



THE ARTS
SOCIETY
FYLDE

In the Picture

Newsletter #24 / Spring 2022

Letter from our Chair

I am sure I can speak for all of us when I say what a pleasure and relief it was to be able to resume our 2021/22 Lecture Season live at the Lowther Theatre. For too long we had been deprived of contact with our members. Whilst seating arrangements were more relaxed, the wearing of masks was still obligatory.

Our Season got off to a cracking start when the American lecturer Charles Harris returned to talk about British Railway posters from 1923 to 1947. This was a light hearted romp through the design principles that various artists employed in creating these iconic posters. By coincidence, as I write, an outdoor exhibition of art inspired by railway posters has just opened in the grounds of Lytham Hall for this summer. This lecture was followed by a Zoom Coffee Morning two days later.

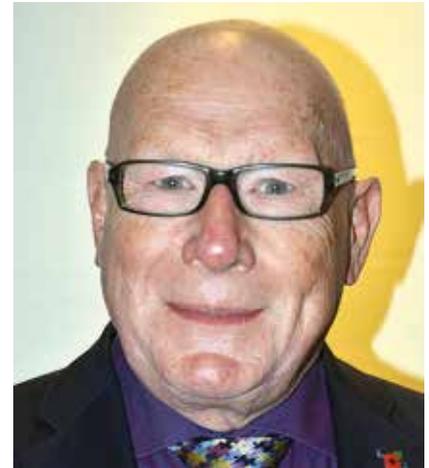
The October lecture was given by Janusz Karczewski Slovikowsk on the history and design of beds through the ages. He talked about the significance of beds in a social context as well as their design and construction, and made a welcome return to the Society. It was also at this lecture that the Society moved on with the announcement of live social activities after nearly two years.

In November Michael Howard returned to give a lecture on the disturbing story of Walter Sickert. Was Sickert Jack the Ripper or more simply the man described as the 'painter's painter'? Michael, who is President of the Arts Society

Bolton, gave a fascinating description of this celebrated painter. Again, by coincidence, there was a major exhibition of Sickert's work on display at the Walker Gallery in Liverpool at the same time.

December not only brought our annual lecture, which is usually on a festive theme, but also the first of our social events. Giles Ramsay had been with us three years ago lecturing on *Post-War British Theatre* and his subject in December was the highly topical subject of *Pantomime – A Very British Feast*. This form of theatre is uniquely British and Giles took us on an exhilarating journey through its history. Ironically, because the Lowther Christmas Pantomime had started, we had to experience this lecture by Zoom only, but this did not detract from the fun and exuberance whilst Giles told his story.

On the 9 December we had our first event, organised by Jean Holland our Events Coordinator. A trip to Barton Grange by coach took place that day and it gave some of our members not only an opportunity to do some Christmas shopping, but also to meet up with each other



once again. Later, on 15 December the Society held its first Coffee Morning, on a festive theme, at Fylde Rugby Club - both events were well supported.

There was no Lecture in January but we were able to meet again socially when the Society held a New Year's Lunch at Fairhaven Golf Club on 5 January 2022. Once again Jean Holland organised this excellent lunch, held in the beautiful surroundings of this local golf club. It was a lovely start to the New Year and enjoyed by the large number of people who attended.

Our February Lecture was delivered by Suzanne Fagence Cooper on the subject of Jane and William Morris. This lecture was unusual in that it concentrated more on the life of Jane Morris about whom far less is known. This will also be the subject of a book to be published by Suzanne this summer.

At this stage I would like to particularly thank two people. The first is Denise Malpas, our Programme Secretary, who researches and books our Lecturers. So far this season she has found lectures for us that have all been voted as 'outstanding' by the large majority of those who attended, and she is to be thanked and congratulated on the care and commitment she gives to her work for our Society. The other person who I wish to mention is Tony Depledge. He not only produces the Lecture Notes for each of our events but also has been entirely responsible for making our lectures available by Zoom. This is a big responsibility and has meant Tony has not been able to enjoy our lectures to the same extent because he has been so busy with the technical side of Zoom.

