

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021 -2022 (Incorporating the Committee's annual reports)

Returning to the Core theatre for live lectures has probably been the most welcome aspect of the Society's year. During lockdown the Core had totally revamped their audio-visual equipment and many of our lecturers have commented on the quality of the pictures and sound. Our return to the theatre was faltering as Tony Faber's lecture on Antonio Stradivari had to become a zoom-only experience because of a Covid spike, but since then it has been marvellous to meet members again in person and attend live lectures, with attendance figures steadily rising towards pre-pandemic levels.

Covid has made the committee re-evaluate what we offered as a Society and some of the innovation will become the norm. Thus, the zoom lectures in December and January will remain. Traditionally there was not a lecture in December; instead the Christmas lunch replaced this. Now both will happen and there will also be a virtual tour in January, which in 2023 will be of Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum.

Whilst lectures remain central to the Arts Society, the tours and events programme is an integral part of what is available. This is as varied as the lecture programme with relatively local trips to the Cotswolds, and Stratford-upon-Avon as well as events such as Fieldings the auctioneers at Wrenn Hall and the four-day visit to Durham. It is the combination of lectures, and tours combined with the feeling of friendship and camaraderie that makes the Society so vibrant.

One of the committee's concerns was the impact of Covid on membership, as membership fees provide the vast majority of income. As the Treasurer's report explains, the Core costs over £1000 per lecture and, as well as lecturer's fees, the Society pays an affiliation fee of £14.21 per member to the national Arts Society. This is just over 25% of the membership fee. The resilience of our membership over Covid has made it possible to offer an increased programme, although we have kept a careful watch on our expenditure. I have written to the National Society expressing concern about future increases in the affiliation fee.

It is usually a courtesy to thank the committee but I do so not as a courtesy or as a pleasantry but as a heartfelt vote of thanks. All the committee are volunteers, giving freely of their time, and their enthusiasm spills over into a desire to offer a product that is appealing, interesting and informative. Without their commitment there would be no Society and I hope this is recognised when they put themselves up for re-election at the AGM.

Programme Secretary (Lorna Bosley)

Once again this has been an unprecedented year and it has been very difficult to decide whether and when we could return to The Core Theatre. I am delighted that now all of our lecturers have upskilled and were confident and competent to undertake online lectures. I appreciate that the hybrid lectures were not as clear nor as well presented but being one of those members who was unable to return to the theatre, it was better than missing the lectures entirely.

I hope that you enjoyed the online lectures and walks that we took with speakers from Blue Badge, some of whom have now qualified as Nadsas Lecturers. We time-travelled in York, learned about Menswear in Saville Row, walked in the footsteps of Oscar Wilde and undertook a Classic Tour of Birmingham. We had an excellent online lecture about The Vatican and Sistine Chapel, and we will be visiting the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in January.

We had the pleasure of hearing Tony Faber give his lecture on Antonio Stradivari, and we rode together on the Carpet Ride to Khiva. Who could forget the lecture given by John Benjamin, such an interesting and consummate speaker. We also visited Moorish Spain with an outstanding lecture given by Ian Cockburn – we seem to have had the opportunity to travel whilst we stayed at home.

We have a varied programme for you for 2022/2023 – although I expect the programme does not always entice all of you to attend, there are always subjects from which you learn another dimension to 'The Arts'. 'The Arts' now covers such a wide range of subjects and it is challenging to select subjects which would appeal to all of our members. We sometimes have remarks made regarding whether the subject was 'The Arts' or not, but you will know that all the lecturers and their lectures are approved by Nadfas House.

I hope that we will continue to meet in The Core Theatre, and I would like to thank you for your patience and support whilst we as a committee have endeavoured to ensure that you have enjoyed the lectures as best we may.

Look out for the Christmas Lecture which will be online. Last year we had fun listening to Ian Gledhill giving his lecture on 'The Magic of Pantomime' and this December we will be Barry Venning's lecture entitled 'Christmas with Giles, Grandma and Family'.

Membership Secretary (Judith Carver)

Without our members, what would we be?

Your loyalty, support and heartfelt comments throughout 2021/22 have meant a lot to the committee and have kept us going when circumstances have been challenging.

Nationally numbers have fluctuated with some societies having to close and others managing to remain buoyant. We are lucky to have enjoyed a relatively stable year with 326 members 'on the books' in June 2022. At renewal we invariably say goodbye to some of our long-standing members who find they cannot make the visit to the theatre anymore and we thank you for your years of support and encouragement which have given us stability.

Numbers this year are slightly reduced on last year but I am pleased to report that we have received a healthy number of new members who are helping to balance things out. Many thanks to those of you who have encouraged your friends to come along to a lecture which has led to them subsequently joining us. We hope their experience is positive and that they too will spread the word. Keep up the good work!

