



THE ARTS  
SOCIETY  
FYLDE

# In the Picture

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*Newsletter #32 / Spring 2026*

# Letter from our Chair

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Time is moving quickly again and we are already in March 2026. As the days get longer and the sun shines (occasionally) a bit brighter, The Arts Society Fylde continues to bloom.

The hard work of the Committee has ensured that the Society has run smoothly. We are a good team and work well together, supporting each other in our roles. If you would like to join us, please do contact either a committee member or myself. If you'd just like to come along to one of our meetings and see what it's like before joining, again, please do. You will receive a very warm welcome and whatever support and help you may require. If you'd like to join us without a specific role that would be good too. We would encourage any of you to join our band of volunteers and get involved with like-minded people to further the Arts across the Fylde.



The last few months have been very busy for the Committee and the Society as a whole. We have engaged with the national Arts Society in a new membership recruitment pilot, which I hope you have all been able to take part in by inviting your friends and family to a free lecture. To ensure our society remains thriving and healthy we need to increase our membership numbers, so we were extremely pleased to have been chosen to be part of this pilot. We hope that you will give your invitation to anyone who you think may wish to join us and we look forward to welcoming them.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Committee and to all those who volunteer for all their hard work and support, and also to the many members who have expressed their support and encouragement to us at lectures. Your positive feedback about the quality and variety of lectures, and of the society as a whole is very encouraging.

The events and lectures over the last few months have been thought provoking and interesting, with talks on *State Ceremonial Music*, *Worth & Winterhalter: the Mid-19th Century's Masters of Design & Draughtsmanship*, *History of Musicals* and *Edith Durham's Bold Edwardian Collection of Beautiful Balkan Things*.

Many members went on our visit to the newly refurbished Harris Museum in Preston. This was an extremely successful visit and enjoyed by all. The feedback was very positive, along with a request for more visits and trips to be planned.

The 2025/26 programme continues on in spring and summer with stimulating lectures. The Committee and I look forward to welcoming you and your family and friends to each one. Please do spread the word of the Society and what we do. We welcome new members at all times to come along and join us at lectures and the social events we hold.

We have organised another of our popular coffee mornings at the Glendower Hotel, on Wednesday 15 April, at 10-30 am – 12.00 pm. Our speaker this time will be local crime writer Nigel Hanson.

We hope to hold other social events in the near future, so please do keep an eye on our website and at lectures for future events.

We look forward to seeing you all at the lectures and social events in the future.

*Sarah Clayden*  
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 1 APRIL 2026

## There's More to Life Than Lowry: Painting in Northern Britain in the 20th Century

*Ed Williams*

Considers artists and painters, other than Lowry, who sought to embrace the new visual language of modernism, but whose approach recognised and embraced the urban and natural landscapes of Northern Britain. Who were these, often forgotten, individuals who sought to challenge the conventional wisdom of their training and metropolitan art market?

WED 15 APRIL 2026

## Coffee Morning & talk by crime writer Nigel Hanson

10.30 am at the Glendower Hotel, St Annes

Lancashire-born Nigel Hanson will talk about *The Wisstingham Mysteries* series of novels. All three mysteries are based in the mythical village of Wisstingham and, according to Nigel, "will change your ideas about tranquil country life for ever!"



WED 6 MAY 2026

## The Glories of Liverpool Architecture

*Ed Glinert*

What other city can match the glories of the Three Graces along the waterfront? Inland there are monumental Egyptian ventilation shafts, banking palaces, dock warehouses, and the finest neo-Classical hall in the country. Oh, and two Cathedrals.

WED 3 JUN 2026

## Flights of Fancy: a History of Birds in Art

*Adrian Sumner*

Birds have a long history in art, as they may be used to symbolise all manner of ideas, as well as being beautiful, colourful entities in themselves. From the dove of the Holy Ghost to Tweety Pie (innocence triumphing effortlessly over evil?), from Aesop to Bosch (rampant sensuality and vanity), from Sindbad's Roc, via the Firebird and the Phoenix to Foghorn Leghorn, the lecture will survey the rich and teeming world of our feathered friends.