Inevitably, the Zoom presentations will cease and the Society Committee keeps this subject under constant review.

The Society Committee continues to work hard behind the scenes to bring you the lectures and the social events. As I write we look forward to another Study Day by Brian Healey which has sold out, a resumed trip to the Judges' Lodgings House in Lancaster and the Winter Gardens at Morecambe, together with another Coffee Morning before Easter. This gives us all great satisfaction and as restrictions due to Covid have just been lifted it is my sincere hope that, as a Society, we can return to normal as soon as possible with members attending our Lectures in person.

Like everyone else we have been through some very challenging times and I do thank all of our members who have continued to give us their support. I also want to thank all the members of the Committee and our group of volunteers. Last of all I also thank the staff and volunteers at the Lowther Theatre. Without their guidance and support we could never have been able to have the number of live lectures that we have been able to enjoy when we were not in lockdown.

I do hope you all have a good summer and continue to enjoy the benefits of your membership of The Arts Society Fylde.

Best wishes

Nigel Bramley-Haworth
Chair, The Arts Society Fylde

Dates for your diary

Please note that we may have to make changes to our programme. See our website at theartsocietyfylde.org.uk for the latest news on all upcoming lectures and events.



WED 4TH MAY 2022

Adolphe Valette: the Manchester Impressionist

Julia Marwood

With more than a touch of French elegance, Valette depicted modern life in wet and dirty Cottonopolis, creating a sense of timeless beauty. This lecture will explore the life and work of an artist whose fine work and inspirational teaching are finally receiving the recognition they deserve.



THUR 19TH MAY 2022

Day visit: Judges' Lodgings, Lancaster & Winter Gardens, Morecambe

Travel by coach. Guided tours at both venues, plus lunch.



WED 1ST JUN 2022

The Tiger In Asian Art

Zara Fleming

Tigers have inspired countless legends, beliefs and works of art. This lecture explores the significance of the tiger as a symbol of power and protection in its Asian homeland, illustrated by a diverse range of art and artefacts.



WED 6TH JUL 2022

Treasures of the Fan Museum

Jacob Moss

From an especially rare Elizabethan-period embroidered folding fan to contemporary examples decorated by street artists, the lecture will highlight some of the key objects within the Museum's extraordinary collections which encompass more than 5,000 fans and related objects.

WED 19TH OCT 2022

Study Day (literary theme)

Richard Burnip



Lecturer Jonathan Foyle

Behind the masks: Elizabethan enigmas

Seventy members, representing nine out of the 19 North West Arts Societies, attended *Elizabethan Enigmas*, a Study Day organised by The Arts Society North West Area, at Hoghton Tower last September. The Tower opened exclusively for the event.

The Elizabethan Age is familiar to us through fabulous portraits of Queen Elizabeth I, Shakespeare's drama and Francis Drake's bravado - but behind the mask

these are strange figures to us: static, reluctant to reveal their emotions, wrapped in symbolism and living through the consequences of a turbulent era. Dr Jonathan Foyle provided three lectures which examined what the Tudors inherited from the old medieval world, and what they created.

Dr Foyle was Chief Executive of World Monuments Fund Britain for eight years, and a Curator of

Historic Buildings at Hampton Court for as long. He has presented numerous television programmes including BBC4's *Henry VIII: Patron or Plunderer?* and BBC2's *Climbing Great Buildings*.

Following the final lecture attendees were able to tour the house and explore the gardens.

We look forward to receiving details of future events planned by The Arts Society North West Area.

Blackpool - a Marmite town

Love it or hate it, Blackpool offers more cultural experiences than might be expected, as Fiona Walmsley-Collins discovered.

A parallel can be drawn between the town of Blackpool, with its history of popular culture and bawdy visitors, with Marmite: people seem to either Love It or Hate It. It is not somewhere most people would think of as a 'high' cultural destination! Yet, following its popular culture roots, it still offers locals and visitors a choice of interesting, if not to everybody's taste, exhibitions, events and shows, some of which are surprising good.