At a time when costs are spiralling, we feel that £50.00 for a year's worth of excellent lectures, visits, holidays, a quarterly magazine and a chance to meet up with friends in a pleasant and comfortable space is a good investment. Thank you.

Heritage Volunteers (Maureen Hill)

Your Heritage Volunteers continue to work on the Packwood House projects.

The current work consists of chair covers for six chairs located in the Long Gallery, leading to the Great Hall. Two of the chairs are similar in colour to those already produced for the semi-circular seat in the Great Hall. The remaining four are of a different design and colour and are progressing well.

The National Trust Conservator has decided that these covers should be lined with a silk type of material which will slide over the original chair covering and not damage anything.

Our Upholsterer is working on the first two chair covers and we hope they will be in place in the near future.

Unfortunately, two of our volunteers, Vera McLuskie and Moorea Ashton Jones have had to leave the team due to ill health and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their work both on the Packwood Project and also with Knowle Parish Church. We will miss them.

Tours and Events (Rosemarie Cope)

The Tours and Events Programme is organised with the invaluable support of my fellow committee members, Judith Carver and Diane Grainger, as well as Lynda Donaldson in the past and more recently, Anne Butcher.

After the last AGM, the programme continued with a visit to the Chatsworth House Christmas Market and a tour of the festive, beautifully decorated house. In December, we held our annual Christmas lunch at Copt Heath Golf Course, then later in the month Ian Gledhill entertained us with his Zoom lecture on Christmas Pantomime.

We started this year with two Zoom Virtual Tours. In January we were treated to a fascinating tour of The Vatican and Sistine Chapel with Stuart Harvey who is a tour guide in Rome and is now also an Arts Society lecturer. In February Aaron Hunter took us back in time with his presentation of the Treasures of Ancient Britain, from Stonehenge to the Saxons.

In March we held our first Special Interest Day, organised by Judith at Wren Hall, entitled From Wedgewood to Bridgewater, with Fieldings Auctioneers. After a lively talk from the experts, followed by lunch, some of the items brought by members were valued. The day was so successful that we have arranged another event with Fieldings, this time an evening event, an auction preview in late October.

We had a lovely day out in the Cotswolds in May, spending the morning at the Gordon Russell Museum in Broadway, then going on to visit a gem of a garden in Moreton-in-Marsh, Bourton House Garden.

The Guided Walk of Stratford-upon-Avon and River Cruise were reinstated in July, having been cancelled during the pandemic. Although most of us had visited Stratford on many occasions, our informative and amusing guide gave us new insights into the background and development of the town as well as the life and times of Shakespeare.

Finally, by the time you read this report, the four-day Durham Delights trip in September will have taken place. This trip, organised by Judith was also a casualty of the pandemic, so we were very pleased to reinstate it. Highlights include visits to the Auckland Project, Piece Hall, Halifax and Durham Cathedral.

Next year, we are planning to reinstate some of the other trips we had to cancel, such as Bletchley Park and The Laskett Gardens as well as some new venues.

Young Arts/Arts Volunteering (Annette Shillaker)

During 2020-21 we agreed to support Arts projects in two local schools, Merstone Special School and Sharmans Cross Junior School.

Merstone Special School applied for funding to support the introduction of Arts Awards for the pupils, starting in January 2021 with training as a certified Arts Award Advisor for their Art subject leader. The art curriculum is now being developed in line with Arts Award certification for pupils initially in KS 3 (ages 11-19).

Due to pupils and staff being affected by isolation rules, Sharmans Cross Junior School had to postpone their planned whole school Art project until the Autumn Term 2021. The resulting mandala is now on display in the school.

On our Arts Society website, we set up a Members Gallery page inviting members to share their work with a wider audience. There is a wonderful range of pieces on display, so thank you to all the members who have already contributed to this initiative.

We donated a PA system to Solihull Life Opportunities (SoLO). The equipment was no longer used by the society and we are delighted to report that it is now being put to good use for events organised for the young people at their Walnut Close centre.

Communications (Lynda Donaldson)

Mailchimp has become fully embedded as the means of communicating with the membership as a group, with our Gmail email address being used for individual responses.

The Chairman's newsletters are now sent out as a PDF with only a few members receiving a paper copy.

We introduced hybrid lectures for the members in September 2021. This gave the members an opportunity to either attend the lecture "live" in the Core Theatre or to continue to watch via Zoom from home. The experience of watching via Zoom proved to be not as effective as the lecture was transmitted from the theatre via a camera and my laptop!

A decision was made earlier this year that we would no longer offer a hybrid lecture. However, both the Christmas lecture and virtual walks of 2023 will be offered via Zoom.