TUE 7 JUL 2026

## The Influence of Music on Edward Burra

*Catherine Tackley*

Music played an important, if perhaps underappreciated, role in Edward Burra's life and work. Although the impact of Burra's visits to Harlem and Boston, where he encountered African American music first-hand, has an obvious correlation with his artistic output, this talk also explores his record collection, held in the Tate's archives, which is perhaps uniquely revealing not only of his musical preferences but also aspects of his personality.

# A Cultural Tour of Cappadocia

*By Pat Mobley*

When I agreed to accompany my cousin on a cultural tour of Cappadocia by coach, I had little idea of what to expect. All I knew about the area was that it was in Eastern Turkey, had unusual rock formations and was famous for hot air balloon trips! I soon found out that there was far more to the region and many fascinating places to visit.

There are indeed amazing rock formations to be seen in the Goreme Open Air Museum, a World Heritage Site, and in Monk's Valley. The rock is volcanic tufa, which is easy to hollow out so people carved out houses and the early Christians used some of the dwellings as churches, dating back to the 4th century AD.

There are ancient frescoes depicting St Barnabas and St Paul, who is said to have preached there. Many outside the heritage site are still used by the locals as pigeon lofts and they collect the guano for fertiliser. Monk's Valley has different formations, shaped like giant fungus, which were not lived in.



*Monk's Valley, Cappadocia*



*Inside a Dervish Lodge, Cappadocia*

There is a tradition of building underground and we visited an ancient underground city known as Rock Town, which covers over 4,000 square metres and dates to the 6th century. People used to store food there and there were also wells, so when invaders threatened they could retreat underground with their animals and live there for weeks until the danger passed. We visited a Dervish Lodge, also underground. Dervish is a branch of Islam and we watched a ceremony with hymns and prayers culminating in four young men whirling, a devotional exercise aimed at achieving a spiritual state of being. They could be compared with our monks except that they all had jobs or professions within the local community.

The highlights of the tour were an early morning hot air balloon flight over the strange rock formations and a visit to a new art gallery. We saw the sun rise behind a volcano from 2,000 metres, the maximum height the balloons are permitted to reach and flew close enough to touch some of the rocks! There were 100 balloons in the air at once with many dazzling designs and 50 waiting to go; they have to be back on the ground for 9.00 am because of commercial flights to Goreme.

The art gallery has, in the tradition of the area, been excavated underground. It has only recently been completed and despite its subterranean nature is very spacious, with an interesting mix of old and new and beautiful lighting. One 2,000 year old pot looked as though it had been made yesterday, the colours preserved by the sand where it was found. There were many examples of more recent art.



*Hot air balloon flight, Cappadocia*



*Underground art gallery, Cappadocia*

We also visited a number of mosques and caravanserais (overnight rest houses on the Silk Road) and a carpet factory, which only uses local wool or silk and we were shown the process of spinning silk from cocoons. The carpets are dyed using plant or vegetable dyes and are hand made by local village women. We could not help but be impressed by the skill and speed of the lady demonstrating, though most are made by the women in their own homes.

It was a most enjoyable week with a packed itinerary. I hope to return to the area now I know a lot more about it and its friendly, welcoming population.

# Visiting the newly renovated Harris in Preston

Last November we organised a visit to the newly renovated Harris Museum, Library and Art Galley in Preston. Having been closed for four years, the Harris reopened in September 2025 after a £19 million restoration project known as the *Harris Your Place* initiative. Funding came from Preston City Council, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Government's Towns Fund, Lancashire County Council, and other local and regional partners. The restored Harris features new galleries, community spaces, learning areas, and visitor amenities aligned with contemporary museum standards.

Our trip included two curator-led tours, including 'behind the scenes' with Scott Schiavone, the Harris' Decorative Art Curator, who had previously presented our October 2025 lecture, *Worth & Winterhalter: the Mid-19th Century's Masters of Design & Draughtsmanship*. As well as showing us some of the major upgraded works, including the UK's longest Foucault pendulum, a 35-metre, 30-kg device that demonstrates the Earth's rotation, Scott also took us down into the basement to see where items and artefacts are stored. Included in the items was a fascinating collection of Horrockses Fashions costumes from the 1940s to the 1970s, as well as a complementary design archive. It was fascinating to learn how the many thousands of items are catalogued, stored and retrieved.



