

In the Picture



**On Wyre's
sculpture
trail**

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Lectures and other dates for your diary

See our website at www.fyldedfas.org.uk for further information on all our future events

Wednesday 2 April

Islamic Art – Exploring the Decorative Arts of the Islamic World

Christopher Bradley

Some of the most important cities, sites and museums in the world will be covered. From its Arabian heartland comes a wealth of decorated ceramics, carved wood, metalwork, glass, tiles, mosaics, carpets, architecture and gardens. Islamic



art encompasses the great wealth of artistic treasures inspired by religion, but there is also non-religious art such as the colourful dancing figures from the pleasure palaces of Persia; the simple mud brick decorations of a merchant caravanserai; or the

delicate carved marble of arguably one of the world's most beautiful buildings, the Taj Mahal.



Lytton Strachey

Until Saturday 5 April

Drawn From Youth 4 exhibition at the Fylde Gallery, Booths, Lytham

Wednesday 30 April

Visit to Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and Port Sunlight

Guided tour of the Cathedral followed by a light lunch in the Sir Giles Gilbert Scott Suite. Later, a one hour tour of Port Sunlight with time to explore the Lady Lever Art Gallery.

Wednesday 7 May

Life with Lytton: Dora Carrington and her Circle

Sandra Pollard

Carrington (as she preferred to be called) lived a short but full life, dominated by her devotion to Lytton Strachey, the biographer and member of the

most influential of all English garden designers. Best known for her superb use of colour schemes in her hallmark flower borders, she combined an early training in art with self-taught horticultural skills and won herself a place in the pantheon of Arts and Crafts. This talk explores the influences of art, architecture and horticulture in her life.

Wednesday 18 June

Special Interest Day: Egypt - Architecture, Art and Artefacts

Lucia Gahlin

The venue is the Old Links Golf Club, St Annes. The lecturer has extensive experience in



Tuesday 13 May

Stratford-upon-Avon Theatre Trip

This is fully booked.

Wednesday 4 June

Gertrude Jekyll: Artist and Gardener

Twigs Way

Almost 80 years after her death, Gertrude Jekyll is still one of the

Egyptological research, teaching, museum work and excavation, and enjoys a well-deserved reputation for making the subject exciting. Application forms available now.

Wednesday 2 July

Shock! Horror! Probe! The art and artifice of Fleet Street: A newspaper story in pictures

Geri Parby

Since the end of the 15th century, when Wynkyn de Worde set up England's first printing press, and after 1702, when the first newspaper moved in, the term Fleet Street has been synonymous with newspaper journalism. We will be looking at the ups and downs of this notorious 'Street of Shame' via the art that illustrated its stories.

Thursday 10 July

Visit to the Hardwick Estate, Derbyshire

Details and booking at the April lecture.

Fylde Decorative and Fine Arts Society

A Member Society of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies.

Members pursue a mutual interest in the arts through lectures on a wide range of decorative and fine arts topics including art, sculpture, jewellery design, architecture, garden design. Lectures are on the first Wednesday of every month at 2pm in the Hall of the St. Annes-on-Sea United Reformed Church, St. George's Road, St. Annes FY8 2AE.

Chair: Marie Riley 01253 713003

Vice-Chair: Kate Cartmell

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Cover: The Seashell sculpture on Wyre's Mythic Coast. See page 7

Hardwick Hall



Day with Bess the Builder

Sixty one members and friends – a record turnout for a Special Interest Day – were at the Dalmeny Hotel, St Annes, last month for a fascinating in-depth study of Bess of Hardwick: her life, marriages, descendants and the homes that she built.

Speaker Roger Mitchell, describing Bess as something of an Elizabethan icon, pointed out that while she was born into the lowest end of the gentry, she gained wealth and prestige by cannily accumulating four husbands, each one richer and more powerful than the one before. As the speaker remarked: "She played the marriage market and did pretty well from it".

While the morning session focused on Bess the Matriarch, the afternoon concentrated on Bess the Builder and her very tangible legacy of projects at Chatsworth and Hardwick. No doubt thanks to this informative day, the Fylde DFAS trip to Hardwick later this year will be a sell-out too. Iain Williamson

Treasures reveal their secrets

In the last newsletter we appealed for volunteers to help us to research the Lytham St Annes Art Collection, a project enabled by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Many of you came forward and we now have over 50 researchers unearthing the most amazing pieces of information that even the experts didn't know about.

