



**THE ARTS  
SOCIETY**  
FYLDE

## THE ART OF CHANGE

8<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017  
AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE...

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[www.theartsocietyfylde.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietyfylde.org.uk)

Arts Education, Heritage and Conservation in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre

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# CHAIR'S REPORT

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2016-2017, a period of excellent achievements and also of planning for an exciting future.

I start my report with a very large thank you to all members not only for a year of exceptional achievement in our regular events, lecture programmes, meetings and service to local arts but also for the diligent and efficient way the change of name for our national group was handled. We have been a successful organisation from the very start in 2009 and I know that many of you were doubtful about the value of changing the name, apart from any resulting costs which we might incur.

We listened to the rationale provided by The Arts Society, supported by the modern but classic new logo and to the explanation of the new challenges and opportunities presented to us as part of a national and international organisation. The Executive Committee was persuaded to move forward with the EGM to change our own name. Thank you for your support and let us wish ourselves 'Good Luck for The Arts Society Fylde' in the future with even better things to support the arts on the Fylde coast.

Our Pilot to change the governance and management of the Society began in October 2016. It is a challenging process and I thank especially the Executive Committee and the Team Leaders for their hard work and most co-operative efforts, always with the 'good' of the society in mind. Despite the fact that we live in the greatest age of communication, it is that which is our biggest challenge. There is just so much going on and Team Leaders and the Executive Committee are doing their best to get this right. I believe they are making a success of the Pilot as it progresses into its second year.

This past year we have devoted a lot of time to the future of the Society and in my last report I mentioned the oncoming "Programme Launch Evening" set up to develop our 2020 Strategy under the heading of **Membership**. It was a most successful evening with presentations by Team Leaders and lots of members came forward to volunteer and to join the various Teams we had created under the Pilot. We welcomed several guests to introduce them to our Society and a super evening with a glass of wine and canapes and lots of noisy chatter was enjoyed by all.

Another element of our 2020 Strategy, presented at our last AGM, was the future development of our **Programme** which is wide ranging and includes our lectures, visits, special interest days and tours and developing the Society's future involvement in volunteering projects. The Executive Committee has considered and debated how we can provide members with greater opportunities to participate in these activities. We believe that this is essential if the Society is to remain vibrant and active in the future. A main consideration is the excellent facilities which have been provided by the United Reformed Church in St Annes since 2009, but as the membership grows we need more space and we need to offer facilities for existing members to meet and chat before a lecture. The

Committee is notifying members of a change of venue as I write this report and I hope that members will see this as positive progress and enjoy the new arrangements from September 2018.

Our thanks go to The United Reformed Church members and especially its caretaker for their welcome and supportive care for our lecture days.

In this report the **accounts** show that we are coming under financial pressures due partly to a reduced profit on some of our programmes and some non-budgeted expenses. The Committee hopes that more members will enjoy the events and visits organised by our Programme Team and support the wonderful visits it organises. The Committee is addressing the financial pressure and it may be that in future our 'service' to local arts and culture will depend on grants and/or sponsorship rather more than in the past. Our reserves remain at the highest recommended level.

A most important element of a successful Society is the plan for **succession** and the Executive has paid particular attention to this. I am pleased to report that the Executive Committee will have nominations for all the Officers at the AGM and within the Terms of Office prescribed in the Constitution. The Team Leaders are nominated within the terms of the current Pilot. From this you will deduce that we have a nomination for a new Secretary. Marion Nuttall, who has served as our Secretary from the founding of the Society in 2009 is leaving her post at the AGM in February 2018. We are delighted that we have at last found a replacement (and a most welcome one).

Those of us who have been close to or served on the Committee from 2009 have had the opportunity to see the quality and diligence of Marion's service to the Society over this time. Members only need to look at the web site to see the carefully crafted policies and practices which she has developed and maintained. Committee Meetings & AGM agendas, Minutes, actions, calendars & notices, fire safety, risk management & venue management represent only a small part of the work. All are delivered on time and with pin-point accuracy and most importantly with friendship and good will. We will miss you Marion and thank you most warmly for what you have done.

I would like to conclude my report by thanking you all for contributing to the success of The Arts Society Fylde and I hope you continue to enjoy what we all share. Finally my own 3 year term of office is completed at the AGM in February 2018 when we will welcome new Officers and wish them every success. I thank members for your welcome friendship and support in furthering our mutual appreciation of the arts. Your support has been most important to me and thank you for having me.

*'You can have no dominion greater or less than that over yourself.'* Leonardo da Vinci.

Jo Darbyshire [Chair]

# OUR PROGRAMME

I have pleasure in presenting my first report to the Society as Programme Secretary. As in previous years, our aim in planning the year has been to provide a programme of **lectures, visits, tours, Special Interest Days and events** that covers a wide range of interests. I think we have achieved this admirably. We have been happy to act on a number of members' suggestions and we continue to welcome your opinions and ideas for the future.

