



Introduction

I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report for the 2022/23 season of The Arts Society Fylde.

Included within the Report are the individual contributions of the Committee members in which they outline the activities they have organised on behalf of the membership of the Society. This leaves me with the task of providing an overview for the Report.

The 2022/23 season has seen a return of a full programme of lectures and activities for the Society. Whilst we have not attained the membership level, we enjoyed prior to the pandemic there has been a slow steady increase in the number of members rejoining the Society and attending the programme of lectures. We have also seen a significant increase in the number of visitors attending the lectures which has been very encouraging and may be partially due to the extra publicity we receive as part of the Lowther programme.

Once again, we have all enjoyed an excellent programme of lectures which act as the bedrock of our activities as a member of The Arts Society. Our members have repeatedly voted them as 'outstanding' or 'excellent'. We have also enjoyed two successful Study Days which have been well supported.

In addition, we have now returned to a full programme of social activities whether they are day trips, a New Year lunch or coffee mornings. These play a very important role for our membership and are events that are greatly enjoyed by those who attend. We have tried to reintroduce a holiday for our members.

All this activity requires organisation, and I am very grateful to all the members of the Committee who give up their time and energies on behalf of the Society. I must also thank the management and volunteers at the Lowther without whom our lectures would not take place. And above all, I thank the members of The Arts Society Fylde who continue to support our lectures and social activities throughout the season.

Nigel G Bramley-Haworth Chairman – The Arts Society Fylde

Lecture Programme

Our 2022-23 season of lectures was well received by the membership with most speakers voted 'excellent' or 'outstanding'. We began with a focus on photography as an art form when Brian Stater transported us back to the 'swinging sixties' with a series of iconic images of the period, captured by the likes of David Bailey and his contemporaries.

Following the opening lecture and assuming we were back to 'live' presentations after the Covid years we looked forward to hosting Jacqueline Cockburn for her lecture on Goya....then the train strike was announced! Fortunately, the technical team at the Lowther were able to 'stream' Jacqueline and her beautifully illustrated lecture into the theatre so that we could enjoy it together

and ‘meet’ her digitally. We were then hit a second time by the rail strike in February but again the Lowther technicians stepped in and presented Jo Rhymer and her lecture on Whistler’s paintings via Zoom. We are extremely fortunate to have access to the theatre’s technical expertise as it allows us to continue with our advertised programme when travel is disrupted.

We did have to change the advertised programme in May, however, when one of our lecturer’s cancelled. Luckily, we had plenty of notice and were able to book Lois Oliver. Her lecture used a combination of music and paintings to examine the ways in which the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice has been interpreted by different artists and composers. Lois’s substitute lecture did not disappoint; in fact, I think it fair to say it was one of the season’s highlights.

It has been pleasing to see members returning to the theatre in greater numbers as we feel more confident to once again attending live events. Several members have recently stepped forward to offer their help with the lecture programme, which is much appreciated as it spreads the load and brings in fresh ideas. The extended Programme Team is now busy planning for the 2024-5 programme, so it is all hands to the pump.

Denise Malpas

Programme Secretary

Events and Trips

Our informal Coffee Mornings, with coffee/tea and pastries at Fylde Rugby Club, have gone from strength to strength this year, attended by ever increasing numbers. In September 22 we held our Heritage Coffee Morning which showcased some of our own completed Heritage projects as well as listening to a most interesting talk by our Area Heritage representative, Mair Piers Moulton. At our Easter themed Coffee Morning in March, we were entertained by Alan Ridgeway to a talk entitled ‘Growing up under the Spotlight, Age 12+’, giving us a glimpse of the ups and downs of a child actor working with many renowned professional members of the theatre. At our August Coffee Morning several committee members and volunteers gave a brief description of their roles in the Society and what they involved. We also took this opportunity to introduce idea slips on the tables for members’ suggestions for future lectures, Study Days, trips/events, and heritage or community projects. This has proved a very useful exercise for future planning.

Our two study days this year, both held at Fylde Rugby Club with excellent lunches, have also proved to be very successful. Last October we were transported to the golden age of the short story magazine, and the London of Agatha Christie, Dorothy L Sayers and PG Wodehouse by Richard Burnip in his Study Day entitled ‘Little Grey Cells and Formidable Aunts’. Somewhat of a departure from the norm, this literary subject proved to be very popular.

In May we explored ‘Power and Status in the Imperial Chinese Court’ with David Rossiter, which gave us an insight into ‘power dressing’ in ancient China. We were privileged to view David’s stunning collection of embroidered roundels, which he brought and kindly displayed for us.

Our Christmas trip this year was a day trip on a coach to Liverpool where members had the option of several museums and galleries to visit, or to Christmas shop if they preferred. We enjoyed an excellent afternoon tea at 30 St James’s Street, with its historic connections with the Titanic, some of us went up to the balcony from which the sinking was announced.

Having been postponed once and cancelled once, we were finally able to enjoy our day out in June by coach to The Lady Lever Gallery, where we were fortunate to catch the Flower Fairy exhibition of paintings by Cicely Mary Barker, and Port Sunlight where we visited the award-winning Museum, the Workers' Cottage, and the Soap Works.

Looking back on another full, well supported year, I feel we are in a strong position to forge ahead with our new Events Team to the coming season full of enthusiasm for many more interesting events.

Jean Holland **Events Co-ordinator.**

Membership

Membership recruitment continues to prove problematic since the pandemic, however in comparison with many other Arts Societies, The Arts Society Fylde continues to flourish.