We have been impressed by the lengths some of our researchers have gone to, visiting galleries up and down the country to discover more about their chosen artists and spending hours online or combing through council minutes and archives.

Of course every art work is different. With well-documented artists it involves collating information from different sources. Artists who are virtually unknown need different detective work. It is interesting also learning about the people who donated to the collection.

We have often heard about John Booth starting it off with Richard Ansdell's The Herd Lassie, and Alderman Dawson's philanthropy in giving numerous precious paintings and sculptures, but many people living right across the borough were inspired by this spirit of generosity and also contributed.

One volunteer was surprised to discover that she is now living in the house of a man who bequeathed three statuettes in 1943 and was also the architect of the property. Needless to say, she is busy finding out more about him.

We have offered volunteers training on basic research at St Annes Library, led by Community Heritage Manager Andrew Walmsley; a workshop on filming and editing at the town hall; a trip to the Lancashire Record Office, where we learnt about their archives; and a day at the Lancashire Conservation Studio,

where we were treated to a fascinating session on collection care by Janice Porter, a conservator in pictorial art, and Jenny Truran, a conservator specialising in social

includes a trip to the Walker Art Gallery in March, with a guided tour of its 19th Century British Art collection and an optional workshop on displaying fine art. This is available to all volunteers on the project, including exhibition invigilators as well as researchers – subject to places being available.

Then on Monday 14 April we are holding an evening lecture at the Lowther Pavilion, Lytham, by Michael Howard entitled Substance and Shadow: Victorian Art and Society. This is a free event and open to all, not just to project volunteers, so we hope that you will join us there.

Our overall aim is to protect and preserve the art collection, a part of our local heritage that was neglected for many years. If you would like to join us it's not too late to volunteer. Find out more at the Tagging the Treasures website www.lythamstannesartcollection.org or email the team at lsaaartcollection@mail.com.
Marie Riley



Members visit the Lancashire archives

history and decorative arts. It was quite something to learn that the Studio was the only place in the country where volunteers could receive this kind of training.

Our next round of activities

A fitting legacy for Fylde DFAS?

This is a difficult subject to raise with our members, but we are aware that many local societies benefit from legacies and bequests and it is not unusual nowadays for charities and voluntary organisations to appeal actively for them.

If you support what we do at Fylde DFAS and feel it has enriched your life in some small way, then perhaps you might like to consider giving something back. We have a dedicated 'Good Causes' account that primarily supports young arts but is sometimes used to promote community projects.

We are particularly committed to bringing art to disadvantaged groups. We put a lot of effort into fundraising and applying for grants to support our work in this area. Our Drawn from Youth Exhibition showing at the Fylde Gallery until 5 April is an example of the partnership working we undertake with local sixth forms.

We have a small team of volunteers giving their time up to manage this project and would like to do more, but we cannot subsidise this from our membership fees or it would put the costs of joining out of reach for some people.

We continue to find creative ways of funding these activities. So if you are thinking about making a will and would like to help us out – and be remembered for your support for promoting the arts on the Fylde – then this might prove a fitting legacy.

Salamanca, a World Heritage Site and truly beautiful city, was the first stop on the Fylde DFAS trip to Spain last autumn.

The scale and grandeur of Salamanca's buildings surpasses any I have seen. The university, cathedral and monasteries dominate the city; everywhere you turn there is yet another exquisitely carved facade and yet more pinnacles towering over the buildings. Our guide took us on a tour of the city and we ended up in the Plaza Mayor where a number of us had lunch. It's a most spectacular square, particularly at night.

The journey to Salamanca had been uneventful except for the wonderful views we had of Avila, the largest fortified city in Europe, which looked quite amazing. It was pity our itinerary didn't allow a stop there and this fleeting view really made me want to return another time.

Our destination in Salamanca was the Hotel San Polo, built around an 11th century Romanesque church, with an outdoor seating area contained within the church ruins. On our second evening our organiser arranged a relaxing social event for people to enjoy wine and tapas and to get to know each other.

