

A History of the Lichfield Society of Artists in Pictures

Dedicated to the many members, friends and supporters of the Lichfield Society of Artists who have upheld the objectives of the society's founders and built on their achievements.

Recipients of The Alfred Pochin Award 1965-2019

The Alfred Pochin Award is named in memory of the society's principal founding member. It has been awarded annually, since 1965, to members who have made outstanding contributions to the running of the society.

1965	BLANCHE POCHIN	1993	KEN HILLMAN
1966	SUSAN WILLIAMS	1994	MARY LISTER
1967	JOHN WARD	1995	CATHERINE CAMPBELL
1968	WILMA HARPER	1996	JANET COTTRELL
1969	SIBYL DODD	1997	CHARLES GRIFFITHS
1970	KATHLEEN WHITE	1998	ROYSTON EVANS
1971	ELIDH ARMOUR-BROWN	1999	MARGARET HARRISON
1972	GEORGE NEWMAN	2000	BRENDA TOWLSON
1973	MARGARET CASTELOW	2001	MIKE CUTTLE
1974	DORIS BEDNARSKA	2002	JOHN SANDERS
1975	JOHN WARD	2003	COLIN CLIFTON
1976	ALFRED ALLEN	2004	PAM TAYAR
1977	VERA BRACKNELL	2005	DAVID LAWTON
1978	JOAN CARRICK	2006	BRIAN EBREY
1979	JOHN SANDERS	2007	BRIAN MILLS
1980	PHYLLIS SLATER	2008	MARGARET PRINGLE
1981	BARBARA WALKER	2009	SUSAN PRICE
1982	EDGAR SHERLOCK	2010	JAN LEYTHAM-GAIN
1983	JACK SMITH	2011	FRED WRIGHT
1984	MIKE KILFOYLE	2012	BERYL EVANS
1985	BARBARA WALKER	2013	TONY ADAMS
1986	FRANCES GARRETT	2014	CHRISTINE TAYLOR
1987	CAROL SMITH	2015	DAVID LAWTON
1988	JEANNE LITTLEFORD	2016	CHRISTINE CARTER
1989	LINDSAY MACLOUD	2017	SUSAN BRINDLEY
1990	MARGARET NEWMAN-SMITH	2018	FRED WRIGHT
1991	ELIDH ARMOUR-BROWN	2019	BRIAN EBREY
1992	JACK BALLINGER		

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Lichfield Society of Artists

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N.B. the LSA website and email address have changed since this was published

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I thank Mary Pochin for inspiring this account of the society's history and Royston Evans for safeguarding and making available the earliest records on which much of it is based. They have both seen and commented on an advanced draft. Christine Taylor, Mark Thomas and Alison Churchill have also reviewed a draft version and made helpful observations, but bear no responsibility for any errors.

Permission to use the cuttings reproduced from the *Lichfield Mercury* has been given by the Editor Andy Kerr, *Lichfield Mercury / Reach PLC*. The *British Newspaper Archive* has been an invaluable source of information and research tool. The Sanders family and Abbotsford Publishing have given permission to reproduce the wood engravings by the late John Sanders used as illustrations for the front and back covers. I am grateful to Stephen Sanders for allowing me to take a photograph of the portrait bust of his late father and for providing me with all sorts of useful background information.

I thank Joanne Wilson, Museums and Heritage Officer, Lichfield City Council, and the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum for supplying information relating to the paintings by John Sanders in the Museum's possession.

The Staffordshire Regiment Museum has supplied and given permission to use the photograph of soldiers at Arras. Many of the photographs covering the years since 2015 have been taken by the author using his iPad. Many of the much better photographs from the late 1990s and early 2000s have been taken by Stuart Harrison and, since 2017, by committee member and professional photographer David Gough. Joan and Dennis Rolison have taken the majority of photographs documenting the society's exhibition awards.

