

The Arts Society Lincoln

Newsletter 15

Dear Member,

Firstly I would like to welcome all of you who have joined the Society recently. I hope you are enjoying the varied lecture programme. The Society's membership is growing slowly and once again I would encourage you all to introduce your friends. If a guest wishes to join the Society the guest lecture fee will be deducted from the annual fee. It is worth mentioning that besides the lectures, members receive the Arts Society Magazine with fascinating articles, news from other societies, lists of upcoming events around the country and books you might want to find as well as opportunities for travel with expert guides.

Over the last few months there has been a debate about the Articles of Association and the governance of The Arts Society. HQ sent out a document for consultation which many local societies found worrying. I think the fact that local societies had not always participated in national affairs made the main Board of the Society confident that they would meet no resistance to change. How wrong they were. Suddenly there was a great deal of interest among local societies and a number of experienced members began to question the proposals. We were most concerned that HQ were disenfranchising local societies and proposing to assume the management of the Arts Society as a whole without recourse to local groups. The Society is substantially funded by local groups and under the proposals they would no longer have had a majority on the main Board and so have no power to influence or prevent the direction the Board might wish to take. An EGM was held at the beginning of June at which the new Articles were proposed. The Arts Society Lincoln voted against them. Civic Election Services undertook the voting process and the results were as follows :

1. The total number of votes was 297 (369 societies were eligible to vote)
2. In favour – 86
3. Against - 206
4. Abstentions - 5

A special resolution requires 75% or more of the vote to be cast in favour. The result shows how much local societies value their part in the Society's management and future. As a result there will be no change in our relationship with HQ and all it offers. Of particular value is the Directory of Lecturers.

Since the last Newsletter we have had four lectures. 'The Art of the Automobile' by Roger Mendham, at first sight an unlikely lecture for the Arts Society, was a stunningly illustrated history of early automobiles going on to describe the iconic Art Deco inspired motors of the thirties. Caroline Shenton brilliantly described how, during the second world war, the great art treasures of the national galleries were secreted away across the country by an unlikely group of curators and civil servants. After Mark Ovenden's lecture, '160 Years of London Underground Design', we will never travel the London Underground without recognising bits of its history in the fonts used in signage or striking architectural designs either influenced by continental buildings or conversely a pioneering influence for them. Last night Malcolm Jones took us through the West End Theatre of the 1930s and more, with Noel Coward and Ivor Novello. Then he opened our eyes to the Unity Theatre and The Theatre Workshop and amazed us with the number of well-known actors who cut their teeth in these dramatically new theatres where reality not escapism ruled the day and new audiences from the working classes were the target. Also since I last wrote we have had an outstandingly good study day titled 'Unravelling the Silk Road'. Chris Aslan captivated us with the depth of his knowledge of Central Asia, mesmerised us with beautiful fabric designs and challenged us to be more discerning when we purchase clothes and to recycle wherever possible.

The committee has decided to pause the coffee mornings over the summer months starting again in September so you will not be receiving the monthly invitation. To end on a cheerful note, thanks to all of you who have introduced new members, we have decided that there will be no increase in subscriptions for the year 2024-25. The more new members we can enlist the easier it will be to keep the annual subscription at a reasonable level. You will shortly be receiving the programme for next year and I hope you will advertise it widely and encourage others to come along.

Anne Coltman

10th June 2024

