



THE ARTS  
SOCIETY  
FYLDE



# In the Picture

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*Newsletter #29 / Autumn 2024*

# Letter from our Vice Chair

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This is my first introduction to The Arts Society Fylde Newsletter, and as I work out how long I have been in the role of Vice Chair I find it has been seven months since I chaired my first Arts Society Fylde Committee Meeting – how time flies!

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Committee for such a warm welcome and also for their help. It has been invaluable in supporting me to get to grips with the role. I would also like to thank previous Chairs, Pat Corless and Nigel Bramley-Howarth, for their encouragement and guidance over the months. I'm sure I will continue to draw upon their expertise and assistance.

I have very much enjoyed the challenge, and at times it has been a baptism of fire getting to grips with understanding and dealing with the proposed changes to the governance arrangements at The Arts Society Head Office. Those that have followed this will know that it has now reached its conclusion.

The Committee has worked so hard over the last year and have ensured our Society has continued to function as it should without either a Vice Chair or Chair. A huge thank you for their dedication and expertise.

The events and lectures over the last year have been very thought provoking and interesting. There was a fantastic Study Day last November, when Brian Healey highlighted the art, architecture and music of Scandinavia. This was very well received by all who attended. There has been a wide and varied selection of lectures over the 2023/24 season, covering amazing subjects such as: the Duchess of Devonshire, the life and films of Alfred Hitchcock, the wonderful life of Grace Darling, food as it appears in art, the Court at Versailles and how magic is depicted in art. The feedback from members has been extremely positive for all lectures.

We have an interesting and stimulating programme of lectures planned for the 2024/25 season, and the Committee and I look forward to welcoming you and your families and friends at each one. We are always trying to increase membership and would encourage you all to spread the word about our lectures and events to anyone who has an interest in the arts, in its widest definition, to come along and join us – word of mouth is always the best form of advertising!

This year has been a special year for The Arts Society Fylde, as we have celebrated our 15th Year Anniversary. You will have seen the lovely bookmarks put together to acknowledge this anniversary. We are hoping to hold a special coffee morning early next year to recognise our anniversary and celebrate the last 15 years. I am so pleased to announce that Hilary Alcock will be there; Hilary was the founder and inaugural Chair of the Society and has agreed to give a talk about how the Society started.

I must also thank the wonderful volunteers who support the Society. Of course, there is the Committee but also many of you undertake a variety of volunteer roles. We held a very enjoyable afternoon cream tea 'thank you' event for the volunteers, at the Glendower Hotel in July. We would encourage any of you to join the band of volunteers and get involved with like-minded people to further the Arts across the Fylde.

*Sarah Clayden*

Vice Chair, The Arts Society Fylde



# Dates for your diary

Please note that we sometimes have to make changes to our programme. Please see our website at [www.theartsocietyfylde.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietyfylde.org.uk) for the latest news on all upcoming lectures and events.

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WED 2ND OCT 2024

## Gustav Holst, The Planets and Beyond

*Roger Askew*

This lecture is in celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the birth in 1874 of Gustav Holst; it will examine Holst's life, the background to *The Planets* and will explore many of his other works.



WED 6TH NOV 2024  
(AGM at 1.00 pm)

## Banksy – Fraud or Genius?

*Pepe Martinez*

Will trace the story of Banksy's humble beginnings as a tagger on the streets of Bristol to one of the most recognisable names in the art world. The lecture will examine the reasons behind his incredible rise and discuss what his influence has been on the art market today, and look at what his legacy, if any, might be.

WED 27TH NOV 2024

## Study Day at Fylde Rugby Club: Vanessa Bell's Art and Her Tangled Bloomsbury Group Relationships

*Ray Warburton*

The day will comprise two lectures; the first will trace her early years, and end with the impact of WW1 on the Bloomsbury Group and her move to Charleston in 1916. The second lecture will trace her mature years, and the fate of the leading Bloomsbury Group members, including her sister and son.

