



**Arts Richmond**

ETNA Community Centre

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# Annual Report

## April 2020-March 2021

### APRIL 2020 – DECEMBER 2020

This reporting period covers the months in 2020 affected by the pandemic, from the first national lockdown (March 2020- July 2020) to the beginning of the second in November 2020.

With the closure of ETNA and with no access to our office for 5 months it was necessary for us to adapt quickly to the ‘new normal’. Linda Hansell, our Administrative Officer set up our temporary office on her kitchen table and we immediately explored and conquered the world of Zoom and on line meetings. The utter determination to carry on shown by the core team: Linda Hansell, Linda White, Jean Wit and Anne Warrington at this point was unbelievable. Linda White continued to produce our newsletter, albeit only as an online version from April to October. She developed various ideas for maintaining interest and a number of societies and individuals had the opportunity to share their histories and activities with us. Anne Warrington, with Jean Wit, worked on our amazing ‘Poem a Day’ feature on our website; Linda White selected and published our Artist of the Day which again was an extraordinary achievement. We maintained this activity throughout the dark days making sure we were in contact regularly with our writers, artists and affiliates through social media. This core team deserve our deepest admiration. Without them, Arts Richmond might have been unable to function at this time and we shall always be grateful to them. The Team reviews that follow in this Annual Report detail the activities of this period.

Sadly, we lost important members of our Arts Richmond community in this period. Rita Stringer, a stalwart member of Richmond Shakespeare Society and friend of Arts Richmond died in September 2020; Geoffrey Morgan, a wonderfully loyal supporter of Arts Richmond and much loved husband of Heather Morgan, a long term committee member and active stuffer and Showcoacher, died in October 2020 and Howard Greenwood, a valued trustee and hugely important figure on the Richmond classical music scene who died in November 2020. Their obituaries were published in our Newsletters. All three will be sadly missed.

Nicholas George was elected as Chairman of Arts Richmond at the delayed AGM on 2 December 2020. The Executive Committee was unanimous in acknowledging and thanking Hilary Dodman for her 6 years tireless service as Chair and indeed her continuing involvement as Chair of the Literature & Drama and Visual Arts Teams.

## JANUARY 2021 - JULY 2021

With the second lockdown casting its shadow over the first half of 2021, this has been a year of survival and consolidation but also, importantly, innovation. The resolutions of a new year, under a new chairman, first bore fruit when our Sub-Committees became Teams and managed under project tracking principles. We have a delivery focussed Team for each arts sector that actively engages with our affiliates, members, and partners to continue to promote Richmond as a centre of excellence for the arts.

Our priority has been to maintain and build on our communication and engagement with an ever-growing list of members, affiliates, strategic partners and, now more than ever, followers on social media. The latter achievement is in no small part attributable to the recruitment and efforts of a new Press Officer who, along with Linda Hansell, brought about a quantum leap forward in our presence and engagement level across social media. More traditional forms of communication, such as the monthly newsletter, have proved their worth in these times of social isolation. Our thanks go out, once again, to Linda White for maintaining this essential outreach lifeline during the lockdown.

Another example of our increasing engagement was when our new chairman canvassed the opinions of our members and affiliates on Richmond Council's overall approach and method of consultation in developing their new '*10 Year Vision for Culture and Strategy*' announced last January, as an introductory, investigatory initiative to facilitate his orientation and understanding of the arts scene in Richmond.

