



PRESS RELEASE

Date 20th January 2020

RIPON MUSEUMS 2020 SEASON BEGINS WITH 'PRISONERS ON PRISONERS' EXHIBITION

Step back in time and follow the story of poverty, crime and punishment through our three museums when they re-open on Saturday 8th February.

The Workhouse Museum & Garden, Prison & Police Museum and the Courthouse Museum all tell stories of desperate people – who were often led through being poor to a life of petty crime – and the punishments were cruel and severe.

In 2020, we'll be holding exhibitions, events, talks and activities that acknowledge and celebrate the hidden and untold stories of the women who spent time in our institutions. Leah Mellors, Curator of Ripon Museum Trust explained that “the stories of the women who lived, worked, or were tried and incarcerated in our institutions have mostly gone untold in our museums. We want to redress the gender balance in 2020 by uncovering, researching and sharing the stories of women connected to our buildings and collections. Through a varied programme of exhibitions and activities, we will reveal what life was like for women in our workhouse, prison, police service and courthouse in the past and for those who are still affected by our themes today”.

2020: Women in our Institutions begins with '**Prisoners on Prisoners**', an art installation by Faye Claridge, sharing the experiences of current and historic female prisoners through audio, textiles and photography.

Faye connects historic prison archives with inmates at HM Askham Grange, to explore similarities and differences in their lives and prison experiences. Through prison workshops for participants to 'adopt' a prisoner from the museum's Edwardian and Victorian criminal record books, Faye has made recordings of their comparisons and created portraits to link with archive mugshots. The artwork gives prisoners a way to share their perspectives and for prison museum visitors to consider the individual lived experience of justice systems.

Neil Dembry, from HM Askham Grange spoke about the project and how it had affected the inmates to think about their connection and similarities with Edwardian and Victorian prisoners “Askham Grange Prison are proud to work in this project which reflects on prison life during Victorian England with the emphasis upon punishment as a priority and how this compares to the modern prison system where a greater weight is

added to rehabilitation. This demonstrates the distance travelled in how we treat offenders in custody.

The participants were able to have empathy for their counterparts and the difficulties they faced in their lives whilst recognising the many similarities they share and how they shaped their patterns of offending behaviours. “

Faye Claridge, artist in residence, said “The participants at Askham Grange really connected with the museum archives. Their thoughts on how prison has changed their lives and what changes might have helped prisoners 100-or-so years ago are really moving.”

Prisoners on Prisoners will be in Cell 13 of the Ripon Prison & Police Museum 8th February – 6th September 2020. The project’s progress can be followed through Instagram and twitter with @fayeclaridge, @riponmuseums or #PrisonersOnPrisoners.

Information:

Full information on Ripon Museums events on www.riponmuseums.co.uk.

For information on Faye Claridge, www.fayeclaridge.co.uk and follow projects on Instagram and Twitter.

Askham Grange is an open prison and young offender institute (YOI) in Askham Richard, near York, for women aged 18 and over.

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A Press Preview has been arranged at 3.30pm on 7th February at the Prison & Police Museum where there will be photo opportunities.

The Workhouse Museum, Sharow View, Allhallowgate, Ripon HG4 1LE

Courthouse Museum, Minster Road, Ripon HG4 1QS

Prison and Police Museum, St. Marygate, Ripon HG4 1LX

**2020: WOMEN
IN OUR INSTITUTIONS**



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