In early September 2021, we had friends from North London to visit and stay for the weekend. Sometimes it is hard to know what to do and where to take visitors from London. They have such a huge array of choice in all things cultural, from 'high' to 'low'. On this visit I had a plan. I read that at the Grundy Art Gallery there was an exhibition entitled *Seaside Photographed*. It was a travelling exhibition, the Grundy being one of only three seaside galleries on its

tour. The exhibition was put together from photographic collections from several regional and national galleries, including Tate Modern, London.

The Grundy is one of our favourite galleries, but I did forewarn our friends that it is quite small compared to a lot of other northern towns' art galleries and museums, and that we have sometimes found its exhibitions underwhelming. I could not have been more off the mark! The exhibition of photographs was fantastic. It ranged from: early, c1860, Ferrotypes by J. Price of Ramsgate and took in along the way, amongst other great seaside photographers and their photographs, Bill Brandt's 1936 *The Brighton Bell (I'm No Angel)* published in *The English At Home*, 1936; The 1936 *Dorset Shell Guide*, compiled and written by John Nash with one of his own photographs on the cover; Lee Miller's 1937 surrealist portrait of *Eileen Agar in Brighton*; Grace

Robertson's 1954 classic *Mother's Day Off*; a selection from Enzo Ragazzini's 1970s collection entitled *the Isle of Wight Festival*, and Martin Parr's 1983-1985 series *The Last Resort, New Brighton, England*.

One of my favourite exhibits was Grace Lau's 2005 series entitled *21st Century Types*. In this series Lau juxtaposes her contemporary subjects in a formal hyper-colourful Chinese background. She transposed the early formal style of 19th century British seaside 'portraits' into a setting, which refers to her country of origin, China. These portraits were taken in her 'Chinese Portrait Studio' at the community arts facility of St Mary in the Castle, Hastings and were free to the photographed participants. The accompanying text discussed how, with the establishment of this studio, she could set out her identity as a Chinese-British artist.



Photo by Mark McNeill on Unsplash

Also amongst my favourites, being a Sandgrown'un and a fan of Modernism, were Alfred Cracknall's 1939 Blackpool Casino photographs. At the time they were taken these photographs were part of wider commission to photograph new modernist seaside buildings.

Our visitors were delighted with the Grundy gallery - the scale, size and depth of the exhibition. They could not quite believe there was no official entrance fee, the gallery asking only for donations; no queue or time sensitive entry requirements; a small number of visitors, so that the exhibits and adjoining text could be easily viewed; and even though the gallery shop is very small, in comparison to most gallery/museum shops, it had a very good collection of seaside and architectural artefacts and cards to buy. Here on our doorstep was an exceptional exhibition with photographs from some of the best known photographers of the 20th Century.



The Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool

Another event on Blackpool's cultural calendar for 2021 was the well known ceramic artist Grayson Perry's *A Show for Normal People* at the Winter Gardens. Perry was a Turner Prize winner in 2003. This was a one man show which was part of his national tour in which he discusses some of the 'BIG' issues of life. In 2008 he was ranked number 32 in *The Daily Telegraph's* list of the "100 most powerful people in British culture" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 11/11/2016). Here was a very visible contemporary artist who can transcribe 'high' art, theory and practise into a popular cultural context.

Between these two events, there was also *Ride the Lights*, *The World Fireworks Displays*, *Light pool* and the annual *Illuminations*. Are these 'high' or 'low' art or cultural events? They all appear to be democratic displays of an alternative artistic popular culture that people from all over Lancashire and beyond enjoy. I hope all might not be lost for Blackpool as a cultural experience and as my home town, if it continues to promote all forms of 'high' and 'low' art and cultural experiences in an accessible way for its locals, ex-locals and visitors alike.



Christmas shopping at Barton Grange

By Jean Holland

The sun shone for our first trip of 2021, to Barton Grange in December. The Grange looked very festive with its award winning Christmas displays, and vibrant poinsettias and other houseplants, as well as the colourful kitchen shop and toy department. Members met for lunch in the Riverside self-service or Willow restaurants, and compared shopping 'finds'. Although the coach was not full - some members finding it more convenient to drive directly from their homes and meet us there - we made a jolly crowd and all had a most enjoyable day which put us all well in the mood for Christmas.