We mentioned earlier that this has been a year of innovation, and, at Arts Richmond, we have delivered this in spades, by embracing virtual technology and migrating existing events, wherever possible, to on-line events, also developing innovative new events in the process. These have included:

- A series of webinars for the Richmond Literature Festival in November 2020, including a talk from our President Sir Vince Cable about his latest book '*China Engage! Avoid the New Cold War*' with an audience Q&A
- A virtual broadcast of our annual '*Young Writers Festival*' live from The Exchange theatre in March 2021 - hosted by our Chairman and His Worship, Geoff Acton, Mayor of Richmond
- A brand new weekly series of virtual events entitled '*Talking Lockdown*' led by Sue Pandit, was planned in this period: it will be fully reported in the next Annual Report (2021-2022).
- Also in the pipeline is another innovative new on-line event with the working title '*Radio Plays*'. We would like to thank Nancy Baldwin for steadfastly developing her idea, which will give up-and-coming writers and voice actors a chance to perform and compete in a risk-free developmental environment. The recent announcement of the event has already attracted 39 entries, please lookout for further details on our website. This will also be fully reported in the next Annual Report (2021-2022).

If all this was not enough, then Arts Richmond's delivery focussed Teams have preserved almost all our annual programme of non-virtual events. These will include *Artist of the Year*, *The Diana Armfield Drawing Competition* and *The Roger McGough Poetry Competition* and *Showcoach* events - all going ahead and planned in the remainder of this year (post-lockdown conditions allowing). For this we must thank our intrepid teams themselves who include Anne Warrington, Janet Langhorne and Peter Cregeen.

There was, sadly, one casualty in our roster of annual events, our iconic, historic, and highly popular Swan Awards. However, the Swans will be back, at full strength, in September 2022.

## **1. Objectives**

Our Executive Committee works hard in pursuit of our objective to develop, produce and promote a huge range of arts events and activities from ourselves and from our Richmond based affiliated groups and societies and to represent their best interests. We also encourage debate and engage with key stakeholders, associates and partners, including Richmond Council, concerning strategy in the borough to support and fund the arts.

## **2. Management and membership**

Arts Richmond is managed by its Executive Committee and, on a day-to-day basis, by a professional administrator supported by volunteers.

The Executive Committee benefits from the work of four delivery Teams: Literature & Drama (including Poetry), Visual Arts, Music and *Showcoach* and we are actively seeking to recruit new members to maintain the powerhouse of new ideas, initiatives and to ensure ongoing sustainability.

Arts Richmond's joint Presidents are Sir Vince and Lady Cable. Although the role is honorary, we are most grateful to Sir Vince's for his active involvement in our innovative new virtual events over the past year.

Our trustees are: Clive Bradley, Cllr John Coombs, Sandra Green, Gillian Thorpe and Rachel Tranter.

We are grateful to them for their valued support.

We meet our society representatives and members formally at the AGM and informally at many functions throughout the year, although these meetings have been virtual throughout 2020/21.

Nicholas George and Nancy Baldwin were elected to the committee at the 2020 AGM. Hilary Dodman and Janet Langhorne were re-elected.

Three serving councillors are invited to observe and we are most grateful for their advice and assistance with our activities. They are: Cllr. Lesley Pollesche, Cllr. Jim Millard and Cllr. Jo Humphreys.

## **3. Communication and Publicity**

Linda White continues to produce our monthly *What's On* Newsletter. We are enormously grateful for her commitment and reliability. 1,000 copies are printed each month and distributed to our members and affiliates, libraries and Visit Richmond outlets. An electronic version is also distributed.

The newsletter regularly runs to 8 pages – evidence of the numerous activities of our affiliated societies and the importance they attach to inclusion of their events in our publicity. The distribution of flyers for the local events through the newsletter is an important part of our service to our affiliates.

The website and our rapidly evolving Social Media campaigns are also vital communication tools. Linda Hansell and her volunteers are skilled in uploading information and in ensuring our information appears on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. She also continues to use Mailchimp which has helped greatly with our distribution and database capabilities.

