



THE ARTS
SOCIETY
FYLDE

In the Picture

Newsletter #21 / Autumn 2020

Letter from our Chair

Who would have predicted a lifestyle such as we have all been experiencing for the past six months?

When we last distributed our newsletter to you in April 2020 we talked of a trip to Morecambe in September and a Study Day in October, as well as our spring and summer lecture series. Of course, none of these events happened, but that is not to say that nothing has happened in The Arts Society Fylde throughout this time. Your Committee has been working away behind the scenes to keep your Society going and to ensure we have a thriving organisation to return to when all the pandemic issues are over.



Our Secretary, Christina, has mastered the art of Zoom and so we have had regular virtual committee meetings. Our Programme Secretary, Denise, has been in constant touch with lecturers checking their willingness to travel, rearranging schedules where necessary and debating options for streaming lectures via Zoom. Our Membership Secretary, John, has had the onerous task of processing renewals of subscriptions and having to do it all by post or email – still, I am delighted to say that, thanks to his efforts, more than 200 of you have renewed at the time of writing. Our events and tours duo, Jean and Nigel, have sadly spent much of their time cancelling events and organising refunds – with financial backup from our Treasurer Rowland, who has the unenviable responsibility of dipping into our reserves in order to keep us afloat over the coming year.

Pam, our Communications Officer, has been a star in producing a constant flow of emails and updates to our membership about the arts scene in general and TASF, in particular. My thanks to her for getting this digital version of the Newsletter prepared and her continuing role in liaising with Tony Depledge to produce our lecture leaflets online (necessary to avoid handling papers at our lectures but also saving on printing costs).

I have not just left it all to the team but have been busy myself liaising with the Lowther to consider how we might run a lecture programme whilst complying with the regulations governing theatres and social distancing. Detailed guidance has been distributed with the avowed intention of embarking on our full programme of lectures for 20/21.

Circumstances may challenge us one way and another and not all our plans will come to fruition . . . but that is not going to stop us trying!

In October 2019 we celebrated 10 years of success and growth and we are not going to see 2020 be our finale. We will be back – hopefully seeing each other in the flesh, or, if not, via Zoom – either way there will still be plenty to retain your interest over the coming months.

I hope you enjoy looking through our Newsletter and taking a peak at what other members have been up to during lockdown. I just hope our next issue will record all the ways in which we have been able to meet up throughout the coming autumn and winter months.

Best wishes

Pat Corless

Chair, The Arts Society Fylde

Dates for your diary

Please note that due to Coronavirus restrictions, 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 NOV 2020

AGM 1.30 pm

Mid 18th Century Rococo Silver, Its Social Context and Its Owners & Makers

Ralph Hoyle

Offers a journey uncovering the original owners by tracing the heraldry; shows portraits of them, and reveals some of the life story associated with them. Fabulously wealthy aristocrats and middling sorts, they got up to all sorts of exploits.



WED 2ND DEC 2020

Raphael: A Master in the Making

Sian Walters

Explores how Raphael moved from humble initial commissions to creating some of the most sublime and influential frescoes of the early 16th.

WED 20TH JAN 2021

A Winter Event TBC

WED 3RD FEB 2021

Provenance Matters: The Mass Faking of the Russian Avant Garde in the World Art Market 2000 - 2018

James Butterwick

Specialists estimate that 95% of pictures on the market are unacceptable to leading auction houses, museums or dealers. This lecture will examine the evidence for and against such painting.

WED 3RD MAR 2021

Dickens, Lawrence & Zhivago: David Lean's Art of Cinema

Neil Faulkner

In the 'golden age' of cinema, before CGI, film makers had to construct sets to represent towns, landscapes and interiors. This lecture will use the films of renowned British director David Lean to explore the art of cinema.



WED 7TH APR 2021

The Genius of Beethoven

Peter Medhurst

The lecture will explore Beethoven's genius as a writer of music against a backdrop of 19th century warfare, revolution and dramatic social changes.

WED 5TH MAY 2021

Sown & Sewn: The Gardens of Restoration England

Lucy Hughes-Hallett

Will include paintings and plans of new gardens created during the late Stuart period, as well as the exuberantly colourful hangings, cushions and bed covers created by ladies of the 17th century.