Every effort has been made to identify the creators and sources of any material and images that remain unattributed. I thank the 'We Love Lichfield Fund' for awarding a generous grant toward the cost of printing this publication. Finally, I thank above all fellow society member Edith Gaxiola whose patience, professional skill as a graphic designer and generous donation of her time have made our collaboration to produce this booklet not only possible in the first place, but also a great pleasure.

INTRODUCTION

The inspiration for this publication came from a fascinating talk given to the society in 2015 by Mary Pochin, daughter of the society's late founder Alfred Pochin. I had only recently joined the society at the time. The names of the people and events mentioned by Mary in her presentation therefore initially meant very little to me. However, the fact that the society had obviously enjoyed a long and interesting history aroused my curiosity. Coming across a rare surviving copy of a collection of short essays published by the society in 1995 to mark its 50th anniversary made me even more curious. The subsequent discovery of an even rarer pamphlet written by the late Blanche Pochin, Alfred's widow, published by the society in 1974, reflecting on the first quarter of a century of the society's existence, provided additional insights into its formation and early years. Further valuable information came to light when I was invited, last year, by one of the society's past presidents, Royston Evans, to take possession of a veritable treasure trove of committee meeting minutes, exhibition catalogues, photographs and other society documents which had lain well protected, but otherwise undisturbed and unread in his attic for many years.

The sources of information mentioned above, given the considerable gaps in the story that still remained, would have been barely sufficient on their own to support a comprehensive account of the society's history. A couple of visits to the Lichfield Record Office at the library, just before its closure, with the intention of trawling through reels of microfilm containing past issues of the *Lichfield Mercury* in the hope of unearthing additional material quickly proved to be a deceptively tedious exercise. The attempt was therefore put to one side. However, the unexpected discovery, in January of this year, that digitally scanned copies of the *Mercury* covering the years 1950 to 1999 had recently been added to the website of the *British Newspaper Archive* suddenly made it possible to interrogate with relative ease this particularly useful source of information. The *Mercury* has regularly covered the society's public exhibitions and often provided accounts, many of them illustrated, of events that are sometimes only briefly mentioned in the society's own records. This not only made the spade-work of research much easier and more interesting; it also provided evidence that the society is older - albeit only by a few months - than it had previously believed itself to be.

For most of its existence, the society has taken 1945 to be the year in which it was founded. Its first public exhibition did indeed take place in June of that year. However, contemporary reports in the *Mercury* show that the society's first meeting, prominently advertised in the newspaper and attended by a substantial number of members, took place in the Guildhall as early as October 1944. This publication therefore takes the opportunity to put the record straight. The chance to rewrite history, albeit only the history of the local art society to which I belong, was not one to be lightly passed up!

The availability of the various sources of information mentioned above still makes it difficult to produce a historical account that is balanced and complete. The decision to tell the story chiefly in pictures relies on the chance survival, especially during the society's earliest years, of relatively few photographs taken before the advent of popular camera use and certainly well before the recent global phenomenon of ubiquitous smartphone-enabled photography and the modern vogue for taking 'selfies'. As a consequence, many of the unsung heroes who have done their valiant bit to keep the society going down the years remain not only unsung, but also largely invisible. I can therefore only offer the same apology for omissions and deficiencies of this kind that was given in the introduction to the society's commemorative 50th anniversary booklet and admit that this account has not only been 'limited by time, space and knowledge', but also frequently by the absence of photographic evidence. I hope, however, that this précis of the society's history, despite its shortcomings, is of interest to current and future members who may share my curiosity about its past and about the people who have run and supported it. Should the society still exist twenty-five years from now, I hope it may also be of use to anyone thinking of producing a commemorative centenary publication.

Jason Reakes
September 2019

THE HISTORY (1944-2019)

The Lichfield Mercury has been a regular reporter of the Lichfield Society of Artists' activities throughout its 75-year history. The society was founded in 1944 and initially called itself the Lichfield and District Society of Arts to reflect its inclusion of the three branches of music, painting and drama. It gradually narrowed its focus and, in 1954, changed its name to the Lichfield and District Society of Artists before settling, in 1975, on the shorter name by which it is known today. The first mention of the society in the Mercury appeared in the issue published on Friday 6 October 1944.