Despite lockdown we were able to maintain over 100 local organisations renewing their affiliation with us. This is mainly due to the much increased presence on all our social media platforms bringing over 5000 visits to our website per month. We now have over 5000 followers across Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. During the first lockdown we were forced

to stop printing our monthly Newsletter and kept our members updated with an electronic version. Once we were back in the office we were able to start mailing again. Linda Hansell handled that each month on her own and was delighted to be able to invite the much valued staffers back to ETNA in June, restrictions allowing. They are Zeena Clark, Hilary Dodman, Janet Langhorne, Jenny Mason, Heather Morgan, Rosalind Potter, Linda White. We are again indebted to Jean Wit, our Assistant Treasurer who continues to volunteer in the office two days a week. Also Linda White who has kept up with the editing of the monthly Newsletter always looking for items of interest to keep us going through the lockdown. Thank you also to Gillian Thorpe who helps Linda proof-reading each month.

#### **4. Partnership with LBRuT**

We greatly value our ongoing partnership with LBRuT and our relationship as both Richmond's key arts delivery provider. We are grateful for their recent acknowledgment that "*Arts Richmond are a very important cultural organisation within and for the Borough*". Indeed, we are immensely proud of the quantity, quality and diversity of the events we deliver for Richmond annually, lockdown or no lockdown, and all on a voluntary basis. These events alone represent astounding value for funds provided.

The starting point of our relationship is always to partner and support LBRuT in every way we can. We strongly believe it is our Chairman's and Executive Committee's essential role to consult closely with Richmond Council on all matters pertaining to the arts and to input our knowledge, experience, and expertise to develop a meaningful and impactful cultural strategy for Richmond.

#### **5. Visual Arts** (Team Leader: Hilary Dodman)

Team members: Linda White, Sue Ribbans, John Coombs, Heather Montford.

This reporting year (April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 – March 2021) began at the height of lockdown when all public events were cancelled or postponed. However, the team continued to meet regularly on Zoom, took difficult decisions together and continued planning for future events where we possibly could.

For the second year running we were unable to run our **Affordable Art Tent** at Richmond May Fair.

The new event, our **Richmond Artist of the Year** that was to be held in the stunning surroundings of the Kempton Steam Museum at the end of May, had to be cancelled. Our generous sponsors, Haynes Fine Art, have kindly agreed to help us on the re-arranged date, August 28<sup>th</sup> 2021.

In August restrictions were sufficiently lifted for Nicky Browne, a local professional artist and former Visual Arts committee member, to hold a number of **Sketching Days** in association with us. These were well attended (within the numbers allowed) and the most wonderful opportunities for people to meet together, albeit socially distanced and outside in some inclement weather!

Planning for the **Diana Armfield Prize for Drawing from Observation** began in the spring of 2021. The event has been postponed to July 2021 so, like the Artist of the Year competition, will fall in the next reporting period.

During the year we met Kate Howe, a professional artist who has established a studio in Hampton Wick. She is keen to make a contribution to her locality and we talked to her about the Barnes Art Trail, a well-established event run by local artist, Katie James. Linda White held a very useful learning session with Katie and we are now ready to start planning for a similar event, hopefully in spring 2022, in one of our local high streets.

I am very grateful to the Visual Arts team for their unstinting interest and support through a difficult year and to Linda Hansell, our indefatigable Administrative officer, without whom nothing would happen!

## 6. Literature (April 2020 – December 2020)

(Team Leader: Hilary Dodman)

Team members: Gillian Thorpe, Heather Montford, Anne Warrington, Peter Cregeen, Nancy Baldwin, Jean Wit, Sue Pandit, Katie Abbott, Linda White

The first lockdown began a few days before this reporting period started. The team responded positively and quickly became experts on Zoom, meeting regularly on line.

A determination to keep our profile active during lockdown led to our **Poem a Day** feature on our website. Led by **Anne Warrington** this became a popular resource for our local writers many of whom are active members of the **Adelaide Poetry Hub** group. Active support from **Linda Hansell and Jean Wit** meant that this astonishing feature was maintained throughout the lockdown period.

Luckily, the culmination of our annual **Young Writers Competition** (2019-2020), the wonderful presentation event at the Exchange Theatre, had taken place on March 15<sup>th</sup>, immediately before lockdown. Planning for the 2020-2021 Young Writers' competition began immediately afterwards with a launch in September and a closing date in December 2020. There were 400 entries.

