



THE ARTS  
SOCIETY  
FYLDE

# In the Picture

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*Newsletter #18 / March 2019*



# Letter from our Chair

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*Tempus Fugit* – time really does seem to have flown since writing my last forward to the Newsletter back in October 2018. Many successful, informative and enjoyable activities have happened within The Arts Society Fylde (TASF) - and the festivities in December made the month fly by.



In January, your Committee picked up the reins again and set aside a full day to think through and plan the year ahead. A special year as it happens since, in October 2009, the Society held its first lecture. We will be coming up with a variety of ways in which we can mark this 10th anniversary, and acknowledge the vision and hard work of those pioneers who set up what was then known as Fylde Decorative and Fine Arts Society (FDFAS).

We are a Society that goes from strength to strength. By moving to the Lowther Pavilion for our lectures we were able to lift the limit on membership. I am delighted to say our membership in January 2019 stood at a record 266, with attendance levels at lectures exceeding 200 on occasions. We even managed to get 180 at our December lecture held at Fylde Rugby Club. Visitor numbers have also increased and we hope this is a way to spread the word about what an open and welcoming society we are.

These high levels of attendance are reflected in the many activities reported on elsewhere in the newsletter – 120 at the Christmas Lunch – sell out trips to Haworth Art Gallery/Hoghton Tower and to the Grand Theatre in Blackpool – record levels of booking for our Special Interest Day in March '19 and terrific responses to our Dresden holiday, forthcoming visit to the Heart of England and, of course, our very special cruise to the Greek Islands.

Arranging all of these activities takes imagination, time and effort, and we are lucky to have such an active and enthusiastic membership. However, we always need more help – we need members to come up with ideas for projects and events, organise them, sell the tickets, run the show or simply be there to support others who are happy to take the lead. I cannot stress enough how much we would welcome you in coming forward and getting involved. We have agreed that Committee members will be available on lecture days to circulate and chat amongst you all, with a view to encouraging your engagement. Please approach any of us if you feel you would like to play a fuller role in the Society.

Our volunteering projects are funded from the proceeds of our raffles and any other surpluses we can make from events. This means we have been able to give grants and start-up funds to a range of ideas, which included the highly successful *Breaking Through, Unknown and Unseen* exhibition, held at the Solaris Centre in Blackpool and featuring the work of artists within the local community, often in unconventional and difficult circumstances. We look forward to supporting more community projects and young people's art in the months ahead.

An excellent programme of lectures, more trips, study days and a special evening event await you in the coming months, and I look forward to welcoming you all as the days get longer and warmer.

*Pat Corless*

Chair, The Arts Society Fylde

# Dates for your diary

See our website at [theartsocietyfylde.org.uk](http://theartsocietyfylde.org.uk) for further information on all our future events



WED 6TH MAR 2019

## The Artist as a Reporter

*Jo Walton*

Looks at the work of a group of young British WW1 War Artists and considers the ways in which they recorded this new and terrifying form of war.

THU 14TH MAR 2019

## Study Day: When Cotton was King: Civic Pride and Commercial Swagger

*Two lectures on the architecture of Manchester by Brian Healey*

The first lecture, *Town Hall Triumphant*, will look at the story behind the building of the magnificent Town Hall by Alfred Waterhouse; the second, *Boom Bust and Baroque*, looks at how architects flirted with every style from Edwardian Baroque to pared-down classicism on the grandest of scales - everything spoke of wealth and confidence, especially reflected in the re-building of the great Cotton Exchange itself, reputedly the largest trading room in the world. To be held at Fylde Rugby Club.

WED 3RD APR 2019

## Breeches, Bonnets and Bags: Fashion in Art

*Rosalind Whyte*

Examines dress and accessories, and some of the more ridiculous styles of fashion from the 16th century to the 19th century.

THU 11TH - SAT 13TH APR 2019

## UK Cultural Tour: The Art & Craft of the Heart of England

A three day cultural visit to the Midlands with visits to stately homes, museums, art galleries and more.



THU 25TH APR 2019

## The Arts Society Fylde At Night event: An Artistic Infinity: the Kirkcudbright Artists Remembered Project

*Hilary Alcock*

A Scottish-themed evening, with a lecture on the bohemian artists and makers living in Kirkcudbright during the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

WED 1ST MAY 2019

## Movers and Shakers: The Women Who Built American Institutions

*Deborah Jenner*

By the 1880s women were founding associations as patrons of the arts. The lecture looks at the influences of the likes of Louise Havmeyer, Elsie de Wolfe, Jane Stanford, Abby Rockefeller, Gertrude Vanderbilt and Peggy Guggenheim.