In addition we provide opportunities for members to learn about and participate in various **Volunteering Projects in Heritage, Church Recording and Young Arts**.

## LECTURES

As in previous years, my aim in planning the year has been to provide a programme of lectures that covers a variety of arts topics from different periods and different countries, presented by high quality speakers.

I hope that members feel that the programme matched their own interests and objectives of the Society. Members will know that I collect feedback (both formally and informally) after lectures and that a report is then submitted to The Arts Society House in London, scoring the overall reaction to the lecture. This process helps us gauge the response from members and gives The Arts Society information on which they can provide help and support to other Societies as they plan their programmes: this process is of great assistance in our own work.

During the last season we awarded an 'outstanding' score to one lecture, The Legendary Lee Miller, seven 'excellent' and two 'very good' which is an indication of the high quality but also of the value of the feedback system in maintaining such high standards.

Some of the highlights of the past season included:

- In November Simon Rees gave a memorable lecture on **Opera – set and costume design**. He talked knowledgeably about the arts associated with Opera through surviving drawings, paintings, theatres and their scenery from the 17th century to the present day.
- In January we had a fascinating lecture on **Caravaggio – the bad boy of the Baroque** by Daniel Evans. The title was very apt and we discovered how scandalous his life could be but also how remarkable his canvasses remain.
- In April Deborah Lambert talked about **Scandinavian design in the mid-20th century** -- Simplicity not only in the clean lines of furniture but also in glassware and simple but beautifully designed silver jewellery. Ikea coming to England has had a huge influence on the design in our homes.

- In May our outstanding lecture by Antony Penrose talked about his mother, **The Legendary Lee Miller**. We were all immersed in her life story. From super model for Vogue in the 1920s, her collaboration and her romance with Man Ray and her photographic career that spanned working in Paris, New York and Egypt. She later became a war correspondent and then, famously, a combat photographer. Antony Penrose offered an accurate and lasting portrait of a talented and courageous woman who was a free spirit and a trail blazer.

*'One of the best lectures; poignant, informative and beautifully presented ' [Member. The Arts Society Fylde]*

Although I have been Programme Secretary for nearly a year our programme is always planned well in advance. We were delighted when 93% assessed it as 'excellent/good' in the questionnaire. [July 2017].

Olga Depledge chose the lecture programme for 2016-2017. thank you Olga for such an interesting and stimulating programme.

Looking to the future, you will see from your Programme Card, that lecture topics for 2017-18 are more diverse and eclectic as we embrace the new branding of The Arts Society.

## VISITS AND SPECIAL INTEREST DAYS

*Exploring history, heritage, religion and culture.*

There have been three events this year and I would like to acknowledge members of the Programme Team, Rita Calvert, Christina McHugh and Ged Curley for their help in planning and organising them.

In March 2017 seventy members and friends gathered at the Dalmeny Hotel, St. Annes to hear two lectures given by Christopher Bradley: **The Queen of Sheba, Empress or Enigma?** and **The Silk Road**. Mr. Bradley is a lively and engaging lecturer with an impressive depth of knowledge and we felt he could have talked for much longer than the allotted time. We were all left understanding more of the historical evidence of the meeting between the wealthy and exotic queen of Sheba and King Solomon.

After an excellent lunch in the Atrium we returned to the St. Annes Suite for coffee and a chance to catch a few minutes in the sunshine on the spacious balcony. Our afternoon lecture was **The Silk Road** and we learned a great deal about the complexity surrounding trade and religion and how one influenced the other and the expansion of both across Central Asia and Europe and their legacy on art and architecture.

### *LIFELONG LEARNING:*

*'Outstanding lectures. Interesting & informative content. I could have listened to more. ----very knowledgeable lecturer'*

*[Member. The Arts Society Fylde]*

A second Special Interest Day on **The Life & Work of Joseph Paxton** in May 2017 was unfortunately cancelled due to the small number of members requesting places. There are various possible reasons for this---subject didn't appeal, too many other attractions, coincidence with school half-term etc. The Programme Team obviously want the days to be successful and appealing and we welcome suggestions on subjects of interest. Come and talk to us on lecture days or contact us via e-mail---details are on the Programme Card.

Our first **day visit** of the year in April 2017 was to **Kirby Lonsdale and Leighton Hall**. The morning was spent exploring Kirby Lonsdale, a historic market town mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and situated between the Lake District and Yorkshire. A volunteer in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin gave us a brief history of this ancient church built sometime between 1093 and 1130. Following that we strolled down to the river Lune to look at 'Ruskin's View' and then to Devil's Bridge, now listed as an ancient monument. After lunch we drove to Leighton Hall.