After lunch, Gemma Burns, Collections and Public Programmes, took us on a tour of some of the revitalised gallery spaces and their current exhibitions, reflecting the museum's enhanced public programme and community role. The reopening was marked by high-profile exhibitions, including a major Wallace & Gromit, which we had time to visit.

The Grade I-listed Harris has been transformed into an impressive 21st century cultural, learning and community hub, showcasing its ceramics, fashion, glass and art collections. Annual visitor numbers are projected to rise to approximately 450,000–500,000, up from around 350,000 before closure. The Museum will celebrate the 80th anniversary of the iconic Horrockses label by showcasing a major free exhibition, running from 19 September 2026 – 31 January 2027, which is likely to attract a large audience.



Wallace's Dining Room from *Vengeance Most Fowl* (2024)

# Judging primary school art

*In March this year, Heyhouses Endowed Church of England Primary School, in St Annes, invited representatives from The Arts Society Fylde to judge its school-wide art competition. The theme of the competition was (a wide interpretation of) the seasons.*

Kate Cartmell and Pam Foster volunteered to judge the entries. And what a difficult job it was! There were so many great works to choose from, with some of the artists displaying a real talent. Most of the children had opted for paint or crayon as their main medium but others had used additional materials such as pebbles, buttons and nut shells; there were also a number of collages and a very attractive tie dye item. After much discussion we finally made our choices. Congratulations to the children who won and we wish all the Heyhouses children good luck in their future artistic endeavours.

Our thanks to headteacher Elizabeth Hodgson for making us feel so welcome – and for her patience as we took so long to decide on the winners! It was a real privilege to be invited into such a busy, bright, modern and vibrant school.





*The Petit Bras of the Seine at Argenteuil (1872), by Claude Monet*

# Rare chance to see Monet Masterpiece at the Grundy Art Gallery

As part of the National Gallery Masterpiece Tour 2025–2027, the Grundy Art Gallery in Blackpool is hosting Claude Monet's masterpiece, *The Petit Bras of the Seine at Argenteuil (1872)*. The artwork will be on show from 28 March until 13 June 2026.

The National Gallery, London selected the Grundy from over 30 UK venues to be one of just four host museums and galleries to take part in the tour. The painting has only left The National Gallery once in the last 20 years, and with the first public viewing in the North West of England taking place in Blackpool, it's considered a landmark cultural moment for the town.

As part of the tour, the Grundy will invite every Blackpool school to view the Monet and host a schools' exhibition, following interactive workshops responding to the themes of Monet's work. Additionally, young people from Blackpool's Young People's charity, *The Magic Club*, will work with artist Kelly Jayne Jones to produce a new sound work in response to their experience of Monet's work. The sound work will be available to listen to alongside the Monet throughout the exhibition.



## Celebrating the New Year

Nearly 70 members and their friends enjoyed our annual New Year lunch, held at Fairhaven Golf Club at the beginning of January 2026. In a warm and informal atmosphere, we enjoyed good food, easy conversation, and the chance to connect with other members and friends after the Christmas break.

# Costume Couture – 60 Years of Cosprop

By Hilary Cresswell

An exhibition at the Fashion and Textile Museum in London celebrated 60 years of the costume house Cosprop. It was founded by John Bright to make and supply historically accurate costumes for film, theatre and television. It holds over one million costumes and supporting accessories, and employs a staff of over 40 experts. John Bright's vision was to develop authentic costume based on close study of original clothing; he claimed, "Actors walk into Cosprop with just a script and the name of their character. They walk out with that character forming in their mind having brought him or her to life through the angle of a hat, the fabric of a coat or the feel of a pair of shoes."