It would have been easy to spend several more days exploring this beautiful city and we were sad to leave the next morning. Travelling on to Madrid, en route we visited wonderful Segovia, another ancient walled city - built by the Moors, Jews

Fylde DFAS Secretary ... are you interested?

It's early in the new year to be thinking about our next AGM but we are doing just that. Our Constitution requires us to replace Marion Nuttall as Secretary this year and we would like anyone who might be interested in the role to come and talk to Marion or to our Chair, Marie Riley (contact details are on your Programme Card).

Marion has been Secretary since the Society's inauguration and systems, policies and procedures are already in place. The Secretary is one of the four Officers of the Society and

Spain: spectacular cities and a feast of art



*The Roman aqueduct at Segovia and (below) tapas al fresco in Salamanca.
Photos by Julie England*

and Christians – and again a World Heritage Site. The best known feature is the Roman aqueduct which straddles the south of the town, but there were many other historical buildings to be seen including the Cathedral of San Martin and the Alcazar. After a very pleasant few hours here we travelled to Madrid, arriving in the early evening.

Next morning we set off on a sight seeing bus and walking tour of this amazing city. During our walking tour we were held up by a demonstration which managed to close several of the streets. The demonstrators were civil servants protesting against cuts. We also saw what is reputedly the oldest restaurant in Europe, Botin, where

apparently some 80 suckling pigs a day are roasted.

The main attractions for art lovers were the three major galleries - the Prado, the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza and the Reina Sofia. The Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza houses one of the best collections of art in the world and in 1993 the Spanish State bought the collection for \$350 million.

Popular excursion to Blackpool's Grand

It's always a treat to visit the Grand Theatre in Blackpool, as Fylde DFAS members did in late November. Couple this with an opportunity to see the UK's longest running play, The Mousetrap, and you have the ingredients for a very popular excursion.

The Mousetrap is, of course, a murder mystery play by Agatha Christie and it has been running continuously in the West End since it opened in 1952.

The play is known for its twist ending and the audience are

traditionally asked not to reveal this after leaving the theatre.

Monkswell Manor is the setting and guests begin to arrive with difficulty on a snowy day. It was difficult to decide which character was the murderer and you questioned yourself throughout the performance. However, the murderer's identity was revealed at the end.

Agatha Christie was always upset by the plots of her work being revealed in the press, so I too am going to leave you wondering!
Judith Curran

In the spring of 2004 an extension opened which houses the Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza collection. Some people managed to visit at least two of these collections, which was quite a feat in one afternoon.

It really was very special to see original paintings one has only seen in books, the most memorable of which for me were Holbein's Henry the Eighth, Caravaggio's Saint Catherine of Alexandria and several Canaletto and Guardi works.

Our next visit was the former Royal Palace and gardens at Aranjuez. It's a beautiful palace with exquisite furniture and paintings. The gardens were very attractive with some of the prairie style planting at the front that is currently so popular in the UK. Being a Saturday, it also happened to be market day and quite a few of us strolled along the market stalls picking up the odd bargain here and there. Later we went to the small town of Chinchon, with an ancient Plaza Mayor still used for bull fighting, and dined at a lovely restaurant converted from a former olive mill where we were served specialities of the region.

On our last full day we were taken



to Toledo, again a wonderful walled town on a steeply sloping hillside. The highlight was the Museo del Greco in the Jewish Quarter. This was a reconstruction of a house in which El Greco had lived and it contained his paintings of the Twelve Apostles. Through the winding streets on our way to this museum we happened upon the Church of Santa Tome, where we found a painting by El Greco above the tomb of Señor de Orgaz. We discovered a wonderful restaurant for lunch here, which was so good that I was moved to post a comment on Trip Advisor.

Our final morning was free for us to explore Madrid a little further. Most of us leapt on a bus and visited as many places as we could fit in. The highlight here for me was Picasso's Guernica in the Reina Sofia gallery, a painting much reproduced but far more impressive in reality.

One could have spent all day here but time did not allow and we all returned for a quick bus ride to Madrid airport.

I am sure I can say, on behalf of all our travellers, what an excellent trip this was.