Earliest records of Leighton Hall go back 700 years and its most well-known residents are the Gillow family, of the famous Gillow furniture. The current owners are Richard & Susan Gillow Reynolds and it was Mrs. Reynolds who welcomed us into her home and into the Music Room with its stylish Steinway piano and magnificent views to the front of the house. We enjoyed a guided tour of the hall's beautifully crafted furniture, paintings, ceramics, silver and glass and then had tea and scones in the charming traditional tearoom before departing.

### *ENRICHING LIVES:*

#### *SHARING EXPERIENCES.*

*70 on our Special Interest Day and*

*85 on visits this year.*

In July 2017 we visited **The Atkinson Gallery, Southport** and **Rufford Old Hall, near Ormskirk**. At the Atkinson we were met by the curator who escorted us to the Art Rooms within this multi-purpose venue comprising art gallery, public library, theatre, shop and café. At the time of our visit there were three exhibitions: 'Why look at Animals', 'Golf & Glamour: Fashion on the Fairway from 19th century to present' and 'Dream & Reality' which included paintings by British artist, John Armstrong, as well as his design work in the theatre, films, posters and ballet. A talented and versatile artist. After lunch in Southport we travelled by coach to Rufford Old Hall, a timber framed manor house in south-west Lancashire and home for many generations of the Hesketh family

before it was presented to the National Trust in 1936. An experienced and enthusiastic volunteer gave us a potted history of the house and family. The Great Hall boasts unique Tudor Hammerbeam roof beams with carved angels and the only surviving example of a massive carved oak screen. It is rumoured that William Shakespeare joined a company of players at Rufford Old Hall in 1581. After that we saw the Philip Ashcroft Collection, a museum of local life and work. It was a lovely day to walk in the gardens and woodland around the house and afterwards to enjoy a cream tea in the cobbled courtyard or the pretty tearoom. Everyone found the day very enjoyable.

*'I am amazed at the versatility of John Armstrong's work'*

*'Lovely gallery. Will come again.'*

*[Members. The Art Society Fylde].*

## TOURS

As previously two tours were organised this year.

In September 2016 over 30 members set off by coach to spend a few days in **Holland**, sailing overnight from Hull to Rotterdam. On the way we stopped at the **Yorkshire Sculpture Park** where we spent three hours seeing some very impressive sculptures by different artists and met our guide who would remain with us for the tour.

The ferry crossing was very smooth and we enjoyed a leisurely meal leaving the ship soon after 8.30am to go to The Hague for our visit to the Mauritshuis Royal Picture Gallery. This beautiful building holds a superb collection of paintings by Rubens, Rembrandt and Steen and includes the 'Pearl Earring' by Vermeer and the 'Goldfinch' by Fabritius. We had plenty of time to view the exhibits and have lunch before travelling the short distance to see the Masdag Panorama. None of us knew what to expect but to reach the panorama we all had to climb a winding staircase and what we saw at the top simply took one's breath away! The circular painting was not only a lovely work of art but also a very clever optical illusion. For some of our party this was the highlight of the trip.

*'As we emerged from the dark into the light, the sight that we saw in panoramic vision was breath-taking' [Member, The Arts Society Fylde]*

Then we travelled to Delft where we would spend the next three nights. The following day we went to Amsterdam where, after a short city tour, we visited The Rijksmuseum. This magnificent building had been closed for nearly ten years for refurbishment but the wait had been worthwhile because it was the most glorious showcase for the treasures it contains. For me, the impressive long gallery at the top of the building with

smaller side galleries leading to 'The Nightwatchman' by Rembrandt demonstrated the care and attention that had been spent on the renovation of the museum. Spare time before a boat trip through the canals provided an opportunity to see the Van Gogh Museum and again we marvelled at the amazing collection.

On our second day in Holland we drove for two hours to the Het Loo Palace, once again in glorious weather. This interesting palace, with lovely gardens, was the home of Queen Wilhelmina after she abdicated and the rooms were all laid out in chronological order. After lunch nearby we drove to the Kroller-Muller Museum set in a vast park. Here we had an unexpected treat. The previous day an exhibition of drawings by Van Gogh had opened. These drawings are exhibited only every eight years and then only for three months so we were extremely fortunate that our visit had coincided with this event. We were also thrilled to see a fabulous collection of Barbara Hepworth's sculptures.

On our last day we drove a short distance to the Delft Porcelain Factory where we had a factory tour and a lovely lunch. After three hours free time in Delft we returned to Hull on the overnight ferry.

This was the first time I had led a tour for the Society and it had been a great pleasure to spend quality time with such a lovely group of people. Many had been pleasantly surprised not only with what we experienced but with Holland itself. The weather was perfect throughout and the arrangements made by Tailored Travel and our driver and guide were excellent.