WED 8TH JAN 2025

## New Year Lunch at Fairhaven Golf Club



WED 5TH FEB 2025

## A Concise History of Our Great British Parks

*Paul Rabbitts*

Will offer a fascinating insight into the history of one of our greatest ever institutions – our Great British Public Park. The lecture will illustrate their origins from the great Royal Parks to the Pleasure Gardens of the 18th century, to their Victorian heyday. It will examine what made a great park, and look at their decline and subsequent revival.



WED 12TH MAR 2025

## The People & Portraits of Stanley Spencer's Final Years

*Amy Lim*

Although less well known than his imaginative paintings, portraiture was also an important part of Spencer's artistic practice, especially in his final decade, when he was in high demand as a commercial portrait painter. This lecture will explore Spencer's views on portraiture, and the role it played in his life and work.



# RHS does urban in Central Manchester

The RHS's first ever large scale urban show was held in Central Manchester in April this year. Forget large, lush Chelsea Flower Show-type showpieces or the beautiful parkland setting of Tatton Park, this exhibition was distinctively focused on urban gardening, sustainability, and greening up small spaces, making it particularly relevant for city dwellers and those with limited outdoor areas.

It was held at Depot Mayfield, which was originally built in 1910 as a railway yard for Mayfield station, and used by the Royal Mail as a distribution centre until the 1980s. The site lay dormant for almost 30 years until its recent development. With a 10,000 people capacity it now functions as a huge venue for cultural events, exhibitions, conferences, etc. Its raw urban feel and industrial charm provided the perfect setting for vibrant plant displays and installations.

The show featured creative ideas for small gardens, balconies, rooftops, and other limited spaces, highlighting the potential of container gardening, vertical gardens, and low-maintenance plantings that thrive in city environments. The emphasis was on sustainable practices, such as water conservation, biodiversity, and using recycled materials. There were lots of small space gardens to see, talks from experts, and lots of advice on growing houseplants. Visitors could stroll through an urban forest and immerse themselves in the soundscape comprising birdsong, traffic noises and other urban sounds.

This was a show that aimed to inspire urban-dwellers and make gardening accessible to everyone.



# Bharti Kher exhibition: a strong voice for feminism

By Pam Foster

*It's always a treat to visit Yorkshire Sculpture Park – as well as the familiar Moores, Hepworths, Frinks and other well known works, there's usually a couple of exhibitions by lesser known artists, and the opportunity to discover something new - as it was in August when our visit coincided with The Alchemists, a notable exhibition by the British-Indian artist Bharti Kher.*

Bharti Kher's sculptures represent the female body and women's place in society. She uses a mix of materials to explore issues such as identity, mythology, and feminism. Out in the open were large sculptures constructed of bronze, fibreglass and recycled items. These hybrid sculptures often merge the human form with animal and mythological elements. *Ancestor*, a very large bronze sculpture, depicts a mother figure adorned with the heads of her 23 children that extend from her body.



Inside the exhibition hall, smaller works use materials such as felt bindis (the decorative forehead dot in South Asian culture), which she uses as a medium to address issues of gender, tradition, and cultural identity. One of the most moving pieces was *Six Women*, which comprises life-size casts of older women, who were previously sex workers and have traditionally been marginalised in society. There's both a strength and vulnerability about these women. Kher says that the work is a tribute to the resilience and lived experiences of older women, challenging ageism and societal perceptions of ageing.

Many of Kher's works are mysterious and sometimes shocking but all are thought-provoking. The exhibition runs until 27 April 2025.



# Windmill Land: creating fabric art

By Mike Bullock

*Member Mike Bullock describes how he used paint, colour, and stitching to create a fabric painting of the Fylde's windmills.*

As a child I used to visit my grandmother Janet Bullock, a sand grown'un, who was born, grew up, and lived most of her life in Blackpool with the exception of a few years spent in Manchester. I would stay with her during the school holidays and she would tell me the stories about the old mills on the Fylde. She had known the writer Allen Clarke who had given her copies of his books, 'Windmill Land' and 'More Windmill Land'. I read these as a youngster and was fascinated by the tales of his travels around the Fylde and especially with the old photos of the mills.

