



THE ARTS
SOCIETY
FYLDE

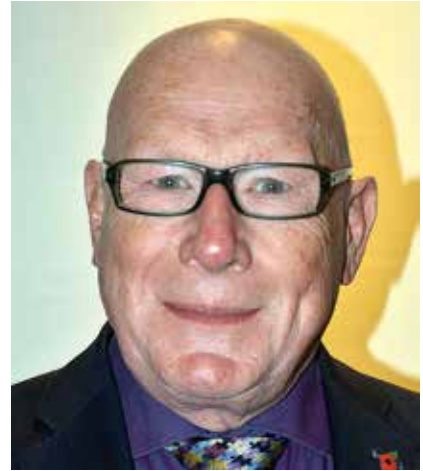


In the Picture

Newsletter #26 / Spring 2023

Letter from our Chair

Since the beginning of the current season we have enjoyed a variety of different lectures that have all been voted as either ‘outstanding’ or ‘excellent’ by those in attendance. Unfortunately, due to train strikes, two of those lectures had to be beamed live to the Lowther theatre rather than in person but on both occasions this did not detract from either the enjoyment or experience of a live lecture. Our thanks are due to the Programme Secretary for dealing with these difficult situations and to the technical staff at the Lowther, who made the live beaming possible. This could never have been achieved at our previous lecture venue.



I have been personally delighted to see an increased attendance at all of our lectures this season. Not only have we welcomed new members to the Society but also it has been a delight to see more of those members who previously felt unsafe to attend as a result of the pandemic. It is always a joy to see old friends once again.

I have been reflecting upon our Society and what it offers our members. The Arts Society Fylde is, of course, part of the national Arts Society. Your membership entitles you to receive four magazines a year filled with interesting topics relating to fine and decorative arts. You can also receive the digital *Monthly Highlights*, as well as special features now all available online. I have particularly enjoyed the mini lectures on ‘*Round the World in 80 Days*’ and both of the ‘*Artvents*’ which acted as an Advent calendar in both 2021 and 2022. In addition for those members still unsure of attending live lectures, many presentations are now available via Zoom once you have signed up with The Arts Society.

For The Arts Society Fylde your membership entitles you to attend all our lectures in our outstanding venue, the Lowther Theatre. In addition, since September, we have presented a Study Day, two Coffee mornings, a trip to Liverpool and a New Year lunch. It is hoped that in the future we will also be able to resume our holiday programme both in the UK and abroad, together with heritage and volunteering projects.

All this is available at a membership of less than £60 per year and we, as your organising Team, still feel is excellent value for money even in these difficult financial times. By comparison I belong to another organisation where it costs £240 just to attend nine meetings a year!

And so as we continue our meetings till the summer I do thank all our members for your continuing support and encouragement. I am particularly grateful to the team of people that help to make this Society function, so that we can continue to enrich people’s lives in the Fylde area by our promotion of the arts in all its forms. I send to you all my very best wishes.

Nigel Bramley-Haworth
Chair, The Arts Society Fylde

Dates for your diary

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



WED 5TH APR 2023

Risky Business: Art Dealers & Exhibitions in the Inter-war Period

Evelyn Silber

Picasso's first one man show in London was a commercial disaster though that of Matisse in the same gallery had a been a huge success. This talk abounds in incidents of outrage, hilarity and adventurous collecting.



WED 3RD MAY 2023

Love and Loss: The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice in Art and Music

Lois Oliver

Will explore the wealth of art and music on the theme, with a rich array of paintings and musical examples from Monteverdi, Gluck, and Offenbach, even taking in the Can-Can!



WED 17TH MAY 2023

Study Day

Nigel Bates

Exploring Power and Status – Imperial Chinese Court, by David Rosier. Three lectures; Fylde Rugby Club.

WED 7TH JUN 2023

Canal History and Heritage

Roger Butler

Will provide a colourful introduction to the secret world of our 2000-mile inland waterway network and will look at all aspects of their exceptional artistic, architectural and engineering vernacular.



THU 22ND JUN 2023

Day excursion to Port Sunlight & Lady Lever Art Gallery



WED 5TH JUL 2023

Discovering the Edinburgh Festival

Mark Fisher

Describes how this great cultural phenomenon came to be – and how to make sense of it when you arrive.