Bright scoured London antique markets, such as Portobello Road and Parisian flea markets, to purchase historic clothes and accessories such as fabrics, shoes and gloves that had fallen out of fashion, to form the basis of his collection. Early successes included the film *'The Charge of the Light Brigade'* (1968) and the TV drama *'Great Expectations'* (1968) and, most recently, the film of *'Napoleon'* (2023).

The exhibition included just 84 items, a small sample of the Cosprop collection; it was interesting to see not just the overall impact of an outfit but the attention to detail in the stitching, the hats, shoes, gloves, shawls etc – plus, actors and actresses have to wear the appropriate underwear to ensure the body is the right 'shape' for the historical costume. The costume must also allow the actor to move (riding, fighting, dancing etc) and to sit comfortably.

Bright worked with Jenny Beaven to design the costumes for Merchant Ivory films, using original period clothing from Cosprop's stock, dressing the actors to decide what suited and would be suitable for the narrative and scene; then dyeing and altering to fit, using the original elements to make a new costume.



Aunt March's costume from the film *Little Women* (2019)

Exhibits included a beautiful 1910s green silk dress with beading, worn by Louisa Trotter in the TV drama *'The Duchess of Duke Street'*. For *'Death on the Nile'* David Suchet wore a lot of padding to look about 40lbs heavier and a tight wing collar that gripped his neck so his face looked fatter, but he still looked cool in cream linen jacket and trousers, a beige waistcoat and white shirt with bow tie. Jack Sparrow's outfit was quite threadbare and his leather boots were suitably battered - apparently Johnny Depp tried on two or three dress coats before finding the right one.

In *'Pride & Prejudice'* (1995) the dresses the Bingley sisters wore to the first Meryton Ball were described as the period equivalent of Gucci in order to contrast with the simple dresses of the Bennett sisters. Sadly, Mr Darcy's wet shirt was not on display as it was sold and can now be seen at the Bankfield Museum, Halifax.

From *'Downton Abbey'* there were four dresses for the Crawley ladies, including a deep green silk and satin ensemble for Violet, plus a smart three piece suit for the Earl of Grantham. The Christian Dior dresses in *'Mrs Harris Goes to Paris'* displayed the perfect dress and the one damaged by fire.

It was interesting to learn so much about what has to be considered when making and designing costumes. I wish I had taken more photos but the only one I took was Aunt March from *'Little Women'*.



Kerry Vasiliou

## Coffee Morning talk - Building on Blackpool's Cultural Assets

We held a festive Mince Pie & Coffee Morning at the Glendower Hotel last December.

As usual, we had a short talk from a guest speaker – this time it was Kerry Vasiliou, Leader of Creative Blackpool Development Group, who spoke about how an Arts Council grant of £750,000 will help regenerate Blackpool through cultural opportunities.

Kerry was previously Learning and Engagement Manager of the town's museum, Showtown, and Education Officer at the Grundy Art Gallery, both of which are involved in the project. She spoke about how important it was to attract, train and keep homegrown artists and cultural leaders in the town and help turn Blackpool into a 'coastal capital of creativity'. It's hoped that this investment in culture will regenerate Blackpool as it has in other coastal communities like Margate.

As there was no lecture in December, the Coffee Morning offered an opportunity for members to socialise before the Christmas break.



## Blackpool bids for cultural status

Working with the Creative Blackpool Development Group and Arts Council England, Blackpool Council is exploring the possibility of bidding for the *UK City of Culture 2029* and *UK Town of Culture 2028*. If successful it would receive £10m for City status or £3m for Town status, towards a year-long celebration of arts and culture for local people to enjoy, as well as increasing the tourism economy and creating new jobs.

Adam Knight, Chief Executive of Blackpool Grand Theatre and Chair of the Creative Blackpool Development Group, said: "Blackpool is a place where the extraordinary happens and individuality is celebrated. The town's bids to become the UK City and Town of Culture perfectly aligns with Creative Blackpool's ambitious vision to be recognised as the UK's Coastal Capital of Creativity, placing Blackpool firmly on the map as a centre of excellence and inspiration for all."