Sue Cornah



Detail from the Stonyhurst embroidery

Welcome for new members

New members from the last two seasons enjoyed a coffee morning at the Old Links Golf Club in St Annes at the beginning of January. New Year resolutions were abandoned as everyone tucked into delicious scones and cakes.

The event provided the opportunity not only to socialise with other new members but also to discover more about our wide ranging activities. Vice Chair Kate Cartmell provided display boards covering many of our latest events and excursions and spoke briefly about the Society. Also on display was the Stonyhurst kneelers tapestry, one of our current Heritage Projects. Members had an opportunity to chat to embroiderers involved in the project.

A Grand Christmas Lunch

Once again our annual Christmas lunch was held at the Grand Hotel, St Annes. More than 80 members and their friends enjoyed socialising with a pre-lunch glass of wine, before sitting down to an excellent lunch in the elegant St Annes suite. A raffle was held in aid of Fylde DFAS Young Arts Project.



Young art talent on show in Lytham

We are delighted to announce that, once again, a local art student has had her work selected by the Royal Society of British Artists for display in their annual exhibition at the Mall Galleries, London.

Each year NADFAS invites Societies to select A level, Highers or equivalent work for consideration. The artworks can be portraits, landscapes, still-life or nature studies. The competition is fierce. In 2012, for example, 57 Societies submitted 465 digital images of A level or equivalent artwork from 87 schools for consideration.

Blackpool and Fylde has been well represented in the past. Jodie Leader from Lytham St Annes High School sixth form and Katie Hampson from Blackpool Sixth Form College both had their work selected for the 2012 exhibition. Last autumn, Fylde DFAS submitted the work of five Blackpool and Fylde sixth form colleges to the 2013 competition, resulting in a win for Blackpool



Katie Lock's winning portrait

Sixth Form student Katie Lock, whose portrait will be exhibited at the Mall Galleries this spring. This is fantastic news, not only for Katie but also for Fylde DFAS, as we are the only North West society represented.

As part of this annual national competition, Fylde DFAS selects the best of the submitted pieces and holds its own local competition and exhibition. This year's exhibition, Drawn From Youth 4, will take place at the Fylde Gallery, Booths, Lytham, from 5 March to 5 April.

Richard Parry, Curator of Blackpool's Grundy Art Gallery, will open the exhibition with the Mayor attending. This year's judges include Nick Kowalski, Head of Fine Art at Blackpool and the Fylde College, contemporary artist Colin Binns and graphic designer Des Plunkett.

All previous Drawn From Youth exhibitions have been extremely popular and successful, and provide a great opportunity to celebrate the excellence of our young artists.

Angela Brown

A Walk on Wyre's Mythic Coast

Hidden sea monsters, soaring sea swallows and a giant steel shell are just some of the sculptures that can be spotted along the Wyre's Mythic Coast at Cleveleys.

The arts project is part of the regeneration of Wyre's waterfronts, which aims to develop a narrative for the seafront from Cleveleys to Fleetwood that will draw people along the coastline and connect communities.

The installations are based on a children's book, *The Sea Swallow*, by author Gareth Thompson and illustrator Hannah Megee. This tells the story of what happens when Mary's fisherman father is killed in a storm, and Mary uncovers a terrible war between land and sea.

To save her town from being swallowed by the waves, she must face the wild water that took her father. It's an atmospheric and haunting tale that takes the reader on a magical underwater adventure.

All the artworks were designed by North West public artist Stephen Broadbent. Go down to the beach and stand inside the Seashell (see front cover) when the tide is out. At 4 metres high, made from stainless steel and weighing 16.5 tonnes, you can't miss it.



Steel monument to shipwrecks

with their great white wings.'

Extracts from the book are engraved on the granite plinth at the base of the sculpture to provide an insight into the Sea Swallow story.

On the promenade, look for a paddle washed ashore. The timber Paddle is 9 metres long and 1.7 metres wide and was carved from purpleheart timber by John Merrill. It bears the inscription "the Sea Ogre's paddle drifted up, to lie on the muddy sand like some strange offering..." Finding the four metre stone Sea Ogre might be more difficult as it is hidden somewhere along the beach at Cleveleys. Weighing in at 12 tonnes, it was carved from limestone by Adrian Wright.