WHU 10TH AUG 2023

Summer Coffee Morning, Fylde Rugby Club

TAS Chief Executive visits North West Area

By Pat Corless, NW Area Chairman

Florian Schweizer, Chief Executive of The Arts Society, was the special guest at the spring meeting of the North West Area on 6 March 2023. Sixty representatives from 17 Societies in the North West welcomed the opportunity to hear from him about challenges faced and developments in hand to ensure the continued success of our organisation.

He took the opportunity to share with colleagues concerns about falling membership levels following on from the Covid pandemic. Nationally, membership has dropped to approximately 70,000. A fall of some 20% - a trend that is also reflected in membership renewals in Fylde and across the North West. Reversing this trend is a key target for The Arts Society nationally.

A 10% dropout rate has always been a feature as people move away or interests change but in the past new members have made up the shortfall and in turn have been a source of expansion for most Societies. Lockdown rather put a stop to this cycle of starters and leavers. Costs are rising to cover lecturers' fees, travelling expenses and hire charges for venues, and so sustaining membership levels and income is the key to survival for some Societies. Alongside these financial pressures, many representatives at the meeting also highlighted their concerns about their ability to replace committee members and so maintain all their varied activities. New members are a source of new committee members and such new blood is vital to keep organisations thriving and developing.



TAS Chief Executive Florian Schweizer

Florian was very upbeat about ideas and approaches for meeting these challenges. Reviewing the overhead costs of the central organisation, including disposing of the HQ office building and replacing it with more streamlined provision, is just one of the changes he announced. In the lead up to the AGM in May questionnaires are being distributed to seek views and encourage a debate about how we might do things differently (and more economically) in future. Our annual fees need to be realistic and reflect true costs. At an average membership fee equal to £5 - £6 per lecture, plus the national magazine and local newsletter, plus online content such as the *Instant Expert* and regular bulletins, it does constitute excellent value for money.

Just as new talent is needed to run our Societies (volunteers to join committees always welcome!) so too is new talent to maintain the standard and variety of our Directory of Lecturers. At the meeting three newly appointed lecturers gave short presentations of the range of topics they cover. This idea of showcasing new talent has been welcomed by Programme Secretaries, and the meeting also allowed time for programme and events organisers to share their experiences (good and bad), and inspire

one another with fresh ideas for their seasonal programmes, as well as trips, holidays and special events.

A very positive day was had by all concerned, and the contacts and networks created will continue outside the formal meetings. It was agreed that this is a great way to support colleagues new to their role and ensure that the experience of older hands is passed on.



Succession planning – can you help?

The Arts Society Fylde can only exist with a bank of willing volunteers, ranging from occasional to regular helpers. Lectures depend on volunteers collecting and entertaining the speakers, organising the raffle, meeting and greeting; others help with arranging and organising visits and tours. We are fortunate to have a group of very willing volunteers who are happy to help out on an ad hoc basis and we thank you! Other volunteers are on the committee, working largely

behind the scenes, arranging our programme, booking lecturers, researching and finding suitable venues for visits and excursions, maintaining data on our membership, looking after our accounts, etc. The future success of The Arts Society Fylde depends on new volunteers coming forward to work with this team as members 'retire' from their positions. Succession is currently a worry. Sadly, a couple of Societies have closed because they haven't been able

to get a working committee together. We need new members willing to serve on our team from November onwards. We get together once a month at Fylde Rugby Club for meetings that last no more than a couple of hours. Please do consider joining us - we're a friendly bunch, and you will get plenty of support and mentoring – and you might even have some fun!