WED 2ND JUN 2021

What Did The Egyptians Ever Do For Bolton

Jaqueline Hyman

Bolton's connection to Egypt dates back to the 1860s and today the Bolton Museum houses the most important and unique collection of Egyptian textile artefacts in the UK, each with a story to tell.



WED 7TH JULY 2021

Artists & Espionage: The Lawn Road Flats NW3: Modernist Living in Mid-20th Century London

Deborah Lambert

A radical residence to the likes of well known artists, sculptors and writers, the Lawn Road Flats also housed a nest of Soviet spies including the recruiter and controller of the Cambridge Five.



Theatre and opera in lockdown

By Denise Malpass

One of the upsides of the lockdown was the availability of online performances of opera, ballet and drama, online book festivals (Hay Online was a real treat), and online performances from the National Theatre. Below, I share my thoughts with you on just three of the many events I was able to watch on my TV via 'Catch-Up' or YouTube during the long weeks of March, April, May and June.

One of the early performances transmitted by the National Theatre was their adaptation of Jane Eyre. I was particularly interested in seeing it as we'd recently read/re-read Charlotte Brontë's famous novel in our book-group. I was impressed by the way in which the National's version was able to translate all the details of the original narrative into a very contemporary piece of theatre, using music, dance and a limited cast. The staging consisted of just one large wooden, moveable structure, on different levels, which became Jane's family home, Low Wood School, Thornfield Hall, etc. as the action required.

Each member of the cast played several different parts and some of the characterisations were more successful than others. The same actress played Jane throughout but this required a leap of imagination on the part of the audience in the early stages, as the children (Jane and her cousins) were played by adults. At least one friend said she found this very

off-putting. But overall I thought it was very successful in bringing a refreshingly modern interpretation of a much adapted novel to the stage.

The second 'stand-out' performance for me was Vanessa, a rarely performed opera and new to me, streamed from Glyndebourne. Composed by Samuel Barber and first performed at the New York Met in 1958, it is an opera full of dramatic tension, underlined by Barber's highly accomplished musical language, which generates an atmosphere of increasing unease as the action unfolds. The production was visually stunning with some very clever use of video to reference themes from the dominant cultural form (film) of the 1950s period in which the opera is set. Occasionally, I felt it came too close to melodrama for my tastes but that was a minor quibble and perhaps deliberately intended in order to highlight the opera's links to gothic romance.

I was particularly interested in the fact that three women were at the centre of the opera; Vanessa, her elderly mother and Erika, Vanessa's niece. It is the relationships between the women - and the man who suddenly and unexpectedly comes into their lives - which provides the opera's dramatic tension. Anatole is a mysterious character (Vanessa's illegitimate son? - hinted at but never made clear), who disrupts the women's lives in various ways. Ultimately Vanessa leaves the other two women to begin a new life in Paris with Anatole, now her lover. All in all a classical theme (Oedipus) played in a modern opera with a fine score and high production values, as you would expect from Glyndebourne. Thanks to Nigel for recommending it to me.

Finally, another very different opera, this time from Aldeburgh - Benjamin Britten's Peter Grimes, performed on the beach in 2013 and streamed on BBC iPlayer in June. This production was a huge undertaking but the beach, with the North Sea in the background and the increasing darkness as the performance progressed through the evening, was absolutely the right setting for this epic drama. The music was pre-recorded, the singing live, and the combination of all the elements of this dramatic and tragic opera came together in an emotionally powerful performance. I have to admit, however, that being something of a wimp when it comes to discomfort I was rather glad I'd seen it from the comfort of my sofa rather than from a shingled beach in the cold and dark. Apologies if this suggests a lack of commitment to opera in all its wonderful manifestations!

Getting arty during lockdown

What did you do during those lockdown days last spring, when the weather was beautiful but we were confined to our homes and gardens? We asked our members and, as you'd expect, they got up to all sorts of creative activities, including painting, embroidery and photography, as well as knitting and sewing to help our NHS and various charities. Someone even tried extreme jigsawing!

Here are some of their stories.





Louise Frearson

I bought the fish in Grasmere at a lovely little shop which imported everything from Bali.