WED 5TH JUN 2019

## From Venice to Sheffield: John Ruskin's Passion for Art, Craft & Social Justice

*Simon Seligman*

As writer, teacher, artist, collector, patron and critic, Ruskin was perhaps the most complete polymath of the 19th century. The lecture looks at his philanthropic side and the projects he created to give the working man access to beauty, art, craft and the land.



THU 13TH JUN 2019

## Study Day: Undressing Antiques and Legends of Czech Glass

*Two lectures by Mark Hill*

The first lecture will look at buying antiques, collectors and the market. The second will describe the 20th century renaissance in Czech glass design that re-established the Bohemian region's global reputation in this area. The day will also include an antiques identification and valuation session. To be held at Fylde Rugby Club.

WED 3RD JUL 2019

## The World's Most Expensive Art

*Ian Swankie*

Examines a number of wonderful paintings, including those by Picasso, Cezanne, Rembrandt, Modigliani, Klimt, Bacon and Pollock, all held together by the common thread of their extraordinary commercial value.



*Christmas at Hoghton Tower*

## Deck the halls – our December excursion

*Our Christmas outing took in the delights of both the Howarth Art Gallery and Hoghton Tower. The Howarth Gallery, located in Accrington, is the home of the largest collection of Tiffany glass outside the United States and was the gift of Joseph Briggs, a design apprentice who emigrated from Accrington at the age of 17. Briggs worked for Tiffany for over 40 years.*



*Tiffany glass exhibit at the Howarth Gallery*

After coffee and a brief welcoming introduction we were free to wander the museum as well as watch artists at work in studios housed in the lovely old stable block, which boasts attractive ironworks and a herringbone brick floor.

The Howarth is a lovely old house, set in beautiful grounds with stunning views across the moors – a real hidden gem.

Our next stop was Hoghton Tower for afternoon tea and a twilight tour of the house. An Elizabethan manor and the ancestral home of the de Hoghton family, who still live there, the house was beautifully decorated for Christmas.

Following our very substantial Christmas afternoon tea, we were taken on a guided tour of the Tower, and learnt about its rich history as it played host to kings, noblemen and writers, including Charles Dickens and maybe even Shakespeare! And as it was Christmas we heard lots about the ghosts that are said to roam the many rooms and corridors. At the end of our tour we toasted in the festivities with a glass of Prosecco in front of a roaring fire. We left for home feeling very much in the Christmas spirit.

# My Favourite Things

By Nigel Bramley-Haworth

In the second of a new series of 'Favourite Things' we asked opera lover and Committee member Nigel Bramley-Haworth to share his views on his 'favourite' opera *The Ring Cycle*.

Music is a very important part of my life. With few exceptions I like all types of music but my main interest is in the classical and, in particular, the world of opera. Within that genre my particular passion is reserved for the operas composed by Richard Wagner, especially the four that make up *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, more simply known as *The Ring Cycle*.

Playing for a total of nearly 17 hours over four separate nights these operas are not for the fainthearted, but the rewards are immense. The operas were written over a period of 30 years and were the summit of Wagner's career. He believed that opera should be all embracing, and involve all aspects of musical and theatrical presentation. Indeed, he exerted his own control over the music, direction and scenography to pursue his vision of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a word hard to translate into English but which could be described as 'total artwork'.

Strangely, he wrote the libretto for the last opera first. *Gotterdammerung* or *The Twilight of the Gods* portrays the end of the gods and their domination of the world. It had been brought about by the theft of a ring, which then carried a curse on all who possessed it. The last opera ends with the redemption of the world brought about through love.

Wagner soon realised this story needed to be explained in more detail – so much detail that he then wrote the librettos for two operas to precede *Gotterdammerung*, namely *Die Walkure* and *Siegfried*. They in turn followed a preliminary evening called *Das Rheingold*, an introduction to *The Ring Cycle*.



Brünnhilde the Valkyrie, as illustrated by Arthur Rackham (1910)

The operas tell a story of gods, dwarves, incestuous love between a brother and sister and the trials of their son Siegfried. Add to that murder, a dragon, two giants, a gang of female warriors all fathered by the chief god Wotan, one of whom is called Brunhilde and who sends the gods to their doom and gives the world redemption, and you have just your average every day opera plot!