The tour to Oxfordshire in April 2016 was cancelled owing to only a small number of bookings being received.

## EVENTS

Five other events have successfully taken place in this very busy year.

In October 2016 49 members attended a Programme Launch Evening at the Glendower Hotel St. Annes where over wine and tapas members heard about how the Society is managed with support & advice from The Arts Society House and each Team Leader spoke briefly about her Team. The evening was very successful in that members got to know each other and many volunteered to be involved in the Teams' activities.

In the following month 13 new members were welcomed to a Coffee Morning at the Bedford Hotel St. Annes. This was a friendly occasion in which they discussed their interests and opportunities within the Society and learned about the organisation and the wider context of The Arts Society.

As last year we celebrated with a New Year Lunch at the Grand Hotel St. Annes. It was attended by 75 people. After a drink, a delicious three-course meal was enjoyed

by all and during this we were entertained by Mr. Bickerstaffe playing his guitar. Thanks go to Alicia Grant, volunteer, for her role in organising this enjoyable event.

The first of our summer events was the Volunteers' Afternoon Tea at the Pavilion St. Annes where 43 members enjoyed tea/coffee and cakes as a token of thanks for their hard work and contributions to the Society's programme throughout the year.

Lastly at the end of July 2017 24 members accepted an invitation to join the Executive Committee for coffee and scones at Lytham Hall. They were interested to hear about the various roles and work implemented in the running of the Society and somewhat surprised to learn of the support, direction and guidance given by the 'Office' of The Arts Society in London. Most of the afternoon was spent informally chatting ---warts and all---about the various roles. From the perspective of 'succession planning' the event was extremely successful and there were several expressions of interest in standing for election to Officer & Committee roles in the future including two for 2018.

The Society is very grateful to Rita Calvert, who as Team Leader: Events, plays a major role in all of these and makes a very valuable contribution to the Programme. Her key contribution is ensuring that there are sufficient volunteers to help, not only with social occasions but also in the management of the Hall for lectures and the smooth-running is largely due to Rita and all her volunteers too numerous to name here.

**Pauline Hamilton**  
**[Programme Secretary & Team Leader]**

**[with contributions from Rita Calvert [Team Leader: Events & coordinating visits]; Christina McHugh [Membership Secretary coordinating SIDs/Visits] and Nigel Bramley Haworth [Tours Coordinator].**

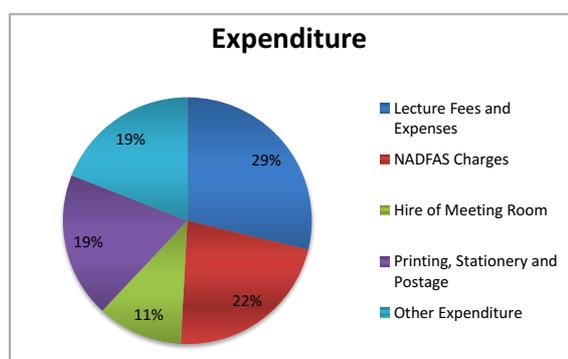
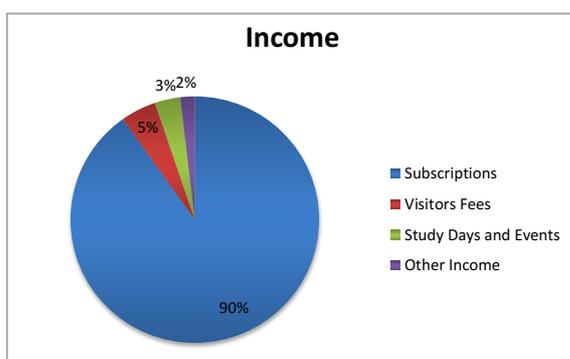
# OUR FINANCES

## Summary Financial Report for the Period ended 31 July 2017

### GENERAL ACCOUNT

The General Account showed a deficit of £2,015.30 over the year to 31st July 2017, this is due partly because of lower income on study days and events and partly higher costs incurred on storage of equipment and members' meetings including the Programme Launch.

	Year to 31/07/2017	Year to 31/07/2016
Subscriptions	11,833.00	11,875.25
Visitors' Fees	606.00	808.00
Study Days and Events	435.83	1,820.96
Other Income	246.33	297.49
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>13,121.16</b>	<b>14,801.70</b>
Less: Expenditure		
Lecture Fees and Expenses	4,355.74	4,186.83
NADFAS Charges	3,340.47	3,357.55
Hire of Meeting Room	1,685.50	1,070.00
Printing, Stationery and Postage	2,875.80	2,403.09
Equipment	-	202.98
Other Expenditure	2,878.95	987.35
Transfer to Good Causes	-	1,000.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>15,136.46</b>	<b>13,207.80</b>
Deficit/Surplus	- 2,015.30	1,593.90
General fund at beginning of the year	16,372.74	14,778.84
<b>General fund as at 31st July 2017</b>	<b>14,357.44</b>	<b>16,372.74</b>



