

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE AGM OF THE ARTS SOCIETY GRANTHAM 2019/2020

At the end of the year 2019/20 I am pleased to report that The Arts Society Grantham is continuing to function despite the restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus Pandemic. We have a membership of 230 which includes 5 new members.

Our programme was well received during the months from September 2019 until February 2020, when seemingly the whole country not only went into shock, but was subject to lockdown. For this reason, not only were our lectures cancelled from March, but our much anticipated visit to Yorkshire in May was unable to go ahead, along with the proposed Young Arts Competition. All plans for further events during the year were put on hold. Our AGM which has traditionally been held in June was also postponed.

However, we began our year with a very successful visit to Houghton Hall in Norfolk organised by our excellent Visits Organisers, Pauline Imber and Audrey Mitchell. In March we held a Study Day at Easton Walled Garden with a lecture on Chinese Imperial Court Costume delivered by David Rosier. This was a memorable event in a venue we hope to use again.

The Arts Society is not only about receiving information through lectures, but it is about personal contact between members sharing a mutual interest. Unfortunately all personal interaction came to a halt. In its place, we have become reliant on technology. Many of us have had to embrace skills never previously contemplated. I speak for myself as a person who has yet to master the TV remote controls (on the rare occasions that The Husband allows access). I now hold regular committee meetings by Zoom and my vocabulary includes technical terms which only a few months ago would have been totally foreign to me.

During this year TASG has been fortunate to have retained a committed and professional Committee who have ensured that the membership has not only been kept informed, but provided with information to enable access to Arts related opportunities both locally and nationally. Carole Brownridge has taken on the challenging role of Lecture Secretary replacing Penny Whitbread - who after many successful years in that role, has become our Independent Member without portfolio. A huge thank you to members of the Committee who are retiring from their posts after many years of dedicated service to the Arts Society Grantham, Barbara Lawry, Philippa Bason and one of the founding members, Jill Speechley.

I am pleased to report that all remaining Committee members are willing to stand and take us through another - we hope - successful year. A special mention for the volunteers, led by Vice Chairman Sue Sang, who helped to ensure that our pre-lecture provision of refreshment continued through until the March lockdown. It provided such an ideal opportunity for members to interact with not only each other, but with members of the Committee. We also thank the volunteers who helped in our registration, led by Jane Shone our Membership Secretary, and Willow Stacey who prepared a list of local Arts Exhibitions each month (sadly no longer relevant with current restrictions).

Our initial plan to hold lectures in the Parish Church of St Wulfram by kind permission of the rector Fr. Stuart Cradduck, which would have started in September was foiled by the virus. Initially this seemed the perfect solution, but it was not to be. We retain the equipment purchased to execute this plan in the hope that next year a decline in the level

of infection might lead to relaxation of the rules governing social gatherings, giving us access to this amazing venue. We continue to keep lines of communication with the membership open through MailChimp and the monthly Chairman's letter

I would like to thank my Vice Chairman, Committee, Society members and friends for supporting me during my very challenging second year as your Chairman. I look forward to not only ensuring delivery of our lecture programme to you for the remainder of the year, but the hope that one day we can meet again in real in time, and deliver the exciting plans for future events which we as a Committee have stored - somewhere on a cloud - until they can become a reality.

At the end of an extraordinary year we wish you and your families well.

Kate Midgley
Chairman TASG
November 2020