



South Downs Poetry Festival

FOCUS ARTS CHI UK ANNUAL REPORT: 2023

CHARITY NUMBER: 1200784

TRUSTEES: Barry Smith, Joan Secombe, Ian Barnett, Lesley Amanda Gravett.

South Downs Poetry Festival, SDPF, is an annual pop-up festival which – uniquely – spans many miles: the length and breadth of the beautiful South Downs National Park and the surrounding area. The festival is organised by Focus Arts Chi UK, a registered charity (number 1200784).

2023 has seen the festival in full swing in locations around the South Downs with exciting events taking place in our usual eclectic choice of venues, including cathedrals, churches, galleries, community spaces and even a jailhouse. We began appropriately by celebrating Sussex Landscapes amongst the pictures on display in Pallant House Gallery before moving on to St Pancras Church to mark the bicentenaries of the Romantics, this year with a special emphasis on Sussex novelist and poet Charlotte Smith. SDPF poets gave a dramatic reading of Shelley's elegy on Keats, Adonais. Once again we were delighted to support the Festival Fringe in Chichester, with events in Drapers Yard (Poetry Take-Off!) and Graylingwell Chapel (Poetry in Motion). Our contributions to the main Festival were the Poetry & Jazz Cafe with guest poet Rosie Jackson at the Assembly Room and Poetry and Music with Louis de Bernieres at the Cathedral. The SDPF Poetry Competition had its culmination in lovely Binsted church, where judge Wendy Klein gave a reading and Alison Campbell took the Binsted Prize. We maintained our partnerships with Blakefest and the Shelley Memorial Project, contributing to the words and music programmes in Felpham Church near Blake's Cottage and at Warnham Church, Horsham, which contains memorials to the Shelley family. Roger McGough was guest poet at the latter and Janine Booth at the former. This year saw the SDPF on tour at Dimbola gallery and teashop, Freshwater, and at Wells Library. And the jailhouse? That was part of the Arundel Festival – Jazz and Poetry at the Jailhouse. We finished the year in style at grade 1 listed St John's Chapel with the Festive Jazz Cafe celebrating the 75th anniversary of the NHS, featuring a talk by distinguished local councillor and GP Dr James Walsh and poems read by SDPF poets who had personal experience of dealing with serious illness under the care of the NHS.

Poets featured in 2023 included Rosie Jackson, Roger McGough, Louis de Bernieres, Stephanie Norgate, Wendy Klein, Janine Booth, Amanda Waring, Lou Beckerman, Kate Noakes, Deborah Tyler-Bennett, Rob Hamberger, Caroline Maldonado, Barry Smith, Chris Hardy, Naomi Foyle, Mandy Pannett, Pratibha Castle and John O'Donoghue amongst others. Actors included Emily Rose Smith, the aforementioned ex-Flying Picket now theatre/TV/film performer Gareth Williams and Paula Tinker. Musicians included classical pianist Elena Toponogova, guitarists Linda Kelsall-Barnett and Chris Hardy, jazz saxophonist Charlotte Glasson, and Mike Carey's Big House Jazz Band. All in all, it was certainly another hectic and thoroughly enjoyable poetical year in the South Downs.

Additionally, we maintained our monthly Open Mic Poetry events in the Jubilee Hall, New Park Centre, Chichester, putting the focus on developing the appreciation of poetry within the community. After a reading by a visiting guest poet, local poets of all ages read their own new work to a supportive audience. The festival also contributed the poetry element of Arts Junction at Arundel, a mix of the arts including music, theatre and spoken word. Each month, two poets read their work bringing the best of new writing to the local community.

ACCOUNTS

Income: (£'s)

Donations	3997
Charitable Activities	5719
TOTAL INCOME	9716

Expenditure: (£'s)

Public Liability Insurance	229
Events costs	4230
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	4459

Cash at Bank: (£'s)	5585
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