

Present: 29 members of the Society including the Management Committee

Presidents opening remarks- Peter Moss

The future presents LAS and its Committee with a period of reflection and renewal.

Recent programme planning and new building work within the Usher Gallery will result in the following major changes. The Society will only have its major Annual Exhibition every other year commencing 2010; the intervening year will then become a large Open Exhibition. This will not in any way prevent LAS members from submitting their art works. Further details will emerge once Jeremy and his staff have ironed out application and selection procedures.

In order to promote the Society's exhibition future your Committee is planning a series of smaller events at other galleries including Patchings in Nottinghamshire, Beverley Gallery and Sam Scorer Gallery, Lincoln.

Such exhibitions will be smaller in hanging space; the knock-on effect is obvious. Your Committee is deeply concerned on members' behalf and is looking at ways of establishing such exhibitions as special events, perhaps thematic or size or material.

The Society's 102nd Annual Exhibition was opened by Maggie Warren. In her opening address she confirmed the high quality of exhibited works and commiserated with those members who had not been selected.

John Maddison, Treasurer, will confirm good sales especially as a result of the Walter's Open Night, managed by Ian Walter and his staff; his audience was most appreciative of the exhibited works.

Many of those attending had not regularly visited the Usher and were totally unaware of the range and quality of the art works produced by our members.

This year we have enjoyed lectures, including the work of John Bellamy by John McEwan and British Art Today by Julian Freeman; both were well attended and the sound system in The Collection lecture hall worked well. Max Marschner and Alan Parker are thanked for their efforts in making this programme so successful.

Finally and on behalf of the membership, I must thank all members of the Management Committee. There will be new Committee members next year, so I will especially thank the following for their excellent service: Frank Marston in his first year as Chairman, John Maddison for this continued financial management, Carol Butler as previous Chairman but remaining as Committee member, Jacky Lee for all her scribing, Bruce Duncan as Society Publicist, David Morris as Membership Secretary and Senior Adviser, and, finally but certainly not least, Derek Roberts, outgoing Secretary. All Committee members have played a very full part in making LAS a great success. I sit as an observer on behalf of the membership and can confirm their active and vociferous engagement.

The Lincolnshire Artists Society is in very good heart and the future is yours to exploit.

Apologies

David Paton, Leslie Stoneham, Ian Walter

Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes were taken as read and agreed as a true record.

Matters Arising to be dealt with later in the meeting.

Chairman's Report - Frank Marston

It does not seem a year since I took up the Chairmanship of the Lincolnshire Artists' Society during the Opening of the 'Paper Works' show at the Sam Scorer Gallery in 2007. I was aware that my predecessor, Carol Butler, was going to be a hard act to follow and I pay tribute to her for her excellent work in the run-up to the Society's centenary celebrations. She has also been a tower of strength to me during the past twelve months.

During my first year there have been two very fine exhibitions of the our members' works, the one at the Sam Scorer Gallery I have just mentioned and recently our Annual Exhibition at the Usher Gallery, the natural 'home' of the Society!

'Paperworks' at the Sam Scorer Gallery was opened by David Freeman, then Chairman of the 'Friends of the Usher Gallery' and former H.M.I. for Art Education in Schools in Lindsey, who commented on the range of imaginative work on display and how this focussed the attention on things not normally considered worthy of notice. On this occasion Edward Mayor, the Society's Scribe, gave entertaining glimpses into the background he discovered in researching the Society's history for his wonderful book.

Sales were disappointing as were those earlier in the year at the Boston venue.

The Toni Bartl prize for Portraiture had been carried over from the Boston Show and was awarded to Carol Butler for her superb double portrait in watercolours of two young girls entitled 'Twins' 'The 102nd Annual Exhibition at the Usher Gallery' was a great success. Again the range of styles and media, quality of the work were impressive. Indeed, enough quality entries were there to fill an extra room if this had been available. Unfortunately some good work had to be left out (the best of my three prints entered didn't make it!)