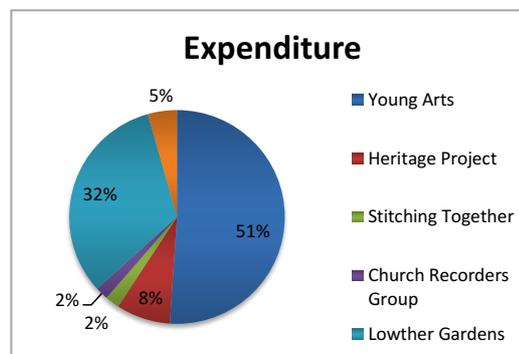
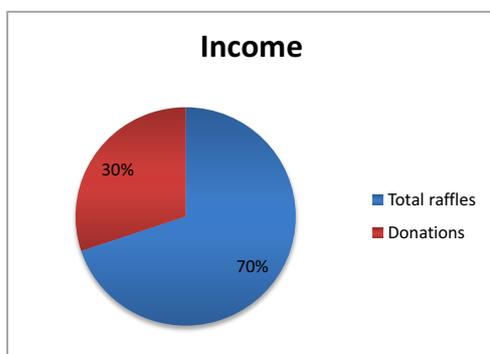
The Committee has a Reserves Policy and currently the reserves of £14,773.60 are held in cash. The current reserves are lower than at the same period last year but still exceed the minimum level by £1,227.21.

## GOOD CAUSES ACCOUNT

The Good Causes Account shows the income from raffles, donations and transfers from the General Account. No transfer was made from the General Account in the last financial year because that account was in deficit.

During the year we spent £1,578.95 on Young Arts and £1,000 was donated to Lowther Gardens redevelopment, together with support for other projects

	Year to 31/07/2017	Year to 31/07/2016
Total Raffles	834.91	969.80
Events	-	-
Tagging the Treasures		2,403.17
Donations	360.00	35.00
Transfer from General Account	-	1,000.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,194.91</b>	<b>4,407.97</b>
Less: Expenditure		
Young Arts	1,578.95	1,482.64
Heritage Project	251.65	-
Stitching Together	65.87	-
Church Recorders Group	60.36	25.12
Lowther Gardens	1,000.00	
HM Prison	135.00	
Tagging the Treasures	-	4,169.99
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,091.83</b>	<b>5,677.75</b>
Surplus/Deficit	- 1,896.92	- 1,269.78
Good Causes Account at beginning of the year	4,477.36	5,747.14
<b>Good Causes as at 31st July 2017</b>	<b>2,580.44</b>	<b>4,477.36</b>



All surplus funds are held at the bank with most of the funds held on deposit.

The accounts have been certified as true and fair by Jeffery Stirrup the Independent Examiner.

Full accounts are available. Please contact the treasurer Jean Holland [jeanho23@hotmail.com] if you require a copy.

# VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS: YOUNG ARTS

Our seventh annual '**Drawn from Youth**' Exhibition was held in March 2017 at the Fylde Gallery Lytham. Resulting from previous collaboration between The Arts Society [formerly National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts] and the Royal Society of British Artists [RBA], a challenging National Art Competition is now held each year at the Mall Galleries, London. Twenty places are awarded for A-level students to exhibit their work alongside prize-winning practising artists at the RBA Annual Exhibition. This year we were delighted to have two award-winning students from Arnold King Edward Independent School, Lytham St. Annes. We warmly congratulate Ellie Morris and Eleanor Wood for their amazing ceramic sculptures: 'Wildlife Issues: Elephant' and 'Musical Instrument Ceramic Bowl' respectively and wish them every success in the future. Over 7 years, The Arts Society Fylde has been pleased to receive 11 of these national awards, a reflection of the very high standard of artwork submitted from schools/colleges in the Fylde.

The annual Drawn from Youth Exhibitions provide a welcome opportunity for students' artwork to be shown locally. This year 57 students exhibited a wide variety of 85 artworks which included drawings, sketches & paintings, ceramics, textiles, photography and increasingly popular graphic design. Participating students are invited to the Opening Preview and this year the event was opened by Hilary Alcock, the founder Chair for our Society and now the newly elected National Vice-Chair of The Arts Society. She applauded the high standard of the displays and congratulated the teachers and students on the wealth of creative skills, calling for students to continue striving for further higher qualifications in the arts and to consider the exciting, new opportunities now arising in the workplace, especially those incorporating ever-expanding skills of science and technology, yet within the world of art. The students' parents and teachers as well as Mayoral Civic Groups from Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre, colleagues from the North West Arts Society and links with Education in the Fylde saw Anna Richards, from Blackpool Sixth Form College, presented with the Hilary Alcock Prize for her sensitive range of artwork developed within a project relating to awareness of Alzheimers Disease.

