

The Arts Society Fylde

Annual Report 2023-2024



Introduction

I have the pleasure of introducing the Annual Report for the 2023/24 season of The Arts Society Fylde.

The other members of the Committee have included an outline of the activities that they have been involved with on behalf of the Society as part of this Report.

It has been another busy year for the Society with a full programme of lectures and social events taking place across the year. Membership numbers have seen a small growth, and we would like to see this expand further over the year. The number of visitors has continued to rise, and we are sure that this is due, in part, to the increased publicity that is provided by the Lowther.

The lecture programme this year has, yet again, been excellent and all have been well received with members voting them as ‘Outstanding’ or ‘Excellent’. There was a well-attended Study Day, which highlighted the art, architecture and music of Scandinavia. This was very well received by all who attended.

Our social events play an important part of the Arts Society Annual Calendar with coffee mornings, New Year Lunch and day trips being arranged. Our members value these times to get together, socialise and share in each other’s company.

The fact that the Arts Society Fylde remains a flourishing organisation is down to the commitment of the hard-working Committee members to whom I am very grateful. As volunteers they give up their time and energies to ensure the Society remains successful. There are also all the volunteers who without their support at lectures and social events the Society would not be able to function.

I must also thank the management and volunteers at the Lowther; without their hard work we would not be able to hold our lecture programme. The final thank you goes to all the members of The Arts Society Fylde who continue to support the lectures and social events throughout the year – Thank you!

Sarah Clayden **Vice-Chairman**

Lecture Programme

Our 2023/24 programme was very varied, covered many different aspects of the Arts..

The programme began in September with a lecture by our President, Hugh Ellwood, on ‘*The Golden Age of British Watercolour*’. In March, we were fortunate to have booked James Taylor, who talked about ‘*Grace Darling and the Fine Art of Saving Lives at Sea*’. This coincided with the bicentennial celebrations of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. We invited members of our local lifeboat station to attend this lecture which was well received by the lifeboat volunteers.

One highlight of the year was a lecture which was voted outstanding by many of our members. This was Simon Seligman's '*Debo – Mitford, Cavendish, Devonshire Duchess, Housewife, 1920-2014*'. He was extremely knowledgeable about his subject and an excellent speaker. We were all captivated by his in-depth exposition and experience of working with 'Debo'.

Our visit by Rupert Dickens in May was very appropriate; he spoke about '*Political Satire: Hogarth at the Hustings*' and with the General Election approaching, this was a superb introduction to the hustings and the political machinations involved.

Unfortunately, we were unable to see two of our Lecturers in person this year but thanks to the technical team at the Lowther, we were able to enjoy the lectures via the medium of the internet. Colin Shindler was unable to travel due to a train strike, but using Zoom gave us an excellent and entertaining talk on the '*Curious Life and Films of Alfred Hitchcock*'. We had to rely on technology again in June, when due to an incident on the railway, our speaker Jane Gardiner was unable to attend and delivered, her lecture, '*The Sun King and the Court of Versailles*' via Zoom.

Our season ended on a very different but entertaining note when we listened to, and watched Ian Keable, who performed simple tricks and enthralled us with the '*Art of Trickery: How Magicians are seen in Paintings, Prints and Cartoons*'.

I attended Directory Day in London during March, along with a member of the Programme Team, where we were able to hear and meet many of the approved lecturers on the Arts Society list. This was an excellent day and enabled us to select lecturers for our forthcoming programme.

We must thank everyone at Lowther Pavilion for welcoming us throughout the year, with special thanks to the technical team, who enabled us to enjoy our talks when our Lecturers could not be with us in person.

It has been pleasing to see so many members at our meetings and we have also welcomed many visitors throughout the year.

The Programme Team have been very busy selecting speakers for our 2025/26 season, and I am grateful for their support as they bring fresh ideas to our programme.

Anne Gaskell **Programme Secretary**

Events and Trips

The November Study Day, *Masters of the North*, held at the Fylde Rugby Club was very successful. Brian Healey's three lectures showed us that despite the constant battle to survive in the harshest of landscapes, the Masters of the North found endless inspiration in the wonders of nature, the ancient myths and the complexities of human relationships.