The Arts Society introduced a West Midlands Facebook page last year and I am now managing the Arts Society Solihull contributions. Using Facebook gives us an opportunity to share what we have been doing to a wider audience.

The number of members who are evaluating the lectures via the website remains healthy but we would welcome more contributions as these help the Committee when reviewing them for the Arts Society.

Airedale Solutions manage the website for us and the monthly analysis indicates how much "traffic" there has been shown. It continues to show that the number of new visitors is consistently higher than that of members.

Phillip Griffiths, Chairman

TREASURER'S REPORT 2021 – 2022

Introduction

I am pleased to report that the annual accounts for 2021-22 reflect a sound financial position at the year-end.

Our independent financial examiner is satisfied that the accounts have been correctly prepared and has not raised any matters of concern regarding the accounting records nor practices.

Income and Expenditure

Our overall income and expenditure figures for this year are higher than the previous year and are more representative of our usual trends since we have been able to return to our more normal level of activities.

Membership fees and Gift Aid provide the main source of our income and those figures for the year have maintained a workable level. Our concerns at the start of the year about the impact of a continued fall in membership on our income have not materialized due to an encouraging number of new members.

With our Events programme each year we aim to cover the costs of each event and therefore do not budget for this as a source of income.

The year's expenditure is affected by our return to live lectures at the Core Theatre in September 2021 and the hire charges associated with that (an average of £1000 per session) and the fact that we have been able to run a range of Events for our members.

Balance Sheet

This year's balance sheet reflects a very similar picture to previous years with our net assets remaining at over £45,000. I believe that this is an encouraging position for the Society's future, considering the difficulties we have faced in the previous 2 years.

Diane Grainger, Hon Treasurer

THE ARTS SOCIETY SOLIHULL
Income and Expenditure Account
For the year to 30th June 2022

		<u>Net income</u>	<u>2020/21</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Subscriptions 2021-22		14,944	14,976
Visitors' fees		492	0
Study Days & Events		10,284	3,332
Interest		118	275
Miscellaneous income		228	150
Gift Aid		2,631	2,656
The Arts Society Refund of expenses/Grants		0	250
		<hr/> 28,696	<hr/> 21,639
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Lecture fees and expenses	4,808		3,960
National and Area Arts Society annual charges for year ending Dec 2022	4,787		4,708
Hire of The Core Theatre	8,184		0
Printing, stationery and postage	484		1,102
Administrative Expenses	415		305
Study days/Event/virtual walks Expenditure	10,385		4,908
Purchase of 50 Treasures of West Midlands (20/21)			1,320
Total expenditure		<hr/> 29,063	<hr/> 16,303
Surplus/ (deficit) before awards and discretionary expenditure	<hr/> (366)		<hr/> 5,336
<u>Awards and discretionary expenditure</u>			
Arts Volunteering (Sharmans & Koestler)	1,250		1,000
	<hr/> 1,250		<hr/> 1,000
<u>Surplus/ (deficit) for the year</u>	<hr/> (1,616)		<hr/> 4,336

THE ARTS SOCIETY SOLIHULL
Balance Sheet
For the year to 30th June 2022

	2022	2021
Current assets		
Cash at bank (No. 1 Acc)	28,436	26,150
Cash at bank (No. 2 Acc)	12,300	11,513
Cash on deposit	20,000	20,000
Other debtors		
Core Theatre payments in advance	0	1,556
Loan - Patricia Fay Fund	500	500
Stratford Walk prepayments	260	
Durham Sept 22 Expenses	397	
Prepayments 20/21		1070
Cash in hand	50	50
	<u>61,943</u>	<u>60,839</u>
Current liabilities		
Creditors & Accruals	16,043	13,323
Bank reconciliation No. 1 Acc.		
Bank reconciliation no. 2 acc		
	<u>16,043</u>	<u>13,323</u>
Net assets	45,900	47,516
ACCUMULATED FUND		
Balance as at 30th June 2021	47,516	43,181
Surplus/Deficit for the year	(1,616)	4,336
	0	
Balance as at 30th June 2022	<u>45,900</u>	<u>47,516</u>

Approved on behalf of the Committee, July 2022

Chairman



Philip Griffiths

Treasurer

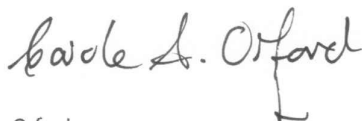


Diane Grainger

REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ARTS SOCIETY SOLIHULL

I have examined the foregoing Balance Sheet as at 30th June 2022 together with the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date and in my opinion they are correctly prepared in accordance with the Society's records produced to me.

Independent Examiner



Carole Orford