## *INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS.*

*On behalf of the students and staff at Blackpool Sixth Form College, a huge thank you to everyone involved and volunteering in Drawn from Youth 7. Once again it has been an invaluable experience for the students involved and a joy to be a part of such a fantastic event which just gets better every year. Well done to all. [Blackpool Sixth Form College].*

The Exhibition was on for four weeks during which lots of visitors viewed the art works. Many compliments were written in our Visitors' Book.

## *ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC.*

*As old as I am I'm inspired. WELL DONE. [Visitor].*

Our other Young Arts Project this year was '**Play is medicine too**' the ongoing project by which we provide art materials for children in two local hospitals. The staff are very appreciative and speak highly of the value to their young patients.

**Future plans** include 'Drawn from Youth 8' for which artwork has been selected and photographed from the seven participating schools/colleges and sent for selection for the RBA Competition. We are expecting to hear the results in October 2017 and look forward to another wonderful Exhibition in March 2018.

Another project we are working on is the provision of **Summer Workshops for 8-16yr olds** designed to provide opportunities for high quality art activities for younger people. Subject to successful applications for funding the project will focus on the theme, 'Lifeboats' and 'The Sea' and will link with RNLI to celebrate the launching of a new lifeboat and with the 50th Anniversary of The Arts Society.

Thank you to the volunteers who have worked with Young Arts this year and especially Christina McHugh who has done a lot of the administration for the Team.

**Kate Cartmell. [Team Leader: Young Arts]**

## HERITAGE & CHURCH RECORDING

### *RECORD OF CHURCH FURNISHINGS OF FAIRHAVEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH*

The recording of Fairhaven United Reformed Church commenced in 2011 and was completed in July 2017 during the incumbency of Rev. David Phillips. This exceptionally detailed and painstaking work has been completed through the dedication and perseverance of a group of the Society's volunteers helped in the later stages by the Heritage Team Leader, Jacqueline Love and representatives from The Arts Society Bolton.

Special thanks must go to Hilary Cresswell, who has worked on the project since the beginning and, in this year alone, spent over 120 voluntary hours compiling the church record and attending many church recording meetings on behalf of our Society and to Jacqueline Love who as a local photographer and Team Leader has spent over 120 voluntary hours editing and formatting the images and working alongside Hilary to complete the task.

The record is now being audited, however, as the NW Area does not currently have an Area Representative it is being checked in parts by other experts within the

church recording programme. Unfortunately, this has delayed things but we are still hopeful to present a bound copy to the church after a church service during 2017.

We are sure that you all join us in congratulating Hilary Cresswell and all the volunteer church recorders who worked on this true labour of love, that took over 6 years to complete and hopefully you will all be able to join us in celebration at the church presentation in due course.

The Society would like to acknowledge and thank the following contributors:

Memorials	H.Cresswell, L.Hynes
Metalwork	H.Cresswell, L.Hynes, T.Saunders
Stonework	P.Bailey
Woodwork	H.Cresswell, L.Hynes, T.Saunders
Textiles	A.Bullock & B.Pagett
Paintings, etc	D.Bennett
Library, books and documents	H.Acock, D.Bennett, K.Cartmell, H.Cresswell, L.Hynes, B.Owen,
Windows	H.Acock, D.Bennett, K.Cartmell, C.Cockburn, L.Hynes, M.Seidel,
Miscellaneous	P.Bailey, H.Cresswell,
Group Leader	P.Bailey
Photography & Editing	P.Bailey, J.Love
Compiler/Typist	H.Cresswell & L.Hynes
Proof Readers	S.Awbery, G.Corless, L.Hynes

## HERITAGE

Following an extremely busy year in 2016 with the completion of the very successful 'Tagging the Treasures Project' the Heritage Group has been fairly quiet this year as there were no new projects. One group event has been held and much work has been done to prepare for a new project.

In February this year about 20 members of the Heritage Group met for an illuminating talk and presentation on the history and traditions of St Valentine's Day:

*Valentine's Day from ancient Roman rituals to the customs of Victorian England*

The group created Victorian Style Valentine cards and listened to a musical rendition of St Valentines Morning by local musician Marettta Fawcett on her flute. The following quotes from participants show how much they enjoyed the time.

*'Thank you for an interesting talk to day. Enjoyed the cards, great materials. Very enjoyable. Thanks!'*

*'I do not usually do crafty things, but I really enjoyed making my card, thank you!'*

*'Very informative presentation, it must have taken you ages to find all the great pictures for the slide show, Thank you.'*

*'The whole morning was so successful, when is the next one?'*

Despite this event being a successful one, due to work load and personal responsibilities the Team Leader has, to date, not found time to organise another similar event. If any members would like the opportunity to hone their presentation and events organising skills, on a small scale, she is happy to work with you to create a slide show and market the event.