The Christmas Coffee Morning, with mince pies and pastries, was held in early December at the Fylde Rugby Club on a very cold and frosty morning. To the committee's surprise a record number of members and friends attended. Members find these meetings a convivial method of keeping in touch with their Art Society friends.

Our annual New Year Lunch was held in the Georgian Room at the Glendower Hotel, Lytham St Annes. We enjoyed a glass of wine or orange juice on arrival, followed by an excellent three course meal, tea or coffee. It was the first time we have held the New Year Lunch at the Glendower Hotel, a jolly atmosphere in a very smart venue.

A lot of effort was made to arrange a three-night trip to Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, due to lack of interest, the trip had to be cancelled. The cost of the tour was based on 30 people travelling, but only 15 people (members and non-members) completed the booking form.

A Spring Coffee Morning was organised for members and friends at the Fylde Rugby Club on Thursday 25 April 2024. Tim Lince, CEO/Artistic Director of the Lowther Pavilion, gave an overview on future plans for the Lowther. This event was well attended.

In July a Volunteers Thank You cream tea took place at the Glendower Hotel. It was a pleasant afternoon allowing the volunteers (30 attended) to get to know our Vice Chair and the Committee.

Glyndebourne Opera Tour October 2024 was arranged in corroboration with The Arts Society Sablesbury. 47 people booked, 15 of whom are members from Fylde.

Forthcoming events include:

A Study Day in November 2024, Ray Warburton, two lectures – *Vanessa Bell's Art and her Tangled Bloomsbury Group Relationships*.

New Year Lunch at the Fairhaven Golf Club on Wednesday 8th January 2025.

A special lunch celebrating the success of our Society early Spring.

Elaine Wolstencroft - Event Coordinator

Membership

Membership recruitment has eased somewhat since last year; however, we are still not back to the level of membership we were prior to Covid. Nonetheless, our visitor numbers have been boosted by our lecture dates and details being featured in The Lowther's publication, and for that we would like to thank The Lowther Theatre.

Enabling members to renew their membership as of the June meeting proved somewhat hectic; however, it demonstrably cut down the admin costs to the Society - consequently we intend to do the same next year. The use of the card reader for payments has definitely been worthwhile and in many respects makes life much easier for all. Bank transfers, cheques and cash remain payment methods acceptable to the Arts Society Fylde. Members are also now able to send their forms to me electronically, thus cutting down the paperwork even further.

Donations via Gift Aid have again increased. The committee are most grateful for this as the donations bolster the society's funds considerably.

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.

I now give thanks to Rita Calvert for her continued organisation of those who meet and greet members as well as visitors on lecture days. Furthermore, I thank Rita for all the other organising 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 and away days.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the sad loss of Christine Cockburn who so ably ran the raffle and provided the beautiful books, etc for prizes. Thankfully, Lesley Jarvis has filled the void left by Christine and the committee thank her for her assistance. The raffle monies continue to pay for craft materials for the Children's Ward at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and Brian House Children's Hospice.

There is further sad news in that Denise Malpas, who for many years provided the annual lecture programme, has died. Denise worked tirelessly to ensure the calibre of the monthly lecture programme provided to members was not only the best available, but the most diverse. Denise was keen to open up members' vision in relation to what could be construed as art; furthermore, she was instrumental in increasing members' expectation in relation to the content and delivery of the monthly lectures. Denise set "the blue print" of expectation and her sound advice and quiet motivation, will be much missed by all.

As many will appreciate there has been a change at The Arts Society's Headquarters' including the election of new Trustees. The committee intend to monitor the situation and will put any new information or proposals to members.

The committee remain committed to recruiting more members from the whole of the Fylde. We are very aware that it is a wide demographic and if any member has thoughts as to how the Society can actively encourage people from under represented areas to join, please let me or other committee members know.

Finally, we hope members enjoy the 24/5 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

After last year's spike in website visitor numbers, this last 12 months has seen slower growth – but the trend is still upwards. To save printing costs, we are continuing with a paperless policy wherever possible, with members being pointed to our website to download and print whatever they need. All the leaflets accompanying each lecture are on the site, as are booking forms; our biannual newsletter, *In The Picture*, is only sent out to members in an electronic format.