We were delighted to welcome Maggie Warren of The Collection to open our Annual Exhibition. She warmly congratulated the Society for putting on such an outstanding show this year. *

Prizes Awarded at the Annual Exhibition 2008

1. Toni Bartl prize for Portraiture – Derek Roberts for 'Helen'
2. Sue Hayward Award for the Most Progressive Work – Graham Lewinton for 'Mother Earth – How do we Treat Her? Shameful'
3. The Judith Oylar Prize – for the Most Meritorious Work – Lynn Lovett for 'Head of a Woman'
4. The Lincolnshire Society of Architects Prize for a Work which best exemplifies the Art of Architecture – Alan Parker for 'Starhouse'
5. The Gill Nadin Prize for the most outstanding Drawing in any medium – Jilly Shore – for 'On the Shelf'
6. The Maggie Dean Memorial Prize for the Most Lively Work – Ken Lee for 'The Art Gallery – Triptych'
7. The Speedframe Framing Prize – David Morris for 'Sunlight Corner, Venice'
8. The Ruddock Award – Leszek Dabrowski for ' Barbate Walk'

A total of 34 works were sold grossing £8,281.00.

A vote of thanks must go to our Honorary Exhibitions Secretary, Richard Hatfield, for the splendid work he always does in hanging our exhibitions. This was particularly evident in the presentation of this year's show.

An Evening with Clients of A. J. Walter (Auctioneers & Estate Agents) to savour our work at the Usher

On the evening of the 12th February, the Tuesday after the opening of our Annual Exhibition at the Usher Gallery the previous Saturday, Ian Walter, a very good Friend of the Society, hosted a gathering of his Clients. This private view was a very enjoyable affair and we, no doubt, gained a new audience for our work that night. It also generated further sales of artwork. Some of the guests declared that they had no idea the Gallery was so impressive as it was their first visit to the Usher. Ian expressed the wish to repeat the exercise and the staff at the Gallery were so pleased with the exposure the event had given to the Usher Gallery that they agreed that a repeat performance would be very beneficial both for the Usher and our Society.

Future Exhibitions

Autumn 2008

As circulated in our Newsletter an exhibition is to be held at The Gallery at Patchings Farm in Nottingham. I visited this excellent venue in Robin Hood country last autumn. There will be accommodation for about 70 works plus depending on the size of pieces entered. I noticed there was extra wall space down the side of the stairs leading up to the Gallery which is on the first floor. Details of entry for this show will be sent out soon. No decision has been made by the Management Committee about size limitation (if any) or how many entries will be allowed for each member.

Annual Exhibition 2009 at Beverley

I visited the Beverley Art Gallery earlier this year and met the curator in charge of exhibitions, Sally Hayes, who allowed me to photograph, for the Committee to see, the one gallery room we are allowed to use. This will only accommodate 70 pieces of work and so is as limited as Patchings for space. In addition to the problem of limited hanging space there will be the logistical problems of have an opening so far away from our customary exhibition centre, i.e. the Usher, but also with awarding and distributing Prizes. The arrangements for submission and selection of works will possibly be worked out in the same way as for the Patchings show.

The exhibition will be open sometime in May – provisionally running from 3rd May to 13th June 2009.

Autumn Exhibition – The Sam Scorer Gallery 2009

This is to take place from 7th to the 20th September 2009. This could possibly be an exhibition with a theme like the 'Paperworks' show at the Sam Scorer Gallery in 2007

Lectures

Over a good number of years Max Marschner has organised our Lecture Programme and it is fitting to pay tribute to him for all his hard work in carrying out this important task, particularly as he is now handing over to another. He has brought several very well known speakers such as Germaine Greer and Bridget Riley to Lecture us.