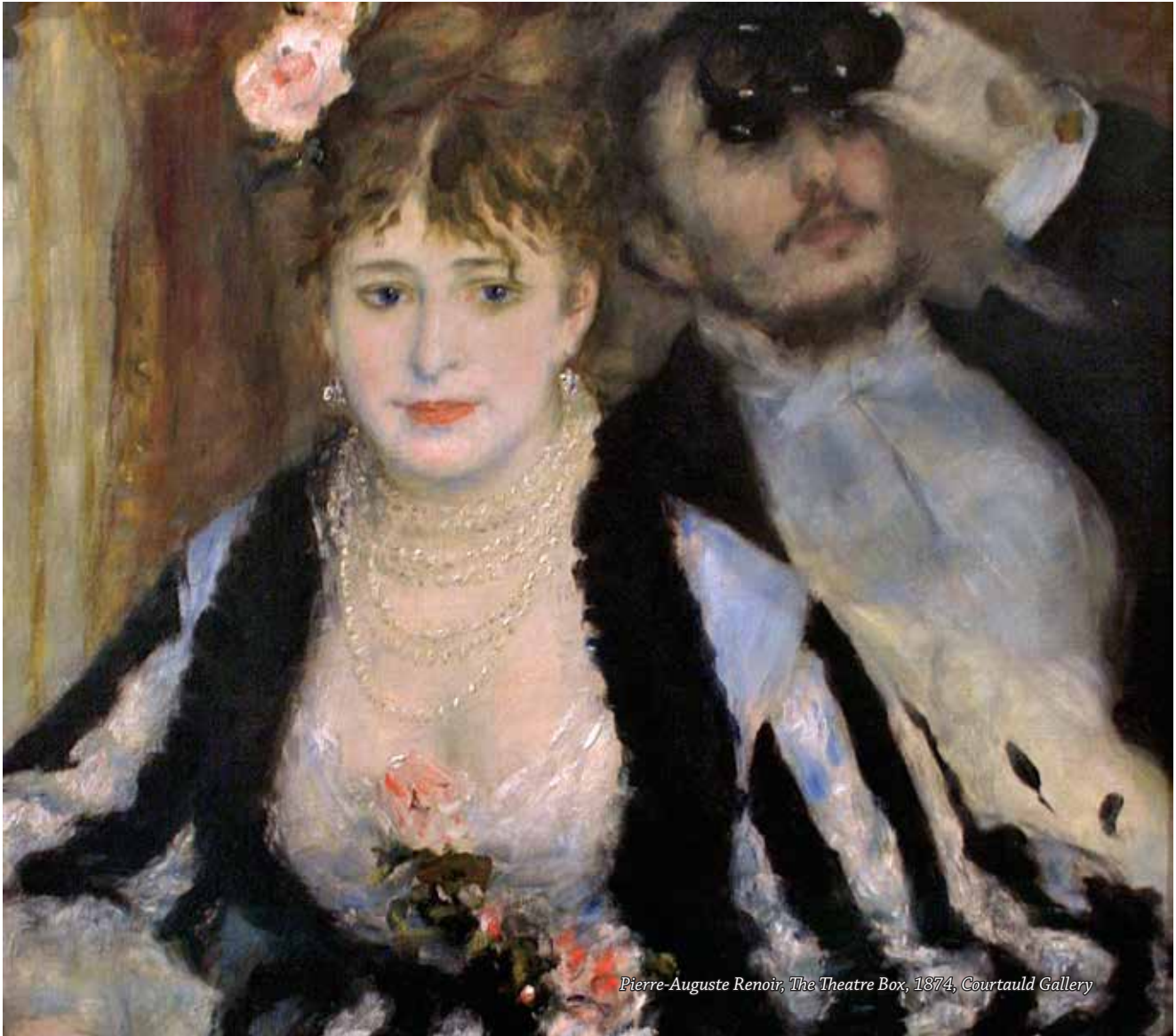


Afternoon tea at one of Liverpool's iconic hotels

By Jean Holland

The Liverpool Christmas trip last December proved to be a very enjoyable event, despite a faulty start with coach problems. The 33 seater was full, with a seat for our voluntary city guide, Angela Wylie, who gave us a very entertaining and informative guided tour of Liverpool. Some of us then enjoyed seeing the Turner Prize exhibits in the Tate Gallery amongst other things, while some explored Liverpool and others shopped in Liverpool One.

The afternoon tea was superb in the Great Hall at 30 James Street, where the Titanic plans were drawn up. We were able to go up in the lift to the top floor to see the spot where the announcement was made that the Titanic had sunk. All in all a very enjoyable trip.



Pierre-Auguste Renoir, The Theatre Box, 1874, Courtauld Gallery

A visit to the Courtauld Gallery

By Hilary Cresswell

Somerset House is a Georgian era structure situated between the Strand and Victoria Embankment; it was built to be a grand public building housing various government and public-benefit society offices. Its present tenants are a mixture of various organisations, generally centred around the arts and education, including the Courtauld Gallery. The central courtyard is a popular ice

rink during the winter months but at the time of my visit it had a large maze installed.