We are lucky to have so many mills in existence although some such as Weeton and Singleton were demolished long ago, but most are still standing albeit with modern adaptations.

It was against this background that I decided to create a piece of fabric art in the form of 12 panels each of which showed a different windmill. I have worked for a while as watercolour artist painting line and wash sketches, and pictures of buildings and landscapes. Then about five years ago I was in the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester where I had my first experience of seeing textile art. I was blown away by the possibilities and started to explore what could be done working with paint, colour, and stitching, to create fabric painting.







## Kirkham Windmill

Kirkham windmill has existed since the 1300 and the old wooden mills were replaced many times over. In 1784 a new brick mill was built but ran into problems some years later when a local resident built a new house nearby that cut off the wind. It fell out of use by 1865 and became derelict with only the hollow tower remaining. In 1970 it was restored and converted into a house and remains so to the present day.

The historical watercolour shown below has employed some artistic licence as you can't actually see St. Michael's Church from that viewpoint but I liked the idea and incorporated it into my painting of the scene.



Historic research & watercolour of Kirkham Windmill. Mike Bullock ©



Completed panel of Kirkham Windmill. Mike Bullock ©



Completed panel of Treales Windmill. Mike Bullock ©

So, the idea of the paintings began to emerge. I decided that I wanted to create images of the windmills as they would have been if they had survived into modern times complete with their sails intact. I visited all the sites and made preliminary sketches, and took reference photos. Where the mills no longer existed, I used old photographs as source material and placed them in their current settings.

Having sourced the artistic material, I sketched preliminary views in my sketch books to produce a series of first interpretive sketches. These were followed up with 12" by 12" watercolour paintings that served as both the design for each panel and a master for the tracing of the cutting templates for the appliqué work. Each panel was then created through a process of cutting and applying appliqué pieces to a foundation, freeform black thread embroidery, and then painting the panel with a mixture of watercolour paints, acrylics, fabric paints, and stabilising them with fabric medium.

It has given me a great deal of pleasure to produce the paintings and I hope that its story will give you pleasure as well.



*Heritage project volunteers at Lytham Hall*

## Recording artefacts at Lytham Hall: our latest heritage project

*By Hilary Cresswell*

About 12 months ago The Arts Society Fylde Committee decided it would be good to start a heritage project as it is some years since our last project. After some discussion, Lytham Hall were approached and they felt there was a requirement where our help would be welcome. They required a list of all the items in the Hall – a daunting task! It was explained that the volunteers would not necessarily have any expert knowledge but the Archivist and Manager felt this would not be a problem. So we appealed for any interested volunteers and got together a team to start work at the beginning of April 2024.

People organised themselves, mostly in pairs, and chose a room to work in. They then complete a form provided by the Hall to describe the item – colour, materials, decoration, size, any distinguishing marks etc; the item is then photographed (using an iPhone – no professional photography). Each artefact is given a unique number based on location. The information is passed to the Hall's archiving section who enter the details onto their database.





*Artefacts at Lytham Hall*

Comments from some of our current volunteers:

“It’s been great to take part in the project, so much more than just cataloguing. It is interesting to learn the history of the Hall and to have an insight into the people who lived there and to look at the artefacts that were part of their daily lives. Makes the past come alive.”

“An opportunity has arisen to assist in logging all the items, furniture, paintings, ornaments, etc located in Lytham Hall. This project is not only interesting but informative for all the volunteers involved. Recording items provides a hands-on opportunity to study artefacts and other items more fully than one would normally do.”

“I joined the team recording the artefacts at Lytham Hall because I have always liked visiting historic houses and sites, and seeing the way people used to live. When at Lytham Hall I am able to learn more about the furniture and objects, and even handle them when it is necessary to make a full description. I thoroughly enjoy my Thursday mornings at Lytham Hall especially as I know we are making a contribution towards the life of the house.”