We welcome Alan Parker to the Committee to take over from Max. Alan arranged for our last speaker, Julian Freeman, who gave us a fascinating presentation on the past and future direction of British Art. Alan also fronted an interesting and, I thought lively and amusing, discussion on the afternoon before our evening lecture dealing with the vexed subject 'What is Art?' Predictably, no definitive answer was

arrived at! What was gratifying was the excellent attendance at our lecture in the evening. At this point it would be appropriate to thank Bruce Duncan, in charge of Publicity, for his excellent efforts in publicising our events including our exhibitions and lectures.

Autumn Lecture: This will be a presentation on Paula Rego by John McEwan and held on Wednesday 29th October in the lecture theatre in The Collection. More details will come out later but it can be assumed that it will start at 7.30pm.

The Future of the Society

At the opening of the annual exhibition an impassioned plea was made by member Ken Lee for a return of the Lincolnshire Artists' Society to the Usher Gallery every year and not biennially as has been ordained by those who oversee the running of the Gallery. My response to this was to arrange a meeting with the Director of the Gallery, Jeremy Webster, and I took Lesley Stoneham, Deputy Chair, and Ken Lee along with me. We had a two hour long discussion with Jeremy when we put forward our case for a return to the status quo. It became clear that the idea of an 'Open Exhibition' was not going to be abandoned and that the L.A.S. would be absent from the Usher Gallery in the years the Open was on. Lesley suggested that the L.A.S. could possibly put on a smaller exhibition in that year, perhaps with a given theme. Jeremy thought there might be a possibility of this happening.

Following on from this meeting I arranged for a number of people to be invited to our next Management Committee meeting. These invited guests included Jeremy Webster (who was entitled to attend anyway), Maggie Warren, Andrea Martin, Jonathan Platt at the County Council, and David Freeman Chairman of the Friends of the Usher. Some were not available to attend but an interesting discussion ensued.

In the meantime I felt that the changes being brought in were more or less cut and dried and I opened the discussion by stating that in my opinion the Society should accept the changes envisaged. I suggested that its members put all their energies and enthusiasm into supporting the Biannual Open Exhibition to make it a success and using it to the advantage of the Society to find new members. We are assured the L.A.S. will be represented on the Selection Committee. I sketched a vision of a more ambitious event developing - a Lincoln Biennial Festival of the Arts. I put forward the idea of considering the exhibition rooms (spaces) in both the Usher Gallery and the Collection building across the road as one entity - 'The Lindum Hill Galleries', or whatever. This would mean a much more ambitious Open Exhibition show and the following year the Lincolnshire Artists Society would have the same spaces. This would make it possible for the L.A.S. to expand and put on works which need much more space - installations, etc. thus attracting more innovative art-workers. The prospect of joining an art society with these facilities the following year would be a strong attraction for artists of nation-wide reputations to join us. I believe Jeremy is keen to give the county a regional if not national profile. In a recent letter to me Jeremy Webster has indicated that he has taken some of these ideas on board. He says "This is a very exciting time. The prospect of a Biennial Festival of the Arts in Lincoln is very exciting and has already got people talking." He also goes on to say "The Collection is seeking ways of working with LAS members on future collaborations. This may include additional opportunities in intervening years; with that in mind we would be interested in working with the LAS to develop briefs for these shows which set a challenge to members and link our collections with new work by members. It is early days but I must reiterate we are keen to explore new ways of working with the LAS that generates new art work and new audiences. I find this very exciting and I hope members of the LAS will also find the challenge simulating." He ends his letter by saying "I look forward to a constructive and mutually beneficial relationship."

The Collection Studio: This is in the building at the bottom of Danes Gate below The Collection. It is a working space that will be available to our members during the summer months and a flier is being prepared to send out to LAS members with the next Newsletter. This could be a great opportunity as there will be equipment for various craft processes such as etching, ceramics, etc.