The Great Room on the Third Floor was the first purpose built exhibition space in the UK and the first top lit public gallery in Europe; it was used by members of the Royal Academy to deliver their popular art lectures to the general public. The RA Summer Exhibition

was held there annually from 1780 until 1837; in the first year over 200 artists exhibited and more than 60,000 people visited. The ceiling was painted to resemble the sky and a moulding known as 'The Line' went round the room at door frame height; artists competed fiercely to have their paintings displayed 'on the Line'.

The Courtauld Gallery took over the building in 1989 to display the art collection amassed by the textile industrialist Samuel Courtauld and his wife Elizabeth. They started collecting in the 1920s, at a time when modern French art was not particularly popular in this country, and it is partly their championing of Impression and Post Impressionism that changed public taste.

The collection includes works by Manet, Renoir, Degas, Monet, Pissarro, Cezanne, Van Gogh and other leading Impressionist painters. There are enough benches to be able to sit and enjoy the paintings, which since the major redevelopment that closed the gallery for three years, are beautifully displayed. Also on this floor there is a small gallery of work by the Bloomsbury group, which

has paintings by Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, etc. It was whilst enjoying these wonderful pictures that the fire alarm went off and the building had to be evacuated, very efficiently managed by the stewards. We stood outside for sometime and I tried to imagine how awful it would be if there really was a fire and the collection was destroyed. However, the Fire Brigade declared the building safe and once the stewards were back in place we were able to return.

Since the Second World War there have been other donations to the Courtauld Institute of Art, and the Second Floor has a collection of 'Old Masters' including works by Rubens, Cranach, Gainsborough, Van Dyck, Goya, Breughel, Lely, Tiepolo – a wide ranging and interesting collection.

The First Floor is dedicated to Medieval and Early Renaissance art – altar panels, diptychs, marble reliefs of the Madonna and Child, ivories, enamelled book covers. And not all the exhibits are religious, there is a very beautiful chased 14th century brass bag, inlaid with precious metal and decorated with roundels featuring musicians, horsemen and revellers. It is from Iraq and was probably worn by the ruler's wife to hold her personal belongings such as mirrors.

I hope I have given you a glimpse of the extraordinary collection of work housed in the Courtauld Gallery and maybe if you are in London you will be tempted to visit and enjoy the art works as much I did.

PS - there is a café and shops!!

Welcoming in the New Year

By Jean Holland

In early January nearly 70 members welcomed in the New Year with a very successful lunch at Fylde Rugby Club. Following a glass of wine on arrival, we enjoyed a traditional Christmas lunch in a very convivial atmosphere. It was the perfect occasion to wish each other a happy and healthy New Year.





Pub signs in miniature

By Denise Fagg

My father, Miles Arrindell, spent over 40 years painting miniature inn signs by hand as a hobby, resulting in a collection of over 500.

These were painted meticulously with enamel paints on a copper plate approximately 45 x 40mm. He also handmade the little signs themselves with metal scrolls and a wooden post of about 50mm. The signs were mounted in cases with glass fronts, also hand-made, in groups of 20, usually from one brewery.

He had worked as a brewer himself both pre- and post-war, latterly with Whitbread Brewery. Now most of these pubs and some of the breweries no longer exist.

Are you a collector or maybe like Denise you have inherited a collection. If you think our members would be interested in hearing about it please contact the editor Pam Foster at pamfos@gmail.com.



Celebrating a special birthday

Our Events Co-ordinator and previous Treasurer, Jean Holland, enjoyed a very special birthday party in March. Husband Mike organised a surprise party for Jean at the Old Links Golf Club, St Annes, where family and friends helped her celebrate her special day. A belated Happy Birthday Jean from The Arts Society Fylde!

Inspiring creativity in our local sick children

By Tess Tackett



Our Good Causes account is funded by members' contributions to raffles, etc. Some of this funding is allocated to providing arts materials for sick children in Blackpool and the Fylde.

Since 2014, on a regular basis apart from an interruption due to Covid, The Arts Society Fylde has supplied art materials to Blackpool Children's Outpatients Department, BVH and Brian House, the Children's Hospice. Neither organisation previously had any budget for such materials.