The music is sublime and itself provides a complete narrative as the operas unfold. Wagner achieved this by the use of *leitmotifs*, musical phrases which can represent a person, an object, a thought or an emotion. These develop throughout the four operas and can often express something different to what you see or hear in the libretto. The music can be heroic, involving a vast orchestra, or be surprisingly intimate.

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So you may wonder what it is about these operas, composed by a man both loved and hated in equal measure, that casts such a spell on those who come to love *The Ring Cycle*. Wagner, by all accounts, was a monster. Egotistical, narcissistic and anti-Semitic he should be all that we hate, especially at this time. I feel the answer lies in that very description of the man. You needed an incredible sense of self-belief and own importance not only to conceive and compose these operas but also to have them performed to his exact requirements.

To listen and to watch these operas is a huge challenge but they are the Everest whose summit every major opera company in the world aspires to climb to perform them. I have travelled to Vienna and Berlin to see the full Cycle. I also saw the acclaimed

concert performances by Opera North and in 2018 attended the Royal Opera House production. This year I shall go to New York and Chicago is already pencilled in for 2020. And I am a mere Wagner Ring novice! I also love his other operas and travel regularly to see them as well.

To learn and know more about *The Ring Cycle* is addictive and if ever attending Wagner clashes with any other of my interests then Wagner wins every time! Passionate, obsessed and slightly mad? I am all of these things and very happy to be so!

*Have you got an arts-related 'Favourite Thing' you'd like to share with us? If so please contact Pam Foster (pamfos@gmail.com).*



## Interested in volunteering?

*As a Society we have a commitment to encouraging participation in the arts in the wider community and we would appreciate your help in meeting that commitment. We are seeking an organiser for*

### Trails of Discovery for Children

A children's trail at Fairhaven United Reformed Church has already been created by one of our members and has been successfully rolled out. We are now looking for someone to take it over and drive it forward. The role of the volunteer/s would be:

- To oversee and encourage ongoing participation in the existing trail
- To devise, over time, other church or town trails for children and accompanying adults, which will inspire interest in buildings, art and artefacts in the local area.

If you have an interest in helping to foster the development of an appreciation of the arts in children and young people living locally, please consider volunteering for this opportunity. Find out more about Trails of Discovery by visiting the Arts Society website: [theartssociety.org.uk](http://theartssociety.org.uk).

If you are interested in the role of Volunteer or Volunteer Organiser for Children's Trails please email: [theartssocietyfylde@gmail.com](mailto:theartssocietyfylde@gmail.com) or telephone: 07399 870179.



*Overlooking the Zwinger Palace and beyond*

# Dresden – a ‘Jewel Box’ of delights

*By Pam Foster*

*Our 2018 European cultural tour took us to the Saxony capital of Dresden. For many this was their first visit to the city and it did not disappoint. The unseasonably warm weather and our city centre hotel enabled us to take advantage of what is a very walkable city.*

Historically, Dresden was known as the ‘Jewel Box’, thanks to its magnificent buildings and art collections, largely amassed by Augustus the Strong. About 75% of the historical centre of the city was destroyed by allied firebombing in 1945 and many of the public buildings continued to remain in ruins under the East German government. Since the German reunification in the nineties, however, the city

is gradually being returned to its pre-war architectural glory, with many of its rich museum collections also restored. Palaces and churches have been rebuilt exactly as they were before the bombing. Occasional GDR buildings sit uneasily alongside this Baroque and Rococo grandeur, reminding us of the city’s recent history.

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Outside the Meissen Factory with our tour guide Cosima

Our walking tours took in many of Dresden's famous restored symbols such as the Frauenkirche, the Semper Opera House, the Zwinger Palace and the Royal Palace. We visited galleries and museums, including the Albertinum, the Old Masters Picture Gallery, and both the Historic and New Green Vaults, where we saw sumptuous jewellery and other priceless artefacts. A visit by coach to Pillnitz Castle and Gardens, a Chinese-style castle located on the River Elbe, provided an opportunity to return to Dresden by boat. Few city silhouettes are more striking and the view from the river takes in spires, towers and domes belonging to palaces, churches and stately buildings.

Music was a feature for many in our party with some enjoying an evening at the Semper Opera House, and others attending a performance of Britten's *War Requiem*, many feeling that Dresden was a fitting setting for this very moving choral work.

Our last day included a visit to Meissen for a guided tour of the Porcelain Museum, which provided an insight into the history of the factory and the historical significance of the porcelain. There was time too to explore the pretty and hilly town, with its Gothic architecture and attractive Marktplatz, before returning to Berlin airport for our journey home.