If somewhat hectic, many members renewed their membership at the July lecture. We have a variety of payment methods; cheques, cash, card payments, which are proving very popular, and bank transfers. Donations via Gift Aid has increased considerably this year, the Committee are most grateful as this certainly bolsters the Society's funds.

Coffee morning provide the Committee with a very useful opportunity to maintain links with members. Hopefully members find it a convivial way of keeping in touch with their Art Society friends.

The Lowther continues to provide an excellent venue for the monthly lectures given it is spacious, well -appointed and has easy access to the coffee shop. At this point I give thanks to Rita Calvert for her continued organization of those who meet and greet members as well as visitors on lecture days. Furthermore, I thank Rita for all the other organizing she does so seemingly effortlessly to enable the monthly meetings to run smoothly. Notwithstanding her flower arrangements and the assistance she provides at the various events held at Fylde Rugby Club.

A further thanks to all members who have indicated through their renewal forms a willingness to assist with a variety of tasks on lecture days, study days trips and visits. A thank you also goes to Christine Cockburn who so ably runs the raffle and provides the beautiful books etc for prizes. Membership should be aware the raffle money does not go into the Arts Society coffers, but is used to provide paint, papers etc for the Children's Ward at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and Brian House Children's Hospice.

The Committee remains committed to recruiting more members. We are very aware that the Fylde covers quite a diverse demographic and are mindful there is a dearth of members from areas such as Poulton Le Fylde, Blackpool, Cleveleys, and Fleetwood. If any member has thoughts as to how the Society can actively encourage people from the above-mentioned areas joining us, please contact me.

Finally, we hope members enjoy the 23/4 season and with your help and assistance we can grow our membership base from across the Fylde and its surrounding area.

Lesley Peabody Brewer **Membership Secretary**

Communications

Traffic to our website has increased this year as members have got used to following the links, we send out to them in our emails. Others seem happy to navigate their own independent way through the site. Could it be that the restrictions of the pandemic was a catalyst, forcing reluctant online users to venture onto the site and gain confidence in using it? It's certainly encouraging to see this increase in usage.

Emails, via the Mailchimp service, are still our primary method of communicating with members. We are aware that some haven't or do not wish to provide an email address, and in some cases, we have to resort to phoning this small group of members. Usage of our social media accounts on Facebook and X (previously Twitter) continue to grow slowly and, while usage remains relatively low among members, both platforms provide an opportunity to reach possible members of the future. Investigating other platforms, such as Instagram, WhatsApp, etc, have yet to be explored. We have returned to our pre-Covid policy of advertising the Society via free services such as the Local List, etc. The Lowther continues to advertise all our forthcoming lectures on its website.

To save costs, we have continued with our strategy of cutting printing down to a minimum. All the lecture notes leaflets are made available on our website a few days before the lecture – an email sent out a couple of days prior to the lecture provides a direct link to the leaflet. All booking forms for events and excursions are also made available on the website, enabling us to cut back on the numbers printed. Our biannual newsletter, *In The Picture*, is also sent out to members in an electronic format.

Thanks to those members who have submitted items for this year's newsletters; we know that members enjoy reading items created by other members, whether they are about a specific interest, an exhibition visited, a personal collection, etc. Thanks also to Tony Depledge for compiling the monthly lecture notes leaflets; Simon Foster for his help in the design of the newsletters. Also, a huge thank you to Fiona Walmsley Collins for her help in creating our archive. Fiona is stepping down this year and Hilary Cresswell has taken on the task of archivist.

Pam Foster Communications Officer

The Executive Committee 2022-2023

Chair	Nigel Bramley- Haworth
Treasurer	Christina McHugh
Minutes Secretary	Hilary Cresswell
Membership Secretary	Lesley Peabody Brewer
Programme Secretary	Denise Malpas
Communications Officer	Pam Foster
Events Co-ordinator	Jean Holland
Elaine Wolstencroft	(co-opted 2023)
Tony Berwick	(co-opted 2023)
Tony Depledge	(co-opted 2023)

THE ARTS SOCIETY FYLDE
FINANCIAL REPORT YEAR ENDING 31.07.23

Balance b/f	01.08.22	3729.00
Subscriptions		10460.00
Joining Fees		90.00
Visitors Fees		651.00
TAS NW Fee		143.50
Transfer from Deposit		335.24
Events & Study Days		9796.50
prepaid printing		40.00
Misc		3.32
<u>TOTAL RECEIPTS</u>	£	25248.56

PAYMENTS

Lecture Fees		3427.20
Lecturers Expenses		471.73
TAS Affiliation Fee		3349.75
Zettle fees		104.87
NW Area Fee		314.00
Hire of Lowther		4104.00
Website		102.30
Storage		669.63
Committee Meet-ings		311.25
Printing/		675.30
Stationary & Postage		52.32
Transfer to GC Raffle		30.50
Events Costs		8625.35
Floats		40.00
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£	22278.20
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	31.07.23	<u>2970.36</u>
cash - Floats	£	40.00

<u>ALL FUNDS</u>	<u>31.07.23</u>
General Account	9743.68
Good Causes Account	511.32
Deposit Account	5026.75

Fixed Term Account		10000.00
Totals	£	<u>25281.75</u>

Raffle income is paid into the Good Causes Account. This year £279 from this account paid for art supplies for Brian House Children's Hospice and the Children's ward at Blackpool Victoria Hospital.

Income deposited in the Patricia Fay Fund was transferred to a fixed-term Savings account.

The receipts, payments and bank statements were examined by The Society's Financial Examiner, Mr. Hugh Ellwood and found to be in order.

Christina McHugh Treasurer.

***The Arts Society Fylde is affiliated to The Arts Society
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