Initially, this was done on an annual basis and the materials - paper, paints and crayons - purchased from a Lancashire supplier. The materials enabled the children's play specialist at the hospital to help children and young people work through the traumatic thoughts and feelings associated with illness and hospitalisation. The children loved to create drawings and paintings, and displays of their artwork made the waiting area so much more welcoming. Brian House also greatly valued the materials for their work with sick children, and outreach work with the children's siblings.

Myself and a second volunteer were poised to take over from the original two volunteers when Covid

struck. Covid dramatically changed normal operations at both Victoria Hospital and Brian House. In the Children's Outpatients only the most urgent cases were seen in person, there was very little face-to-face contact. The children's waiting room became a very sad place. Everything had to be removed from the walls, there could be no Christmas decorations and the sensory room was closed. Resources could not be shared because of the risk of infection. The play specialist made up 'goody bags of paper and crayons' as anything used had to be taken home by the child. In the Children's Hospice all group activities were suspended and only single children were admitted. The Lancashire supplier of art materials went out of business.

Post Covid, limitations on personal contact meant changes in the methods used to provide art materials. A new provider, Baker Ross ('a fun catalogue, perfect for our children'), was sourced and both agencies individually chose

what would most benefit their group of children. They were truly delighted to be 'restocked' in 2021 after Covid and are just receiving their next batch of materials now in 2023. It is to be hoped that such provision will now continue on a regular annual basis.

The resources provided by the Art Society Fylde through Baker Ross include the traditional range of art materials such as paper, card, crayons and paint but also such items as ceramic hearts and wooden flowers for the children to personalise. Brian House report that the children love creating keepsakes, and that these can become priceless treasures for the parents and families.

From the children's play specialist, BVH for the current delivery: 'THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! I really mean this. It's such a massive help and makes the children's time at the hospital so much more positive and less stressful. Not only for the child but their caregivers too'.

The Literary London of Christie, Wodehouse and Sayers

Last October we held our first 'literary' Study Day, *Little Grey Cells & Formidable Aunts: Agatha Christie, PG Wodehouse and the Golden Age of the Short Story Magazine*, at Fylde Rugby Club. Richard Burnip gave us three lectures, accompanied by a raft of interesting photos of various London addresses that featured in many of the stories created by these authors.

The first lecture, *The Rise of the Illustrated Magazine*, looked at the history and development of several different titles, including the celebrated *Strand Magazine*, which provided an outlet for a truly outstanding array of writers, including Christie, Wodehouse and Sayers.

The second lecture brought together the two great Queens of Crime - *Agatha Christie and Dorothy L Sayers in London* – and described how Hercule Poirot and Lord Peter Wimsey found a home there, and brought the metropolis to life. Both authors chronicled the rapidly-changing London of the 1920s and '30s, writing in the same genre but in radically different ways. They also had very particular views on where their characters should live and work. The final lecture of the day, *PG Wodehouse in London*, highlighted the remarkable way in which the author borrowed the addresses of family and friends to populate Mayfair and the West End with scores of his characters, in one of the most elaborate overlapping fictional worlds ever created.

Seeing where all these well known fictional characters lived was fascinating as Richard Burnip took us on virtual walking tours of fashionable parts of London in the 1920s and '30s, while we enjoyed it from the comfort of our chair!



Welcome to our Members' Gallery

Did you know that our website includes a *Members' Gallery* where current members can display samples of their works? We're pleased that this has recently been expanded by including 12 artworks from Jeffrey Hammond. Readers may remember that Jeffrey has previously held exhibitions at the Fylde Gallery, Booths and the Heritage Centre in Lytham. Jeffrey has recently been involved in creating a Virtual Reality Gallery, designed by staff at the Blackpool School Of Art. You can enter the virtual gallery at jeffreyyhammond.co.uk.

If you would like to display your artworks/-crafts in our *Members' Gallery* then please get in touch by emailing theartssocietyfylde@gmail.com.



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

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

Front cover: Portrait of the Kangxi Emperor in Court Dress, by Anonymous Qing Dynasty Court Painter. The Palace Museum, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. (Please also see information on our upcoming Study Day Exploring Power and Status – Imperial Chinese Court, 17 May 2023, at Fylde Rugby Club)
<http://fyldefas.org.uk/study-days/upcoming-special-interest-days/2023-study-days/>