

Wall life captured by Dickens of an artist

KAREN Neale, artist-in-residence at Lords Cricket Ground, hot-footed it from the Ashes 2005 series to the opening of her exhibition at lifefofum gallery near Newton, Stocksfield, on Tuesday.

It was on a visit to Hadrian's Wall, hosted by the Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership, that Karen produced the impressive display of biro and water-colour sketches being exhibited at lifefofum.

Described by art collectors as the Dickens of the art world, Karen chronicles the life and times of historic places in a small sketch pad which she opens out to panoramic format.

Scenes depicted in the lifefofum exhibition include Hadrian's Wall from Housesteads, Corbridge from the Roman town of Corstopitum, the altar

stores at Chesters, the Moot Hall in Brampton, St Andrew's Church at Heddon-on-the-Wall, as well as the Crown Posada and the Swing Bridge in Newcastle and scenes from Wallsend and Shields Road in Byker.

Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership community outreach worker Hazel Barron-Cooper commented: "We were delighted to coordinate Karen's journey along the wall.

"More than 150 people attended a series of illustrated talks and workshops in the local towns and villages, including a local art group from Greenhead, the art group in Heddon-on-the-Wall, the A.D.A.P.T. Group in Hexham, the Denton Holme Community Centre in Carlisle and Brampton Church Hall.

They were interested to hear about her sketching

on Hadrian's Wall, as well as her other journeys and sketches of World Heritage Sites in France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Uzbekistan, India, Nepal and Cuba.

"It was a real joy working with Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership," enthused Karen, "and I am very excited my sketches will be shown at lifefofum.

"I hope that the people of Newcastle, Northumberland and Cumbria will make their own journey to the gallery and enjoy my vision of the wonderful UNESCO World Heritage site, Hadrian's Wall."

Karen's detailed observational drawings have impressed many, including the interview panel of the Winston Churchill Fellowship who granted her the prestigious fellowship to

visit and sketch UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Karen had a busy year in 2004. As well as her World Heritage journeys, she was artist-in-residence at the Athenaeum, the prestigious intellectual club on Pall Mall, where she had free rein to sketch from the library to the laundry, and the members' drawing room to the porter's lodge.

She was also invited by Sir Patrick Cormack MP to make sketches at the Houses of Parliament in the Palace of Westminster, another World Heritage Site.

An exhibition took place at Westminster in December, as a result of which some of her paintings are now in the Foyal Collection as well as that of the Parliamentary Estates and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.



■ On the wall: Hadrian's Wall captured on canvas by Karen Neale.