catalogue of the exhibition will be available for purchase from The Folly.

On display, alongside the paintings, will be a selection of original letters, Constance Pearson's diaries and recipe book, palette, easel and many household objects from the family home.

During the exhibition, the Museum is organising a range of complementary events for all ages, including, on 12 April an illustrated talk by Katharine Holmes followed by a traditional 1940s Dales afternoon tea, featuring Constance Pearson's own recipes.

[Ends]

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