We were able to plan and launch our annual, prestigious **Roger McGough poetry competition**. The theme we agreed was 'Identity'. Launched in September there were 274 entries before the closing date in December.

With the reintroduction of restrictions in October, the entire **Richmond Literature Festival (LitFest)** was moved on line. Linda Hansell led our training in the art of webinars and we delivered our three contributions to the Festival with great confidence and success. The first (November 11<sup>th</sup>) was our esteemed President, Sir Vince Cable, on his new book, 'China: the new Cold (and Hot?) War'; the second (November 18<sup>th</sup>) was 'Writing about Jazz', a group discussion led by Peter Jones, jazz journalist and author with Alyn Shipton, author and presenter of BBC Radio 3 Jazz Record Requests, jazz drummer and biographer, Clark Tracey and Emma Warren, documenter of today's exciting London jazz scene. The third event was Dr. Stephen Davies on his book, 'The Street-wise Guide to the Devil and His Works'; a fascinating study of the idea of the Devil as a key figure in all cultures.

All three events attracted good audiences with lively Q and A sessions following the entertaining speakers.

I am grateful to all the team members for their active and enthusiastic contributions to the team effort through a difficult period. Linda Hansell, our Administrative officer has generously supported us throughout particularly as we came to grips with modern technology!

## 7. Drama (April 2020 – December 2020)

(Team Leader: Gillian Thorpe)

Team members: Nancy Baldwin, Anne Warrington, Sue Bell, Laurie Coombs

The impact of the pandemic was particularly felt by this team. With no theatre productions our Swan Awards programme and the activities of our judging panel, came to an abrupt halt at the beginning of this reporting period.

However, with 7 months of productions to consider (September 2019 – March 2020) it was possible to award Swans and our usual glittering awards ceremony in September was replaced by an amazingly glittering on line event! Twenty-six awards were given ranging from Best Young Performer under 19 (Thaisa Smart as Robin Hood in *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood* Barnes Charity Players) to the Arts Richmond Accolade for services to the Arts in Richmond (Keith Wait).

Presenters Nancy Baldwin and David Menkin provided a spell-binding, professional commentary throughout the evening whilst the Zoom 'chat' reflected the excitement. Guests present included Arts Richmond Presidents, Sir Vince and Lady Cable and the Mayor of

Richmond upon Thames, Cllr. Geoff Acton. Approximately 65 participants took part on the Zoom for nominees and over 300 joined in with the link to YouTube. This wonderful event would not have been possible without the technical expertise provided by Blue Fire Productions and the feat of overall organisation by Laurie Coombs. We are enormously grateful to all concerned.

Though live performances ceased during lockdown our resourceful affiliated drama companies developed all kinds of on line productions and our team of Swan judges set about learning how best to assess the quality of such work. In the period from April to September they saw five performances that were submitted for judgement and awarded three prizes: Best Production, Best Performance and Judges' Award (Virtual) for a particularly special moment. The winners will receive their prizes at the Swan Awards night in September 2022.

We are very grateful to the team of Swan judges for staying loyal through a very lean period and for their continued efforts on behalf of Arts Richmond and all the affiliated Drama and Musical Societies who put forward their wonderful productions for the Swan Awards. Through this period the judges were: Benedict Dias, Philippa Egan, Margaret Keelan, Graham Nugent, Elizabeth Slater and Warren Walters. Keith Wait and Anne Warrington were very much involved as mentors and remain active in this area. We are enormously grateful to them all.

## **8. Drama/Literature Team January 2021- March 2021**

(Team Leader: Hilary Dodman)

Team Members: Gillian Thorpe, Nancy Baldwin, Anne Warrington, Katie Abbott, Jean Wit, Peter Cregeen, Linda White, Heather Montford, Sue Pandit

The Drama and Literature teams were merged at the Executive meeting in January 2021. It was felt that cross over events would be better delivered by a joint team.