This was our first trip since before Covid and it provided a very welcome day out for members to socialise as well as an opportunity for some Christmas shopping – in fact there was so much shopping that the driver had to open the side panels of the coach to store it!

It seems that our members aren't the only ones to appreciate the delights of Barton Grange. Since our trip it has been awarded the title of Best Destination Garden Centre in the UK for 2022 by the Garden Centre Association!

Mince pies and Christmas cheer

Following the success of our 'live' October Coffee Morning at Fylde Rugby Club, we organised another similar event for the middle of December, this time with a Christmas theme. Members enjoyed coffee and mince pies as they were entertained by our Events Coordinator Jean Holland, who recited two seasonal monologues/poems - *Sam's Christmas Pudding* by Marriott Edgar and *The Twelve Days of Turkey* by John Owen Smith.

Members have missed our Society's trips and events over the last nearly two years and all agreed it was lovely to be able to see each other again, and catch up with old friends at this special time of the year.



The Arts Society family in the North West

By Pat Corless, Chairman North West Area Support Team

Every member will know that The Arts Society Fylde is affiliated to the national organisation in London, where there is a Board of Trustees with a Chief Executive and a small team who provide a range of services to members and societies. It is a big task to support and coordinate 300+ societies and some 90,000 members, and in order to assist in this some activities are devolved to Areas. In the case of TASFylde we are one of 19 Societies who make up the North West Area.

As I was stepping down as Chairman of TASF at the end of 2020 I was approached and asked if I would be willing to take on the role of Chairman for the North West. I was honoured to be appointed to this role in March 2021 for a three year term.

Although I am called Chairman I do not have a committee as such but I do have a strong team of very experienced volunteers to work with me. All of them have worked on behalf of their own societies for many years, on local committees as well as in national roles. Our Treasurer is Treasurer of Ribble and Craven, the Secretary is Chairman of Bolton, my Vice Chairman is a member of TASCrosby and leads on events and trips for them; plus there are three former Society Chairs and experienced leads in Heritage and Arts Volunteering - together we make up The Area Support Team (AST). Our title says it all, as we are there to support our 19 Societies and the volunteers who work so hard to keep their local committees going.

I am responsible for organising periodic meetings to encourage the sharing of problems and solutions. The aim is to create networks of Chairmen and other committee members with similar roles – such as those responsible for organising the lecture programme. Training is available for newly appointed committee members and experienced officers are always willing to mentor newcomers.



Fulfilling this role has been even more of a challenge than usual because of our inability to meet in person. However, the wonders of Zoom have enabled me to keep in touch with my team and have periodic round table discussions with the 19 Society Chairmen. Some are facing financial pressures and falling membership levels; others have nowhere suitable to meet and/or have struggled with the technical skills needed to organise on-line lectures, as well as the need to get new blood onto committees to bring forward fresh ideas for events, outings and trips. There have been lots of shared difficulties but I think it is fair to say that having a strong North West network has contributed to keeping the show on the road.

I am thoroughly enjoying getting to know a set of friends through the Arts Society family in the North West – like any family we do not have to meet up all the time but it is good to know we are there to help and support when needed. The experience gained in Fylde has been invaluable and I am so pleased to continue to have the opportunity to contribute in this way.

New Year Celebration Lunch

By Jean Holland

On 6 January this year 63 of our members enjoyed a New Year lunch at Fairhaven Golf Club. The menu was extensive, with four choices for the starters and main courses and three choices for sweet, as well as tea and coffee.

As the sun was shining the views from the pleasant ground floor dining room over the golf course were stunning. We were lucky to still have the Christmas decorations in place which added to the festive atmosphere, and we were pleased to be able finally to wish one another a Happy New Year in person. A most successful event which may well be repeated next year.





The Arts Society Fylde
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: Nigel Bramley-Haworth
Vice Chair: Christina McHugh

In the Picture is edited by Pam Foster. It is published twice a year in spring and autumn. If you would like to submit an item please contact the editor at pamfos@gmail.com

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Back cover: Tiffany jewellery