Shipwrecks, another steel monument situated on the promenade, serves as a memorial to all ships that have been wrecked off the Fylde coast between 1643 and 2008. The names of all the shipwrecks are etched through the steel.

The Mythic Coast project is ongoing, with plans for more installations. The sculptures are transforming the Cleveleys coastal landscape in an imaginative way. Why not walk the story by discovering one of our best kept art secrets? Pam Foster

The group at Parrox Hall

A surprising find in Preesall

A new partnership is developing between the local Lancashire National Trust and Fylde DFAS. There are notable similarities between us, especially in providing outings for our members to places of cultural interest.

An outing to Parrox Hall in Preesall was chosen as a venue for a combined visit for both societies. Late in November, with autumn colours much in evidence, we spent a fascinating afternoon being shown around this historic Hall and its extensive grounds. This was a first visit to the Hall for most of us and we were amazed at the history that unfolded before us.

Parrox Hall is one of the oldest homes in Lancashire. Most of today's house dates back to the 17th Century, although parts are believed to have originated from the time of Prince John in 1189.



Remarkably, the house has been occupied by descendants of the same family since that time.

It was interesting to see so many varied and personal collections of the family – for example, period furniture across centuries, including a number of four-poster beds still in use. Kate Cartmell

Letter from our Chair

It feels a privilege addressing my first letter as Chair to such a vibrant and active Society. The close of Hilary Alcock's term of office was the end of an era. She nurtured a small steering group into a full committee that took on the daunting task of conjuring Fylde DFAS from thin air. Between them they adopted a constitution, planned a lecture programme, recruited members and set up a plethora of related activities.

Hilary's energy and leadership skills paid dividends and as a result, Fylde DFAS is now a significant part of our lives. Although I wasn't a member of that preliminary group, I remember being blown away at the inaugural lecture and so astonished that something of this calibre was happening on my own doorstep that I knew I had to become more fully involved. It has been inspiring to find that new members have expressed this same sentiment on discovering us for the first time.

Taking on this role is challenging, but I have been touched by the messages of goodwill I have received. And although change is inevitable, there is also stability. NADFAS provides an infrastructure and framework to underpin the work of local societies. We can recruit lecturers with confidence, knowing that they have survived a rigorous vetting process ensuring that only the best in their field get through.

Closer to home, our committee works as a team. Roles are enormously varied: maintaining the membership register; mounting displays; creating publicity materials; organising trips and events; planning the lecture programme and ensuring everything runs smoothly on the day; managing volunteers; promoting young arts; or doing the admin, IT, and finance that



Fylde DFAS committee

enables us to function smoothly.

We are also fortunate to have so many willing volunteers who take on a range of tasks from selling raffle tickets and making tea, to giving talks and lectures to help us raise money for young arts and good causes.

We know that you appreciate what we do because you keep coming back for more. Our membership numbers creep up each year, making the issue of waiting lists a hot topic at committee meetings. Recent trips and holidays have sold out as soon as we have advertised them. There was almost a stampede for tickets to Budapest and unfortunately we couldn't accommodate everybody.

To ensure all these popular activities continue we rely on your involvement. Our constitution restricts our committee members to fixed terms to prevent us from becoming moribund or developing into an exclusive clique. This is the right thing to do in theory but only works in practice when new people come forward to take their place.

Marion, our secretary, will be coming to the end of a five year term at the next AGM. We are

currently advertising for her post, which will be a difficult one to fill, and we are particularly in need of a committee member to take responsibility for heritage. Our heritage programme is probably one of the largest of all NADFAS Societies. We have church recorders making a detailed inventory of the White Church; tapestry volunteers stitching a beautiful six-foot kneeler for Stonyhurst chapel; and researchers helping us to catalogue the Lytham St Annes Art Collection. Yet we have no single committee member to oversee this.

Please talk to one of the current committee if you think that you might want to join us. And meanwhile, a big thank you to the committee and volunteers, past and present, and to all of our membership for supporting Fylde DFAS. With so much shared expertise and enthusiasm, we will continue to build on the strong foundations laid by our first Chair and the small steering group who worked so hard to pull off that conjuring trick and turn a wishful idea into the thriving society we enjoy today.
Marie Riley