After I arranged them on the wall I had thought for sometime that I needed to fill the empty space below. So one morning during lockdown out came my brushes, paints and canvas, and I created this painting with similar colours to complement the fish.

It is positioned over my sink so when I look at it - so bright and colourful - it makes me feel very happy especially during those difficult times.

John Driffill

Tired of staying home? Then try extreme jigsawing. This takes the art of completing a jigsaw to an edgy level. I tried this new sport during lockdown. Not only did I have the satisfaction of completing an impressive 3-D model of Highclere Castle but it also me got out of the house. During the construction of the puzzle I managed to collapse a footstool on my hand and break a finger. A trip to A&E and three visits to the orthopaedic clinic ensued.

My finger has healed nicely but my pride is taking a little longer. Health and Safety have been informed and I am trying to retrospectively complete a risk assessment to avoid a fine!





Fiona Walmsley Collins

For the last several years I have spent some time during each year knitting for charity. This is to use up all my unused and leftover wool from the previous year's knitting projects. What I knit and for which charity depends on shout-outs from the various knitting websites I have subscribed to. It also depends on what I have got to use up in the way of wool.

My husband Michael comes from a family of female knitters. His mother was and his sisters are fabulous knitters. He can cast on and cast off but can only create one type of stitch which is knit. As long as what he is knitting is made up from a straightforward knit stitch pattern he is quite happy with a pair of knitting needles and a ball of wool.

During the months of lockdown Michael and I decided we would knit Trauma Teddies for charity. We made 20 in total. Michael knitted all the plain ones with some additional help. I knitted all the multicoloured ones. We had quite a production line going at one stage, with teddies waiting in-line to be stuffed and finished off. Each teddy was dressed with its own 'college' scarf. Ten of the teddies have been given to a social worker with a case load of families in Blackpool. The teddies are to be given to families with small children as an addition to any food parcel the family receives. The others were donated to a Police force that uses them to comfort children that have been involved in a traumatic incident.

Denise Malpass

Towards the end of the third week of lockdown, having caught up with spring cleaning, gardening and domestic chores, I began to feel in need of a project in order to preserve a degree of sanity during what was increasingly looking like more than just a short pause before normality was reinstated. Had it been autumn or winter I might have reached for the knitting wool but the spring and summer light is perfect for embroidery, so it had to be a needlework project.

Now was the time to re-engage with my interest in crewel work, an interest which began 25 years ago when I met Philippa Turnbull, who now runs The Crewel Work Company, at the *Knitting and Stitching Show* in Harrogate. She had designed and stitched the beautiful work she had on display that day and by the end of our conversation I had signed up for one of her workshops.

I became interested in the history of crewel work and marvelled at the wonderful curtains, bed hangings and bed spreads that can be seen at Gawthorpe Hall, Hardwick Hall and similar properties up and down the country. Many of these major pieces of embroidery date back to the 17th century or even earlier; they would have been stitched by the women of the household often working together on the same project. Traditionally, the embroidery is stitched onto linen using stranded wool, although silks and metal threads can also be used. Favoured motifs include small animals, insects, exotic fruit and flowers. Often the design is worked in a range of colours but sometimes the same colour - in different shades - is used throughout. Designs can be completed using a variety of stitches but sometimes the same embroidery stitch is used for the entire design (I have a piece of antique crewel work which just uses chain stitch). I prefer to use a variety of stitches and enjoy trying out new ones.

One of the great joys of Crewel embroidery is working with Appleton's wools which come in every shade of every colour imaginable, so my first task is to decide on the range of colours to be used. I like to work with a limited colour palette that complements the colours in the room where the embroidered cushion will eventually live. This time I had also to pay attention to the colours in the other crewel work cushions, stitched over the years, which would be companions to the new arrival.



Then comes the tricky bit - getting the design onto the linen. I do it by using my glassed-topped coffee table and a daylight bulb to fashion an improvised light box. This involves much kneeling on the floor (painful!) and a few choice swear words, but once the linen has been marked up and set into a frame, I can relax into the stitching process. Occasionally this goes wrong, which means a few more swear words until stitches have been unpicked and a peaceful rhythm has been regained.