### **8a. Literature Team**

In January the 400 entries for the **Young Writers' Competition** were sifted by members of the team and then passed on to three judges for the final selection of winners (Heather Montford, Anne Beach and Imogen Bond). We are very grateful to them for this important contribution. Prizes were awarded in four age categories and the presentation event held as a live stream from the Exchange Theatre on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The winning entries were presented as dramatised readings by a wonderful trio of young actors ( A.J.MacGillivray, Jo Shirley and Cara Steele) rehearsed and directed by Keith Wait, a skilled and experienced director and generous supporter of Arts Richmond. Present at the theatre, in addition to the actors, were the Mayor of Richmond upon Thames, Cllr. Geoff Acton and the Chairman of Arts Richmond, Nicholas George. Sadly the prizewinners themselves were obliged to watch from home but were invited to share their reactions to winning and hearing their work performed. Though inevitably different, this event still managed to excite and amaze the audience through the quality of the work and the expertise of the young actors.

The 274 entries for the **Roger McGough Poetry Competition** were judged in this period. This enormous and challenging task was undertaken by Matthew Griffiths, Greg Freeman, Judith Blakemore Lawton and Anne Warrington.

Main Judge: Roger McGough

An anthology of the 40 poems selected by our panel as potential winners has been created by Matthew Griffiths with crucial support from Anne Warrington and Sue Ribbons, the designer. Roger McGough himself will select the winning entries and will present the awards in person at an event delayed until September 2021. We are grateful to them all.

A huge amount of work has been involved in the organization of this competition and we are particularly grateful to Anne Warrington for her determination to see the project through in difficult times.

Planning for two exciting new ventures took place in this period: A series of on line presentations: '**Talking Lockdown**' and the very first **Arts Richmond Radio Play** competition. We are indebted to Sue Pandit and Nancy Baldwin respectively for their dynamic and innovative contributions to our programme. Both events will come to fruition outside this reporting period (in May 2021 and November 2021); full details will appear in next year's report.

### **8b. Drama Team**

With a continued absence of live performances in our theatres and drama spaces the **Swan Judges** were unable to do any 'judging' in this period (January 2021 – March 2021). We all look forward to the lights coming on again and to a busy Swan season, whenever it begins!

## **9. Showcoach**

(Chair: Janet Langhorne)

Team Members: Jean Wit, Linda White, Heather Morgan, Hilary Dodman)

Although 2020 has been an unfortunate year for everyone we at Arts Richmond have made a lot of effort to stay smiling and think of different ways of keeping in touch. We held regular Arts Richmond Zoom meetings during the year to discuss Showcoach amongst all other areas of Arts Richmond

Our annual residential trip, this time to Northumberland, in June had to be postponed to October. These trips involve a lot of planning by us and Heritage Travel who were very helpful in keeping in contact with everyone. Then once again it had to be postponed due to further lockdowns. This trip is now re-arranged for September 2021 and we very much hope that it will finally be able to go ahead

Our annual visit to Chichester Festival Theatre for August had to be postponed. 54 tickets had been booked for South Pacific and all the preparation had been done for this trip. The theatre has held over our tickets for the same performance and special price for August 2021 We hope that this also will go ahead without further problems

By August when life seemed to be returning slightly to normal we arranged a visit to Orleans House Gallery. This was simply a social gathering for people and see one another again and proved very popular.

14 regular Showcoachers came to this and all enjoyed themselves

The Stables cafe was open and there was an exhibition in the Gallery.