## VOLUNTEERING & INCREASING PARTICIPATION

80 members on the Heritage Group mailing list: people who have expressed an interest in our Society's Heritage work and projects.

During 2017 our Society became a **Corporate Member** of local Civic Societies: Blackpool Civic Trust, Lytham St. Annes Civic Society and Fleetwood Civic Society in order to become aware of their projects and events in which our members might be interested in participating. Three members volunteered to be the 'links' between the Societies reporting back information of interest. Many thanks to Carol Neale, Barbara Weston and Alan Townsend. Unfortunately owing to unforeseen circumstances, Alan has had to step down and if you live in or close to Fleetwood and would like to be the 'link person' attending meetings and reporting back items of interest please let the Heritage Team Leader know.

This networking brought a **future project** to our attention: Lytham St. Annes Civic Society has permission from Fylde Council to carry out their plans to improve the old site of the **mussel tanks** near Lytham Green. Earlier this year discussion took place with our member, Sue Cornah, who is very much involved in the project and the Heritage Group is hoping to assist in researching the Lytham estuary.

Our second possible future project, still in its initial stages of planning, is already showing exciting potential and how it would continue the work of our Society to be more inclusive of the whole of the Fylde. It is a textile embroidery project originated from an idea by member Fiona Walmsley Collins, a Textile Practitioner. Provisionally named *'Stitched Together --- Strands in the Sand --- The Fylde Coast'* the project aims to be historical in its domestic sewing/embroidery origins; conceptual and contemporary in its final display and to broaden The Arts Society Fylde to a wider audience on the Fylde Coast. Fiona and the I have already spent 20 full working days researching possible funding sources and attending days meetings. We presented the Executive Committee with a detailed proposal explaining what the project would cover, where/when/why they want to undertake it, who will be involved and how they intend to implement it. If funding is successful, we will be working in collaboration with the local Guild of Embroidery groups [an educational charity] and in conjunction with several other interested parties and wide-ranging community groups.

**Jacqueline Love**  
[Team Leader: Heritage & Church Recording]

# OUR MEMBERS

I was very pleased to take over the Membership Secretary role at the beginning of the year and I would like to thank Pauline Hamilton, the previous Membership Secretary, for her invaluable help in getting me started and her husband Michael for his IT expertise setting up the files on my computer.

I am pleased to report that once again our membership numbers have remained buoyant over the period 2016-17. We had **229** members when the 2016-2017 Lecture Programme began in October and we were able to offer a further ten memberships in February 2017 bringing the total to **239**. Renewal forms and letters went out at the end of our lecture programme and as in previous years the membership has responded very promptly. Thank you to all those members who have ticked boxes on the renewal form offering their help in a variety of ways: making refreshments: meeting and greeting at lectures: hosting & collecting lecturers from the train station: giving the vote of thanks.

## *Our Society is Our Membership*

Attendance for the 2016-2017 season averaged at 146 with a maximum of 160 and the average number of visitors was 8, but at the January lecture attendance was 178 [159 members and 19 visitors] just 2 short of our venue's capacity of 180. The numbers are fairly consistent over the last five years with members' attendance being slightly higher and the number of visitors being slightly lower than last year.

## *ENRICHING LIVES: LIFELONG LEARNING.*

*Attendance at lectures this year:  
members = 1535 and visitors = 77*

## *Constancy through Excellency*

*Achieved by the diversity of lectures and high standard of lecturers*

There are **19** on the Waiting List, most of whom have attended one or two lectures as visitors. Others have moved into the area and have belonged to The Arts Society [formerly NADFAS] at a previous location and are keen to remain members. During this year visitors have expressed a very positive and enthusiastic appreciation of our lectures; other comments have been made by visitors and those on the waiting list about the warm welcome from those meeting and greeting and the efficiency and courtesy of those helping on our reception tables. It is hoped that all nineteen waiting to join will be offered membership either in October 2017 or February 2018 but this will depend on the number of vacancies in mid-September.

Recruitment and retention is paramount to the Society continuing to offer members the best professional lecturers to deliver an inspiring, enjoyable and informative programme. On receiving the programme card for 2017-2018 Hilary Alcock, a former Chair of Fylde

DFAS, e-mailed '.....it is wonderfully eclectic.' We welcome visitors to come and enjoy our 'eclectic' programme and ask you to promote membership of The Arts Society Fylde through friends, your book club, gardening club, golf club, gym, art society.

