

# Judges' Lodgings Museum, Lancaster

Judges' Lodgings Museum has welcomed 7,400 visitors since re-opening in March 2019. We now have over 30 volunteers plus a small staff team who welcome visitors and care for the collections. Events over the year have included everything from lectures on Gillows to life drawing. The Friday lunchtime lecture series has proved very popular, with the majority being repeated owing to demand. Topics included Susan Stuart's *Lancaster: A Town of Many Trades*, an introduction to Lancaster as the county and Assize town, centre of trade both regional and overseas during the eighteenth century, and *A Tale of Two Cities: Gillows of Lancaster and London*, which explored the founding of the Lancaster business and c. 1770 the Oxford Street shop. Both talks were linked by showing the exterior and interiors of some of the Lancaster town houses owned by rich West Indies merchants originally and the furniture they purchased, from Gillows. We have hosted tours and visits from student groups, refugee groups, school visits and the Chippendale Society. The museum also has an active Friends group of around 50 members who run a popular pop-up tearoom once a month. There are now information sheets in all the rooms giving visitors details about the key pieces of furniture and artworks, alongside a children's trail. Staff and most volunteers wear 1820s costume (supported by the Friends) when stewarding the rooms. We have lots of new activities planned for 2020 including a new porch, shop, welcome



Judges' Lodgings c. 1820. On the left are Gillow showrooms, workshops and Richard Gillow's house. The Friends are helping to raise funds to have the painting conserved, after which it is hoped it will hang in the Judges' Lodgings. *Photo courtesy of Lancaster City Museums*

gallery and temporary exhibition. Thanks to the RFS for their support and I look forward to welcoming members to the house soon.

*Lynda Jackson*  
Judges' Lodgings Manager