

Royal Hall Restoration Trust  
Press Release  
Contact: Mitzi Mina 07754 886163

## ROYAL HALL LENDS GOLDEN TOUCH TO LOCAL ARTIST ALISTER COLLEY



*Alister Colley, The Royal Hall, Harrogate*

Once described as a “palace of glittering gold”, the recently-restored Royal Hall in Harrogate has now lent its golden touch to the work of leading local artist Alister Colley. In November last year, Alister – whose quirky, illustrative style has won him national acclaim – completed a top-selling painting depicting the Grand Opening of the Royal Hall. The painting, which was applauded by the Trustees of the Royal Hall Restoration



**Alister Colley's top-selling painting depicting the Grand Opening of the Royal Hall in Harrogate**

Trust, attracted the attention of both established collectors of Alister's work and of friends and patrons of the Royal Hall. Beautifully and painstakingly executed (the faces of almost everyone who was there are depicted true to life), it sold for a figure which, though undisclosed, has been confirmed as the highest sum yet paid for an example of Alister's work. Meanwhile, the

limited edition prints that Alister produced of the painting have been

selling like hotcakes. On the heels of the great success of these works, Alister decided to produce a companion painting, this time showing the exterior of the Royal Hall. Unveiled at The Framing Centre, Harrogate on Friday, 17 July 2009 it aroused similarly high levels of interest.

This painting was again be accompanied by a run of prints: 150 limited edition prints (available in two sizes from the Framing Centre, Harrogate), together with 10 exclusive artist's proofs (signed by the artist), which will again be donated to the Royal Hall Restoration Trust for them to sell in order raise money towards further essential works. Two of these (one of each view) have been put on permanent display in the Heritage Lounge at the Royal Hall.

Alister's interest in the Royal Hall as a subject was sparked by an image in The Harrogate Advertiser, showing the newly-restored, grade II\* listed building as it opened its doors again to the public after a two-year restoration project. He said:

*"I had always wanted to be involved in some way with the restoration project, and when I saw the picture of the Royal Hall in the Harrogate Advertiser, I knew I had to paint it. I*

*approached the Trustees of the Royal Hall Restoration Trust who loved the idea, and engaged me as their official artist. I have to say that, when I started work on the painting of the Grand Opening, I thought I had bitten off more than I could chew – but it was a labour of love, and I’m thrilled that the end result was so well received. I hope the painting of the exterior will be equally appreciated.”*

Russell Davidson, acting Chairman of the Royal Hall Restoration Trust, said:

*“These fantastic prints, and the paintings behind them, perfectly capture the spirit of the Royal Hall. It’s a place for enjoyment and celebration, and it’s also a place of great beauty – all of which is there in Alister’s exceptional work. We are thrilled with the gift of the artist’s proofs, which we will use to generate funds for the continued work of the Trust. Although the fabric of the building is fully restored, the Trust is still striving to complete the final works that will make the Royal Hall into a world class performance venue. Top of the list are the refurbishment of the dressing rooms, an acoustic shell and improvements to the ‘Heritage Lounge’”.*

Ten artist’s proof prints of each of the paintings are available from the Royal Hall Restoration Trust, (£350 each, or £600 for a pair), tel: 01423 505805/07754 886163. Meanwhile, limited edition prints can be found at The Framing Centre, Harrogate, tel: 01423 507701.

**Notes to editors:**

**The Royal Hall:** Built by Frank Matcham in 1903, the Royal Hall Harrogate is the only surviving Kursaal remaining in Britain. After a £10.8 million makeover, the building was officially reopened to the public by HRH Prince Charles in January 2008. When it first opened in 1903, the Royal Hall was described as “a palace of glittering gold”. During the recent restoration, over 112,000 sheets of 23.5 carat gold leaf were used in the decoration of the magnificent auditorium. For more information see [www.royalhall.org.uk](http://www.royalhall.org.uk)

**The Royal Hall Restoration Trust:** Founded in 2003, and spearheaded – until her death in 2008 – by erstwhile Chairman Lilian Mina, the Trust has to date raised £2.8 million towards the restoration of the Royal Hall. Fundraising efforts continue as the Trust seeks to raise money towards the refurbishment of the dressing rooms, an acoustic shell, and other essential works.

**Alister Colley:** A graduate of Leeds Metropolitan University, Alister began his career as an artist illustrating children’s books written by his sister Stephanie Noble. In October 2005, Alister launched his own freelance illustration business: “Zeitgeist Illustrations”. In recent years, his success as an illustrator has been matched by the success of his stand-alone paintings, which have won national acclaim and have been the subject of a number of sell-out exhibitions. Alister’s work can be viewed at [www.zeitgeistfineart.com](http://www.zeitgeistfineart.com) and at The Framing Centre, 43 Oxford Street, Harrogate.