We'd been accompanied throughout by our guide Cosima, who was excellent; she dealt with issues relating to the war in a sensitive manner and provided us with a personal account of what it was like growing up as a practising catholic in the former German Democratic Republic. As with all our Arts Society Fylde excursions, this trip provided a wonderful taster of what Dresden has to offer and left many of us wanting to return to discover more.



## Call out for embroidery silks

Our Heritage Group is hoping to run an event in March, which will include a talk on *History and Traditions of Embroidery*. There will also be an opportunity for those attending to stitch small pieces around the subject of Easter. If you have any spare silks that you could donate to the group please contact Jaqueline Love ([jacqueline@lovedigitalphotography.co.uk](mailto:jacqueline@lovedigitalphotography.co.uk)) or Fiona Walmsley-Collins ([few\\_collins@hotmail.com](mailto:few_collins@hotmail.com)). Thank you.



*One of the restored ivories*

## Ivories restored as part of birthday celebrations

*By Jacqueline Love*

*In recognition of last year's 50th anniversary of our national body, The Arts Society, our own Society decided to fund the restoration of a number of the ivories from the Lytham St Annes Art Collection. The items to be restored were agreed by Heather Davis, Conservation Manager, Lancashire County Museum Service and Kunie Couch on behalf of the Society. Kunie is a Society member who researched the ivories and their condition during our 2013-2016 Tagging the Treasures project, which researched and catalogued the Lytham St Annes Art Collection.*

Originally, it was thought that the funding would cover restoring a total of six ivories so we were delighted when the conservation team announced that they were able to stretch this to 10.

All of the restored ivories are hand carved and are Japanese or Chinese in origin. Three have been identified as originating from the Meiji era (1868-1912). In the past the ivories had been

neglected and stored incorrectly, and had become discoloured. They are now restored to their former glory and correct storage procedures are in place. In addition, the Friends of the Lytham St Annes Art Collection paid for a plaque to go into the ivory cabinet in the Mayor's office at the Fylde Town Hall, in commemoration of the generosity of The Arts Society Fylde.

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*Jenny Trurin, Conservator; Kath Bowen, Head of Heritage Volunteering for The Arts Society; Caroline Collins, Mayoress of Fylde; Peter Collins, Councillor and Mayor of Fylde, Pat Corless, Chair of The Arts Society Fylde; Jo Darbyshire, former Chair of The Arts Society Fylde; and Kunie Couch, member of The Arts Society Fylde*

A special presentation event was attended by Fylde Mayor - Councillor Peter Collins, with his mayoress and wife Caroline; Karen Henshaw, JP and Mayor of St Annes; Kath Bowen, Head of Heritage Volunteering; and members of the Friends of the Lytham St Annes Art Collection, and The Arts Society Fylde. As well as viewing the restored items, guests were able to view the complete ivory collection, and learn more about its origins and how they were restored. A raffle raised money for the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, which protects elephants.

Presenting the ivories to the Fylde Mayor, Jo Darbyshire, former Chair of The Arts Society Fylde, said: "The Arts Society Fylde is delighted that we have been able to make even more progress with the restoration of the ivories in the collection than we thought possible. We hoped to restore six items but the curating team managed a total of 10. The collection is important because it is a generous gift contained in a will. It seemed such a worthwhile thing to do to celebrate 50 years of national service by The Arts Society to local and national arts, that we should support a local need to restore these precious, museum quality, ivories."



## A taste of Christmas

Our Christmas lunch was held at Fylde Rugby Club following the December lecture, which broke with tradition by being held in the morning. Members were able to relax and socialise over drinks before lunch, as well as chat to lecturer Brain Healey who joined us for our meal.

A big thank you to all those members who provided raffle prizes and to the staff at Fylde Rugby Club for a lovely lunch.

# Exhibition provides opportunities for Fylde Coast community groups

By Pam Foster

*There is a growing understanding of the impact that taking part in the arts can have on health and wellbeing. As an arts society with an interest in supporting community art, we are aware that many local support groups situated on the Fylde Coast encourage their clients to get involved with creative art as a means of recreation, help and therapy. Unfortunately, these efforts are seldom seen other than by the group itself. With these factors in mind the idea of an exhibition took off and thanks to member Tony Tackett, it came to fruition in November last year.*

The project initially got underway last summer when The Arts Society Fylde was approached by Kirkham Prison to help with its Inside Art group and especially with getting the prisoners' art on display in the wider community. Tony Tackett was so encouraged by what he saw that it was decided to expand on prisoner art and include some of the many other support groups that offer art therapy to their clients.