Finding Exhibition Venues: Some of our Committee members have found suitable venues for us to hold exhibitions when we are not able to be in the Usher. It is vitally important that more venues are found and I believe it is the responsibility of all our members to find additional exhibition spaces. We also need spaces for when we are to hold a smaller exhibition during our year at the Usher (such as Patchings this year). I have recently looked at the new Epic Project building on the Lincolnshire Showground. Ian Walter has said he thinks there may be some opportunity there to exhibit work. The new University buildings need to be investigated from this point of view too.

The schedule for the LAS and Open Exhibitions:

The timing for this is only provisional as there are no definite dates for the refurbishment of the Usher Gallery, which will possibly have to close at some time for this.

Schedule:

April 2007 – March 2008 LAS

April 2008 – March 2009 Open

April 2009 - March 2010 LAS

April 2010 - March 2011 Open (possibly scheduled for the early summer to coincide with the Book Festival etc. part of the creation of a Lincoln Biennial Arts Festival?)

The financial years make a difference.

How this will work out for us is not very clear but I am sure Jeremy will be able to elucidate when things settle down and become clearer.

Thanks to the Members of the Management Committee: My thanks go first to my Deputy Chairman, Lesley Stoneham, who has always been on call when I have needed help and support. The Committee has worked very hard this year, as always, and deserve to be thanked wholeheartedly by the Membership. I have been staunchly supported by them and they have my heartfelt appreciation. Some I have mentioned at appropriate points in this report but there are others I have not mentioned. Many thanks to them. Thanks to those who have dealt with the sales, welcoming guests to our shows, providing refreshments, selling the Centenary Books, particularly Edward Mayor who has diligently held book sales over the year and Fiona Proctor.

Our Secretary, Derek Roberts has done a great job and now retires but says he will help with sales. Many thanks Derek. I would like to thank Jacky Lee for agreeing to take over from Derek as I am sure she will do a great job as Secretary. Also thanks to Janet Schooley who takes over as minutes secretary. Jacky has been superb as minutes secretary as I well remember when Secretary of the Society. Many thanks for those years of your wonderfully prompt supply of the minutes, Jacky! Finally I thank our President and Vice Presidents for their support. They are the permanent bunch of stalwarts who form the core of this splendid Society. Thanks to David Morris for also keeping an eagle eye on subscriptions.

The years ahead are going to be challenging but I believe this society is strong enough to survive and to thrive into the future. In closing I would like to quote a passage from Edward's superb History of the Society – "The Society is a great survivor, innately conservative, as most societies are, it has welcomed those who did things differently and created waves. It has renewed itself through two World Wars, severe economic recession in Lincolnshire, and several alarming haemorrhages of Membership numbers. Its relationship with the Usher Gallery has been crucial and symbiotic, and its future will depend on the evolution of new relationships with its host."

Best wishes to all and here's to another successful year

Treasurers Report – John Maddison

Financial Statements for year ended 31st March 2008 circulated

'Mr. President

Once again it gives me great pleasure to present your accounts, this time for the year ending 30 March 2008, for, as you will see, the Society's finances remain in great shape. A far cry, I would suggest, from a few years ago, when I had to warn you that if something was not done, and done pretty soon, the Society was heading for the rocks. However, one small word of warning. When you come to look at the actual figures, there are several factors peculiar to the year in question, which need to be borne in mind.

1. In the recent past, the Society celebrated its Centenary Year, meaning that it not only received several unusually large donations and other income, it also incurred some unusually large expenditure. Some of those amounts spread over into the following year, creating a certain amount of distortion.
2. This year's Usher Exhibition was held earlier than usual and, in consequence, it straddled two financial years, the one in question and the current one, with the result that some of the income by way of sales appears under the year 2007/8 yet none of the payments owing to the artists was actually made until 2008/9.