The final part of the process, turning the embroidered linen into a useable cushion, is either satisfying or enraging depending on how well my sewing machine is behaving. Choosing a spare piece of silk for backing the cushion meant that the machine and I fell out several times during the course of the afternoon but I finally won the battle.

The cushion was finished but lockdown continued and I was left wondering what to do next when lo and behold the *Hay Festival* announced it was going digital this year. That was me sorted for another week!

Denise Fagge

No, I did not spend lockdown in my pyjamas!

I was part of a group sewing PPE scrubs, some of which were made from donated sheets and duvet covers. It is hard to take a full length selfie with an elderly camera, hence the look of concentration.

In between sewing I decorated the porch and spare bedroom; set quizzes for the Friends of Ansdell Library; had exploratory surgery at the Spire Hospital (very safe) for breast cancer, thankfully proving negative and am presently recovering from a skin cancer removed from my leg, followed by a skin graft. Never a dull moment!!

All this with the support of a wonderful group of friends.



Barbara Weston

I usually only paint flowers, and in recent years only get my paints out when we are on a long cruise. However, during lockdown, my daughter Philippa set me a challenge to paint her two cats, Khloe and Pheobe. I had such fun doing this and I actually did two versions of the painting of Khloe (the larger of the two cats) and Pheobe. Philippa has to my surprise framed both paintings!

I do like to paint birds. I usually copy from magazines or postcards, though sometimes create new species! The Nuthatches on the Silver Birch tree is based on Eileen Soper and is one I did before lockdown.



Jean Holland

I sewed about 34 sets of scrubs. The pieces were dropped off already cut out – eight pieces for the tops and eight pieces for the bottoms. Once finished they were picked up, ready to wear, and another half dozen or so sets were dropped off for sewing. We were given little ‘NHS heroes’ labels to sew into the sets.

I also did lots of knitting during lockdown whilst watching endless news on the telly! I completed 12 beanie hats for the homeless (on the left) and 14 little jackets and hats for the Premature Baby Unit at the Victoria Hospital, using wool I had in or have inherited from my mother and two aunts. I do still have the patterns if anyone wants them!





Christina McHugh

Photos taken during April 2020 as the lockdown bites and thoughts and images of isolation are all around.

Lytham front and beach: solitary walks along a deserted Lytham front. High tide detritus, backed up, left for weeks, in my mind starts to look like tumbleweed, a beach sculpture, a snare for abandoned chips & papers, plastic bottles, discarded face masks and blown away hats.

Thursday evening highlight: pan and spoon, I'm ready to make some noise on my street, to thank the NHS workers, accompanied by my neighbours with whistles and bells, the occasional firework and many hands clapping.

Preston docks, taken by my granddaughter: even the swans are isolating. Pontoons providing a safe haven to build a nest far from Covid-troubled humans.



Pat Corless

The last couple of weeks of our cruise was during lockdown so we were at sea the whole time. I spent the time, singing in the choir (badly) and attending art classes. Never having painted a thing since leaving school it was a revelation as to how relaxing and enjoyable dabbling with watercolours can be.

The tutor gave us paintings of his own to copy and demonstrated techniques as we went along. There's nothing original about the pieces I have shown here but a reflection of how much pleasure I got from being absorbed with the activity and enjoying the camaraderie.





Play Your Part! An insight into how The Grand Theatre, Blackpool is managing the COVID-19 challenge

Like every arts organisation across the country (and most of the world), The Grand Theatre Blackpool faces major challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic. A local charity, dedicated both to protecting and operating a beautiful heritage theatre building, whilst working extensively in the community and with schools, The Grand Theatre needs support to continue its work with young people, outdoor events, workshops, mentoring and other projects that are built round community needs across the Fylde Coast.

To help understand what is happening and how we can help this vital local resource, Society member Tony Depledge, who is also a Trustee and Vice Chairman of The Grand, spoke to Chief Executive, Ruth Eastwood on behalf of The Arts Society Fylde. Just what are the challenges? Are there any solutions in sight and how can TASF Members help?

The Arts Society Fylde (TASF) - Is the building at risk?