Email is our primary method of communication, and we still use the free basic service from Mailchimp to send out news of events, upcoming lectures and any other news items we wish to inform members about. A few members don't use email, so occasionally we need to rely on phone calls and the post to contact them. Usage of our social media account on Facebook is still growing slowly. It provides a good platform for reaching a wider audience and when asked, a small number of visitors have said that they saw news about the lecture on Facebook. The Committee makes use of WhatsApp, to communicate with each other. The Lowther includes all our forthcoming lectures on

its website and in its printed brochure, which provides us with extensive publicity over a large area and is probably responsible for the increase in the number of visitors we have had this year.

Thanks to those members who have submitted items for this year's newsletters; we very much appreciate your contributions, and we know from feedback that members enjoy reading about other members' interests. Thanks also to Tony Depledge for creating the monthly lecture notes leaflets; Hilary Cresswell for agreeing to help maintain the archive; and to Simon Foster for his help in the design of the newsletters.

Pam Foster Communications Officer

Heritage Project

Thirteen members of The Arts Society Fylde have been involved in a Heritage Project at Lytham Hall. We are assisting the Archivist by preparing documentation listing the main objects, furniture, pictures, ceramics etc, in each room of the Hall. We provide a detailed description of the item together with any distinguishing marks and photograph it. The project is progressing well, and the Hall are grateful for our help.

Hilary Cresswell Heritage Project Co-ordinator

The Executive Committee 2023-2024

Chair	Vacancy
Vice Chair	Sarah Claydon
Treasurer	Christina McHugh
Secretary	Hilary Cresswell
Membership Secretary	Lesley Peabody Brewer
Programme Secretary	Anne Gaskell
Communications Officer	Pam Foster
Events Co-ordinator	Elaine Wolstencroft
Tony Berwick	(co-opted)
Tony Depledge	(co-opted)
Kirsteen McGlashen-Hansen	(co-opted)
Matthew Willey	(co-opted)

Financial Statements

This November I shall be retiring as treasurer, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the current members of the committee, also the committee members I have worked with over the past ten years, for their friendship and support in the various roles I undertook. My best wishes to the new treasurer and the committee, it's been a pleasure working with all of you.

Christina McHugh Treasurer

CURRENT ACCOUNT**FOR YEAR ENDING 31.7.24****INCOME**

C/F 31.07.23	2970.36
Subscriptions	10012.00
Joining Fees	90.00
Gift Aid	304.00
Visitors Fees	1255.00
Bank to Bank transfers	827.06
Grants	250.00
Events	6492.62
TOTAL	22201.04

EXPENDITURE

Lecture Fees	3100.00
Lecturers Expenses	339.87
TAS Affiliation Fee	3295.04
NW Area Fee	151.20
Grant to Lowther Pavilion	250.00
Grant to LSA Art Collection	50.00
Bank to Bank transfers	1173.06
Bank Fees	139.15
Hire of Lowther	4104.00
Website	129.90
Storage	629.88
Committee Meetings	696.87
Committee Expenses	140.18
Printing/Newsletter/Postage/	710.57
Events	5596.24
TOTAL	20505.96

SURPLUS/DEFICIT AT 31.07.24**1695.08**

Cash Floats	40.00
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GOOD CAUSES ACCOUNT**INCOME**

B/F 31.07.23	495.32
Income from raffles at lectures & Study Days	942.01
TOTAL	1437.33

EXPENDITURE

Raffle prizes	142.51
Craft Materials for Brian House & Victoria Hospital Children's Ward	298.05
TOTAL	440.56

SURPLUS/DEFICIT AT 31.07.24 **996.77**

RESERVE ACCOUNT

INCOME

C/F 31.07.23	5030.77
Interest	76.35
Interest Fixed Savings Acc	339.97
From Current Account	130.00
TOTAL	5577.09

EXPENDITURE

To Fixed Savings Acc	100.00
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SURPLUS/DEFICIT AT 31.07.24 **5477.09**

FIXED SAVINGS ACCOUNT

DEPOSIT AT 31.07.23	10000.00
From Reserve Account	100.00
TOTAL ON FIXED SAVINGS ACCOUNT	<u>10100.00</u>

ALL FUNDS SUMMARY

CURRENT ACCOUNT	1695.08
GOOD CAUSES ACCOUNT	996.77
RESERVE ACCOUNT	5477.09
FIXED TERM DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	10100.00



Supporting The Arts in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre
www.theartsocietyfylde.org.uk