*'Variety's the very spice of life that gives it all its flavour.'*

*William Cowper [1731 - 1800]*

**Christina McHugh [Membership Secretary]**

# COMMUNICATION

Communication with our members and interacting with them in an inclusive way as well as with other organisations and the public is very important to us and I'm pleased to say that we 'talk' to our members very well according to our recent research.

*95% rated the communication & information received as excellent or good. [November 2016]*

This year the change of our Society's name has presented a number of challenges for the Communications Team. Everything from letterheads to programme cards, to the web-site, to social media have all required lots of changes, as we followed instructions and advice/suggestions from The Arts Society in terms of using new logos, different fonts, preferred colours and ideas for design. We have embraced all of the Society's suggestions and we now contribute to a brand identity that is strong, coherent and recognisable.

While our communications material may look a little different from before, we are still keen to embrace both old and new ways of sharing information with our members. Thus we are continuing to offer printed brochures, newsletters, lecture notes and reports as about 40% of members tell us they rarely, if ever, use the web-site or e-mail. [July 2017].

*Our communications strategy ensures visibility, accessibility and promotion of our Society, not only to our members but to the outside world'.  
[Team Leader: Communications]*

Our biannual Newsletter is slowly evolving to include more articles from our members such as a Society excursion or their own individual experiences of a visit to an exhibition. Thank you to all our contributors as well as Simon Foster for his help with layout and printing.

The Arts Society Fylde website plays a major part in ensuring our members are kept up-to-date with news and events. Data analytics show that the most frequently accessed pages are those providing information on

forthcoming lectures, closely followed by exhibitions at galleries in the North West. The website also provides us with an opportunity to promote our Society to the outside world and, once again, our usage statistics reveal an international audience. Similarly our use of social media, such as Facebook & Twitter, also enables us to engage with the international arts community. Sometimes it's important to get news out to members quickly and for this purpose, we send out e-mails, via Mailchimp, which enables us to contact everyone at the same time, via one mail.

*'Social media is not about the exploitation of technology but service to the community'*  
[Mainwaring]

While we use Dropbox for electronic archiving we do acquire a large amount of paper archives such as press cuttings and letters and this year we have been pleased to welcome Fiona Walmsley-Collins who has volunteered to take on the role of archivist. We also now rent space to store the archive, as well as other items that have previously cluttered up our homes.

Our extensive electronic photo library continues to grow on Flickr and can be accessed by all members. It provides an important archive of lectures, Special Interest Days, excursions, day trips and other events. We are lucky in having a number of excellent and keen photographers and our thanks go to volunteers Ged Curley and Julie England and to Jacqueline Love, Team Leader: Heritage.

Before each lecture we have a number of notices concerning news, details of events and information on the day's lecture. The PowerPoint presentation includes details of these notices and cuts down the amount of time required by the Chair to read them out, enabling us to start the lecture punctually.

All lectures and other events rely on technology and understanding the workings of each piece of hardware and how they all connect and talk to each other carries a great responsibility. Once again our thanks go to Tony Depledge, Allan Foster and Phillip Bailey, all volunteers, for taking on this responsibility and ensuring the smooth running of each event.

Thanks to the Communications Team for its hard work and dedication.

**Pam Foster [Team Leader: Communications]**

# OUR ORGANISATION

The Society has enjoyed another successful, eventful and extremely busy year during which important changes have taken place.

We are grateful for the encouragement and support we have received throughout from our Honorary President, Hugh Ellwood, a highly regarded lecturer for The Arts Society who has lectured extensively in the UK and overseas.

The Executive Committee would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the five Team Leaders and volunteers who work tirelessly to achieve the high standard of events and other programme activities of which we are very proud and for which the Society is well known.

Although difficult to single out special successes in the reporting period for this Annual Report we think the following are **highlights**:

- Completion of the record for Church Recording
- Artwork from two students selected for RBA National Exhibition. Outstanding achievement of 11 awards since 2011
- Membership number constant with waiting list
- More members' awareness and participation/volunteering in the work of the Society
- Members' high level of satisfaction with programme activities, their organisation and communication with the Committee
- Successful succession planning for some key roles
- Securing new venue and completing successfully procedures for changing our name

Phase 1 of the **Evaluation of the Pilot** is completed and the Interim Report has been submitted to The Arts Society House. The response rate for questionnaires is exceptionally high and thank you for the time you've taken to give interesting, useful information. Phase 2 will start soon with Executive Team Members and Team Leaders and will finish at the end of April 2018.

This is my last Annual Report for The Arts Society Fylde as I step down from my role as Secretary at the AGM in February 2018. It has been both a pleasure and an honour to have worked with the Society which has grown a lot in size and stature since its inauguration in 2009. I would like to thank members, volunteers and especially my colleagues on the Committee both past and present for their support and encouragement and at times inspiration. I wish my successor and the new Committee all the best for the exciting future ahead. Thank you.

**Marion Nuttall [Secretary]**

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