Ruth Eastwood (RE) - The building is not at risk; when the theatre was rescued from closure and demolition, it was wisely decided that the building and the operating side of the theatre would be split into two separate organisations. The building needs continuing maintenance, of course, but that's a much smaller challenge than keeping the theatre operating in a Covid-secure and economically viable way. We earn 91% of our income through ticket sales and our 50 or so employees are mainly involved in delivering live theatre to our loyal audiences (front of house, bars and catering, marketing, technical, etc.) and that costs about £75,000 a month just in salaries. Without income from ticket sales, or other support, we will rapidly run out of money.

TASF – So, what have been your priorities?

RE – We must try to look after our employees – they know that every theatre is looking at how to restructure to try to keep afloat until better times return – and so, in line with good industrial relations practice, we are consulting with them about next steps at a time when we have no normal work and no place of work available to us. Crucially, we have also had support from The Arts Council, Blackpool Council, and a number of other supporters and funders, all of which has given us time to work on a survival and recovery plan. To help that, we have also submitted a bid for a share of the new £1.57 billion Emergency Fund for the Arts. We also need to look after our customers and to do this we have launched our own [YouTube site](#), which is full of online activities and information for all ages. Do take a look at the short films available free online.

TASF – How much do you need?

RE – Up to about £1 million would see us through to 2022, though let's hope that we can be back in business before then! What we don't yet know is what "back in business" will look like. We've bid for £500,000 from the new fund and will hear by 5 October 2020 if we've been successful. We believe that this is a strong bid, offering community and schools' engagement, in addition to restructuring the business. Many of our employees are on furlough and, of course, this support also finishes in October. If we are successful, the new money has to be spent, as a condition of the grant, by March 2021.



TASF – What has happened to all the shows? Is anything still on sale?

RE – All our shows have either been postponed or cancelled and we have nothing programmed until 2021. There is a summary of what has happened this year and what is planned for next year on our [website](#).

We don't make our own shows. We rely for our theatre work on the producers who tour productions round the country; it is the producers who take the main risk (costs, income from ticket sales, cancellations, etc.) and, unless they are prepared to tour, we have nothing to programme. Most producers are being very careful at the moment as, without the commitment that they make to planning, designing, casting and touring a show, the future would be very bleak. Much of what we do in the community and with schools depends on the income we earn from our main theatre work, so it's essential that we have a good programme that will encourage good audience numbers to come to the theatre.

TASF – What will the future look like?

RE – Things are evolving all the time; even with funding - and like all theatres - we will need to adapt, scale down, and address what we put on and what our spaces are used for. At current social distancing restrictions, our capacity falls from about 1,000 to fewer than 200. The backstage area is small, which brings challenges for our artists.

Yet, looking outside the theatre, we'll be raising our community and schools' engagement work, both digitally and, when we are able to visit schools again, through live workshops and performances, in addition to looking at where our skills can be of value.

TASF – What other support do you have?

RE – There's a strong sense of support for The Grand Theatre: we are in regular dialogue with our MPs, with Arts Council England and with Blackpool Council. They are supporting us the best they can at a time when they, themselves, have tremendous pressure on funds. We have applied to many trusts and foundations for help. We have the support of many partners, from Esmée Fairbairn to Edge Hill University but everyone is struggling.

We have the support of many local and regional media, including regional TV news, radio stations, Blackpool Gazette, and regional magazines; VisitBlackpool, VisitLancashire and VisitFylde; UK Charity, Lancashire Magazine, Lancashire Life and LIVE Magazine. A long list of celebrity supporters has Steve Royle (our Pantomime star for 18 years) working hard to help us raise money and to keep up the profile of the theatre in the community and across our audiences. With almost everyone in the theatre on furlough, it's been tough to maintain a flow of information to our friends and supporters while at the same time processing refunds, rebooking shows to next year and dealing with bids for grants, etc when we have just six of our team not on furlough. I know that TASF Members are keen to see the theatre survive and prosper – you can be sure that the Trustees and I have the same aim behind all our work.

TASF – So, finally, Ruth – how can The Arts Society Fylde Members help?

RE – There are a couple of ways:

Have a look at what is on sale and, if you can commit to a ticket now, that would be a tremendous indication of your support for theatre as an art form and for The Grand Theatre itself.