“I am one of a number of enthusiastic volunteers tasked with recording the many valuable and not so valuable items that provide a backdrop to the Hall’s intriguing history. In such a beautiful setting I enjoy being part of a team, doing something useful and developing my understanding of antiques and local history.”

“My impressions of Lytham Hall, since starting as a volunteer, is that it is a treasure trove of Clifton family furniture, paintings, photographs, and objets d’art. The whole effect is a delightful and accessible family home. It is an interesting project, being part of a group we exchange knowledge, ideas and share research. And we are learning some of the fascinating history of the Hall and the Clifton family.”

“When I first enrolled as volunteer archivist I didn’t know what to expect but it sounded interesting. It is a privilege to work in such beautiful surroundings. Everybody at the Hall is really grateful we are doing the work, even if our descriptions may not use ‘antique terms’, thank goodness for photographic evidence! I have enjoyed making friends with other volunteers. One drawback is walking through the Garden Hub every week, I have to keep tight hold of my credit card.”

If you are interested you are welcome to join us on a Thursday morning, 10-12 at the Hall – come for a sample session to see what it involves, just let me know so I can be there to meet you. There is no commitment to be there every week and no time limit on how long we take on this project.

[hilarycresswell3@gmail.com](mailto:hilarycresswell3@gmail.com)

# Potfest in the Park – a festival of ceramics

The annual ceramic festival, *Potfest in the Park*, is held in July at Hutton-in-the-Forest, near Penrith. This year it featured about 90 selected artists from the UK, Europe, and beyond, showcasing their work and offering pieces for sale. Exhibits are displayed in marquees set against the backdrop of the historic and beautiful Hutton-in-the-Forest estate.

Visitors cannot help but be struck by the diverse range of ceramics on show, ranging from functional pottery to more sculptural pieces. There was such a wide variety of styles, techniques, and forms on show, including pieces from the potters' competition, with this year's theme being "Hybrid – a mixture of two different things, resulting in something that has a little bit of both". A few of these unconventional pieces were interactive, with some being rather disturbing, but all equally fascinating.



*Potfest* is well worth a visit – as well as showcasing hundreds of some very tempting beautiful and attractive pieces, the whole event is all very relaxed – offering ample parking, plenty of food outlets, lots of inviting tables and chairs for picnics – and all set against the picturesque backdrop of Hutton-in-the-Forest historic country house and its stunning gardens. It offers a great setting for a day out, combining art with nature.





# Surreal times in Figueres

By Pam Foster

The Dalí Theatre-Museum in Figueres is a tribute to the surrealist genius of Salvador Dalí. Situated in the artist's hometown, it offers an insight into the mind of one of the 20th century's most iconic surrealist artists. We last visited in the nineties when one of our children was studying Dalí as part of an 'A' level Art project. It had left a lasting impression on all of the family, so we were looking forward to exploring it again – it did not disappoint.

The museum itself is a work of art, designed by Dalí and incorporating his unique vision. According to the Museum's blurb, 'Everything in it was conceived and designed by the artist in order to offer visitors a real experience of delving into his captivating and unique world'. The building, formerly a municipal theatre, stands out with its distinctive facade adorned with giant eggs and golden statues. An iconic glass geodesic dome crowns the structure – another example of Dalí's flamboyant creativity. The inside provides an extensive collection of Dalí's works, spanning his entire career. The exhibits include paintings, sculptures, 3D installations, holographs and jewels. The layout is labyrinthine, offering a series of different rooms, encouraging you to explore and discover the wide range of different works. It was Dalí's wish to be buried here after his death and his crypt forms part of the museum. The Dalí Theatre-Museum offers a journey through surrealism and is a celebration of Dalí's extraordinary legacy. A visit promises to be both enlightening and unforgettable.





**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 the month at 2pm at the Lowther Pavilion, Lowther Terrace, Lytham St Annes FY8 5QQ.

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](mailto:pamfos@gmail.com).

Front cover: Watercolour of Kirkham Windmill, by Mike Bullock ©