The overall effect is, then, that last year's figures appear to be a little healthier than they really are and next year's will be that much less so. Comparison of these accounts, with those of last year and next can be, therefore, somewhat misleading. However, despite that health warning, I am still able to repeat with confidence that the Society remains in sound financial health. Turning to the details before you, you'll no doubt be pleased to hear that I won't bore you with every item, but merely highlight a few of the more important items. And of course, as ever, if you have any simple questions, I will try to answer them. More difficult ones may require a telephone call to the accountants.

The first inside page gives a summary of all our income and expenditure for the year and compares them with the previous, and this is where it is important to remember the health warning, for while subscription income was broadly in line with the previous year's, commission on paintings appears to be considerably higher. That is, until you recall the fact that some of the sales money is included but none of the artists' payments are. Similarly the income and expenditure on the book don't bear year-to-year comparison, mainly because these were one-off items. The overall effect of these is that with an income of £5213 and expenditure of £5968, there was a net deficit of £754 compared with last

year's of £6278. Below that, we see that due to some sound investment policy, interest on our reserves more than doubled

Over to the right hand page we see the effect all this has had on our balances, leaving the Society with a grand total of £13,227 in the bank.

The back page merely details the various functions held during the year totalling the £3680 we saw on the first page.

Some members have suggested to me that £13,000 is far too large a sum for a Society like ours to be (as they see it) hoarding. The fact is, ladies and gentlemen that just as your personal expenses are spiralling, so too, are those of the Society and this, together with the possibility of only one major exhibition every two years instead of every year, leads me to the belief that our current bank balance may well be much needed in years to come. At the equivalent of little more than only six pints of beer a year, your annual subscription appears to me to be very good value for money and I would hate to go back to those years, when we were facing financial difficulties and a possible increase in subscription. Things are very good at the moment – Let's keep it that way if we can.

As I said, if there are any questions, I will do my best with them, after that, or if not, I would hereby propose that you formally adopt the audited accounts, as printed.

I thank you'.

The chairman seconded this proposal. Unanimously agreed

On behalf of the committee and membership the Chairman offered his sincere thanks for all John's hard work and support for the Society

Election – Management Committee

One vacancy Alan Parker proposed: Derek Roberts, 2nd Peter Moss - unanimous

Election of Officers

Treasurer	John Maddison	proposed: F. Marston, 2 nd C. Butler – vote unanimous
General Secretary	Jacky Lee	proposed: C. Butler, 2 nd J. Maddison – vote unanimous
Minutes Secretary	Janet Schooley	proposed: P. Moss, 2 nd J. Lee – vote unanimous
Exhibition Secretary	Richard Hatfield	proposed: G. Ross Kelsey, 2 nd J. Carter – vote unanimous.
Membership Secretary	David Morris	proposed: M. Marschner, 2 nd R. Hatfield – vote unanimous
Publicity Officer	Bruce Duncan	proposed: P. Moss, 2 nd .R. Critchlow – vote unanimous
Sales Officer	Derek Roberts	proposed: C. Butler, 2 nd F. Procter – vote unanimous

Any Other Business

John Maddison: directions for Patchings in Calverton needed – include map in Newsletter.

Suggested transport sharing for members to attend Preview. Bus to be considered

Alison: enquiry on Usher Open Exhibition. There will be a guest selector/curator and 1 representative from LAS will be included

Edward Mayor: suggested we push for a permanent home/headquarters for Society to include gallery space for regular large exhibition. Other societies have own premises.

Peter supported idea but stated problems of managing premises, maintenance and repair etc.

It was agreed to set up a sub committee to research into possible venues available.

Max Marschner, Rex Critchlow, Edward Mayor agreed to form sub-committee. [Awards for All could fund research] Ian Walter to be approached for advice, information etc.

Janet Schooley: prospect of exhibiting outside the County to new audiences was very exciting.

Rex Critchlow: enquired into issue of last exhibition - new members not getting selected. Frank informed meeting that this issue is being addressed and the Management Committee had decided to ensure every new member to have at least 1 work hung in the first exhibition after membership.

Peter Montgomery proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for all their hard work.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.