Make a donation if you can to our [Recovery Fund - #PlayYourPart](#) or through the [Charity Aid Foundation](#) or through our [Name a Seat project](#).

If you are an Amazon customer, consider buying through [Amazon Smile](#), where you can make 'Blackpool Grand Theatre (Arts and Entertainment)' the recipient of donations from Amazon that are funded from your purchases.

Have a look at [Easyfunding](#) (sign up and search for Blackpool Grand Theatre) for purchases through M&S, John Lewis, Argos, Sainsbury's, Ocado, Tesco and others, where there is a donation reminder option.

We'll keep up the work through local, regional and national media, and with local, regional and national funding bodies. Our Twitter messages have been seen over 1.3 billion times since March. In 2019 we sold 132,000 tickets and had a turnover of £3 million. In the 12 months before we closed in March, over 22,000 local children, students and community participants saw a show or engaged in one of our creative programmes; and in the past 25 years, we have put on over 3,500 shows. TASF Members will be as keen as we are to see us back up and running.

TASF – Thank you, Ruth. Members of The Arts Society Fylde send our best wishes to you and the Theatre. Like you, we are looking forward to the return of live theatre both locally and nationally. Good luck with all the hard work!

Friends of the LSA Art Collection look to the future

By Margaret Race

The Arts Society Fylde has a close relationship with the Friends of the Lytham St Annes Art Collection and we wondered how they were faring during the pandemic, especially in view of the closure of The Fylde Gallery. Their Chair Margaret Race assures us that they are still as active as ever.

I would like to let everyone know that in spite of COVID-19 conspiring against us the Friends are still active and functioning. After a very enjoyable visit to the Conservation Studios in Preston on 22 January this year, we were forced to cancel all following events planned for 2020.

The unusual situation has not stopped us carrying on with what we are all about, ie raising awareness of the Collection and raising funds for its conservation. While Anne Matthews makes sure both our websites are up to date, Barbara Weston has been successfully posting information about the Collection on Facebook and created quite a following. There have been a few interesting things happen as a result. For example, she posted information about the Mexico Disaster, as we have an excellent lithograph depicting the sad event. Two individuals each commented on the entry saying their great, great grandfather was involved in the disaster. As each individual gave more information about their relative's name and where he lived and how he had been involved, they realised they were talking about the same lifeboat man, discovering they were thereby related and had not previously known about each other! We are gathering more information as people come forward and tell us their stories and when the wonderful Tagging the Treasures project was



The Startled Deer by Richard Ansdell

completed research continued and has done ever since. Awareness of the Collection is increasing all the time.

The Friends are also continuing to raise funds for conservation. Richard Ansdell's *The Startled Deer* is currently undergoing cleaning and repair work at the Conservation Studios. It will cost £3,900 and we have been fortunate to receive £500 of funding following a successful bid by Barbara who is also our fund-raising person. Members know our fund-raising opportunities have been curtailed recently and have responded generously by sending donations and buying cards, all of which increase our income. We are very grateful for their support.

Have you seen Ansdell in Bloom's most recent creation in the grounds of Ansdell Library? It is a life-size wicker figure of Richard Ansdell complete with paintbrush and easel! It has featured in the LSA Express and has inspired the Friends to plan an outdoor event.



While giving out a positive message and an optimistic outlook, we cannot deny it has been a huge blow losing The Fylde Gallery. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking TASF for their kind support. Pat Corless and Pam Foster were actively supportive and with member, Christine Marshall, tried to help efforts when we thought there was a chance of saving the Gallery. Unfortunately, it was discovered that any action was too late but it meant such a lot to the Friends that support was so readily given. The Arts Society Fylde and the Friends of the LSA Art Collection have been closely aligned over the years. We share many members, help each other and have worked well together as with the Tagging project. Long may it continue.



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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 spring and autumn. If you would like to submit an item please contact the editor at pamfos@gmail.com

Front cover: Simon Gudgeon, Sculpture by the Lakes, Pallington, Dorset

Back cover: Barn Owl by Simon Gudgeon, Sculpture by the Lakes, Pallington, Dorset