I had also arranged for a volunteer guide to give us a potted history of Orleans House and those that wished could also visit the Octagon Room and Gallery. As OHG had been so helpful in providing the talk/tour we made a donation of £50 to their funds

In early March I contacted the Tate to arrange a Zoom tour and talk on the current Picasso exhibition . As I had little response, and certainly not enough people to cover the cost of the talk, I unfortunately had to cancel this provisional booking

Hopefully we will now be able to arrange more Showcoach outings in 2021-22 I would like to say thank you to my Showcoach team and Linda Hansell for all their support during this difficult year

## **10. Music Team**

(Team leader: Nicholas George)

2021 has continued to be a disastrous year for performing arts and live music concerts, with the 'Rule of 6' effectively wiping out concerts and rehearsals by orchestras, choirs and other

so called ‘super-spreader’ music events (although bafflingly not sporting events). At the same time virtual performances have not presented a viable solution for music, as with other areas of the arts, because of issues of sound quality and spatial considerations.

However, with the first light of a post-pandemic dawn appearing, we are delighted to hear of a few exciting developments from our affiliates. These include: a Grand Opera Gala by Instant Opera at Richmond Theatre on 25 September 2021; a new instrumental competition and masterclasses now in developmental stages and the possibility of Jazz Festival with regular weekly concerts in Richmond.

We greatly look forward to supporting more affiliates’ events in the remainder of this year.

## **10. Assuring quality for members and funders**

This is achieved through:

- Formal feedback forms and questionnaires.
- Messages via our Website and other social media channels
- Engagement with Richmond Council and other key cultural stakeholders e.g. The Richmond Society
- Views expressed at forums and other public meetings. Consultations with our members and affiliates with feedback provided
- Our teams meeting regularly to consider members’ views and expectations and take them into consideration when instigating projects and planning for future events
- Our office being open for contacts and prompt responses every day from 9.30am to 12.30pm

## **11. Thanks**

We are enormously grateful to Lynn Faulds Wood and John Stapleton for their generous support of Arts Richmond both before they took office as Presidents and throughout this year. As mentioned earlier, Lynn’s sudden death in April 2020 was a dreadful blow.

We welcome the Right Honourable Sir Vincent Cable and his wife, Lady Rachel Cable as our Presidents 2020-2021 and look forward very much to working closely with them.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Kay Williams and the David King Trust and are grateful to Squires Garden Centre, Richmond Shakespeare Society, Teddington Theatre Club, BROS, Nicky Browne, Emma Durnford, Pam Frazer and others for their generous donations to our annual raffles. We are also very grateful to our anonymous donors.

**Nicholas George, Chairman, July 2021**

# Arts Richmond

## Richmond-upon-Thames Arts Council

**Joint Presidents 2020-2021 The Rt. Hon. Sir Vince Cable and Lady Rachel Cable**

**Vice Presidents:** John Coombs, Hilary Dodman, Pam Frazer, Sandra Green, Edie Purdue

### **Officers and Executive 2020-2021**

*Chair* Nicholas George  
*Treasurer* Simon Bartlett  
*Asst Treasurer* Jean Wit

*Administrative Officer:*  
Linda Hansell

*Executive Members:*

Cllr. Geoff Acton  
Peter Cregeen  
Benedict Dias  
Hilary Dodman (VP)  
Janet Langhorne  
Heather Montford  
Gillian Thorpe  
Linda White  
Anne Warrington

*LBRuT Representatives*

Cllr. Jim Millard  
Cllr. Lesley Pollesche  
Cllr Jo Humphreys

*Co-opted Members*

Heather Morgan  
(Showcoach)  
Sue Ribbans (Visual Arts)  
Laurie Coombs (Drama)  
Sue Bell (Drama)

### **Trustees**

Clive Bradley  
John Coombs  
Sandra Green  
Howard Greenwood  
Gillian Thorpe  
Rachel Tranter

### **Past Presidents**

2013 Anne Sebba  
2014 Dame Jacqueline  
Wilson  
2015 Clive Bradley CBE  
2016 Sara Burn Edwards/  
Howard Greenwood BEM  
2017-18 Samantha Bond  
2018-19 Roger McGough  
2019-20 Lynne Faulds  
Wood & John Stapleton

### **Patrons**

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*Convenor of patrons:* Sara  
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