The Solaris Centre in Blackpool hosted the exhibition, *Breaking Through: Unknown & Unseen*, for three weeks in November. In all, four groups were involved from Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre: The Harbour mental health hospital; HMP Kirkham; Stand Together and Recover (STAR), a centre for adults living with mental illness; and the New Langdale, a day centre for adults with learning difficulties. The range and diversity of the work, and the artistic talent on show was impressive. All works had been created under unconventional or difficult

circumstances, and were moving and thought-provoking, especially as many were created by individuals with a challenging cocktail of conditions. Some were for sale and it is a testament to the talents of many of the artists that their works were snapped up.

The last word goes to organiser Tony Tackett, who said: "A major role of The Arts Society Fylde is to ensure that we are part of the fabric of the Fylde Coast community and a positive force for the wider benefit of arts at local level. We do this by networking, supporting the local voluntary and community sector, and involving ourselves in worthwhile community activities. Therefore, the Society is delighted to have played a role in organising this exhibition, and providing an opportunity for those who create art in these circumstances, to display their works and be recognised for their artistic efforts."



*Tony Tackett and Sarah Fleming, Library Manager at HMP Kirkham*



*Contributing artist with some of her exhibits*

# Finding inspiration at Yorkshire Sculpture Park

By Fiona Walmsley-Collins

A visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YPS) from the Fylde coast is always something of an adventure. There are always several things to take into account: when does the exhibition you want to see finish, what time of year is it, for the light, what is the weather going to do on the day you've allocated for the visit, and how do you tackle the various motorways on a busy day? My husband and I have a bad habit of going over on the last day of the exhibitions we want to see. One time the end of the half-term holidays, this time the last day of the festive break. Both times were worth the visit even with our habit of procrastinating. Both visits were also very busy. A plus this time, after all the greyness of the festive season weather, was a beautiful day filled with sunshine.

Several years ago, while reading the *Inflight* magazine on a flight to Madrid, we discovered the abstract painter Sean Scully, RA (Irish/English), now living in America. The article was about his exhibition in a marquee in a park in the centre of Madrid. We went along because we'd never heard of him and we both appreciate Abstract art. Not everyone's taste! For me though, nothing is more magnificent than huge sways of painted colour - think Mark Rothko or Howard Hodgkin. Sully's work is usually a series of colour blocks either horizontal, vertical or a mixture of both. His exhibition at YPS was called *Inside Outside*. As well as a collection of his recent paintings there was also a collection of his sculptures both inside the allocated gallery, one based on his father's habit of stacking the coins he'd made from his tips after work, and outside in the park. A couple of the outdoor exhibits were huge. There is something about the repetitive nature and form of Scully's work that I find soothing, the linear nature/narrative and quality of it.



Coin Stack by Sean Scully

Over the last couple of years, BBC4 have produced a series of art-related documentaries under the overall title/genre of *What do Artists do All Day?* One of the first 'artists' they followed was the English printmaker Norman Ackroyd, CBE, RA (Leeds/London). The programme followed him as he discussed a series of prints he was working on in relation to the coast of northwest Scotland and Ireland. What a great treat to see *The Furthest Lands*, an exhibition of his finished prints in the galleries at YPS. Again, here was an artist that we both had no knowledge of before the programme. His monochrome prints can only be described, by me, as beautiful. There is an ethereal quality to the coastal landscapes, birds, waves, cliffs and the sense of space in the huge dramatic settings - images that take you into that place and space. Our favourite was of the Cliffs of Moher, Galway, Ireland, where we visited in our youthful days and which surprisingly reflected the linear and sculptural stacked work of Sean Scully - Landscape meets Abstraction! What a great way to spend a sunny winter's day. Start planning your adventure to YPS asap; our last minute trip, like before, was full of really inspirational art.





**The Arts Society Fylde**  
[theartssocietyfylde.org.uk](http://theartssocietyfylde.org.uk)

A member of The Arts Society

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 and garden design. Lectures are on the first Wednesday of every month at 2pm at the Lowther Pavilion, Lowther Terrace, Lytham St Annes FY8 5QQ.

Chair: Pat Corless

Vice Chair: Nigel Bramley-Haworth

In the Picture is edited by Pam Foster. It is published twice a year in March and October. If you would like to submit an item please contact the editor at [pamfos@gmail.com](mailto:pamfos@gmail.com)

Photographs by Ged Curley, Tess Tackett and Pam Foster

Cover: 'Devotion', one of the restored ivories from the Lytham St Annes Art Collection