# Panto joy for local families

For the second year running we made the decision to make donations towards tickets for local families to attend pantomimes at the Lowther Pavilion in Lytham and Blackpool's Grand Theatre. Families were selected from The Coastal Community Hub, based in St Annes and The Grand Theatre's *Magic and Sparkle* Christmas appeal. Our donations are made possible mainly by revenues from raffles held at lectures. It is thanks to the generosity of our members and visitors that The Arts Society Fylde has been able to fund these two charitable campaigns. Judging by the feedback from both organisations, the families involved had a wonderful time at both theatres.

Coastal Collective Trustee, Jonathan Bailey, said:

"A Magical Trip to the Panto. The curtains have closed, and the reviews are in - it was a spectacular success! A massive thank you to Hilary & The Arts Society Fylde for their incredibly kind donation of pantomime tickets."

We've had some heart-warming feedback from the families who attended:

*"Hi J, T's Dad – just wanted to say thank you for the tickets, the kids and us really enjoyed Peter Pan today"*

*"The show was brilliant!"*

*"T wanting to book every show now."*

*"Thank you to the lady who gave us the tickets, she's very kind."*

Jonathan went on to say: "Thanks to your generosity, our families enjoyed a truly magical experience. Seeing the children's faces light up and hearing about their favourite moments has been a highlight of our festive season. Thank you for helping us create unforgettable memories and for bringing so much joy to part of the community!"

The Coastal Community Hub provides a range of resources, including Infant Massage Classes, Creative Groups, Family Drop Ins, Stay and Play Sessions and Cooking Lessons. Through these sessions it aims to bring the community closer together to help and support one another. It provides support, help, advice and guidance to any families in need and works closely with local organisations, who it can signpost families to for specialist support.





Scene from *Beauty & the Beast*, Grand Theatre



Scene from *Beauty & the Beast*, Grand Theatre

The Grand, in conjunction with Producer Martin Dodd of UK Productions Ltd, created their *Magic & Sparkle* project, which aims to make the festive season a little more special for local groups, children and families in need, by inviting individuals, companies, etc to purchase pantomime tickets for those who ordinarily wouldn't visit the theatre.

Andrew Howard, Head of Audience, Marketing and Sales, said: "On behalf of everyone at Blackpool Grand Theatre, thank you so much for your generous donation to our *Magic and Sparkle* Christmas appeal. Your support helped us create moments of joy and escape for children and families who are facing real challenges, moments where worries can be set aside, laughter can be shared, and Christmas can feel truly special. For many of the people we work with, a visit to the theatre is an experience we sometimes take for granted, but some people simply can't even consider. Your kindness helps change that.

"Through *Magic and Sparkle*, we work closely with partners including Better Start, Blackpool Council

Support Organisations, Curious Minds, Single Dad, Young Carers, Food Bank, and local community and family support organisations to reach children and families who may be experiencing poverty, isolation, or difficult circumstances. For some, this will be their very first time inside a theatre, the first time the lights dim, the curtain rises, and a world of imagination opens up in front of them.

"What you have helped provide isn't just a ticket. It's a child's wide-eyed excitement, a parent seeing their child smile when times have been tough, and a family sharing a joyful experience together at Christmas. These are moments that stay with people long after the final curtain call.

"We are incredibly grateful to The Arts Society Fylde for believing in the power of the arts to bring comfort, confidence and connection. Your generosity will help ensure that more children and families feel included, valued and cared for this festive season.

"Thank you for helping us bring warmth, wonder and Christmas magic to those who need it most."



## Lowther wins Cultural Venue/Organisation of the Year Award

The Lowther has won the *Cultural Venue/Organisation of the Year Award* at the Lancashire Tourism Awards 2026. The award, which recognises culture and heritage-based experiences that engage with both residents and visitors, follows a year in which the Lowther not only celebrated its most successful Christmas season, but also the launch of a brand-new building, The Windmill Performance & Education Centre.

The judges were impressed by the Lowther's "outstanding success story underpinned by excellent sustainability credentials, and a cultural programme with a growing economic impact. They [Judges] said the Lowther is entrepreneurial, bold, and empowering with a diverse offer."



**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: Hot air balloons over Cappadocia, Turkey. Photo by Pat Mobley.