LICHFIELD AND DISTRICT SOCIETY OF ARTS
(MUSIC - PAINTING - DRAMA)
A GENERAL MEETING
will be held in
THE GUILDHALL (Opposite) Town, Market St, Lichfield,
on
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11th, 1944, at 7.30 p.m.
All interested are invited to attend.
The topic is country areas and together to meet, but particular will
be given to country areas and together to meet, but particular will
be given to country areas and together to meet, but particular will
be given to country areas and together to meet, but particular will

This advertisement on the front page of the Lichfield Mercury (6 October 1944) invited people to attend a public meeting in the Guildhall on Wednesday 11 October with the purpose of winning support for the proposed formation of a society devoted to the practice and appreciation of arts and crafts. Mention of 'those in country areas' shows that the society sought to attract members from outside the city as well as those resident in it. Throughout its history, around half of the society's members have typically been city residents, with the other half coming from the immediately surrounding areas in the district as well as from places further afield such as Cannock, Bridgton, Rugeley, Tamworth, Stafford, Sutton Coldfield and Walsall.

This report on page 4 of the Mercury (6 October 1944) provided information about the public meeting advertised on the front page of the same issue. The headline's reference to 'innovation' conveys the novelty of the venture. The broad sweep of the society's original ambition ranged from 'music in all its branches' to the visual arts, sculpture, architecture and 'drama in all its forms', and sought to appeal to many different interests. The statement that 'some eighty persons are desirous of membership' and the announcement of the society's intention to give 'special encouragement to local juvenile talent', expressed in the language of the time, must have been uplifting to a population weaned by years of war and deprivation. The report names Mr A. D. Fochin as the person to contact in connection with a meeting to be held on 11 October 'to start things moving'.

The Mercury's report on 6 October 1944 of an initiative to form a new arts society appeared directly alongside the reproduction of a letter written by the Colonel of the South Staffordshire Regiment, Major-General F. R. C. Commings, describing the outcome of one of the most famous battles of the Second World War. The Battle of Arnhem (17-26 September), in which members of the South Staffordshire Regiment played an important role, had been heroically fought and bloodily lost in Holland just a few days previously. Despite its reference to 'this magnificent feat of arms' and to 'the most glorious battle of the war', the stark statement that 'the cost has been heavy' would have prepared readers to brace themselves for the grim news that many men had been killed in the fighting.



D-Day invasion on the beaches of Normandy in June 1944, however, had shown that the course of the war had already turned decisively in favour of the Allies. An end to the conflict was in sight. It was possible, in October 1944, to envisage a happier existence and, indeed, at least for those in civilian life at home, to do something to help bring it about.

The Valiant Men of Arnhem THEIR VALOUR HAS NOT BEEN IN VAIN SAYS THE COLONEL OF THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT

TWO following letters have been addressed by the Colonel of the South Staffordshire Regiment (Major-General F. R. C. Commings, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.) to the relatives of the "Arnhem" men.

Perkins, Catherine, 1st October, 1944.

I write these few words in the hope that they may prove help to those who await news of the gallant men of the 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment (M.M.A. Post), 1st Arnhem Division.

First my sympathies I feel extended to all that can be done in being done to bring relief to all, as soon as possible, from the anxiety caused by Arnhem.

The Battle of Arnhem, the magnificent feat of arms, and the most glorious battle of the war, is over.

My thoughts and sympathy go out to the mothers, fathers, wives and sweethearts who await news of those who are dear to them.

My son and your son of our 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, have fought a good fight and victory, and they it is good to know that they have been made by their own hands.

I cannot do better than quote the glowing tribute paid to our heroes by the Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill.

Moving Armada have

already been given to the country and to the world of the glorious and heroic spirit which will take a lasting place in our military history. We are in a position to say that the cost has been heavy, but there is at least one consolation that the country has not been without much of the South Staffordshire Regiment with, I think, the finest of these valiant men, and we claim them as our own. They are indeed Guardians of Liberty and their valour has not been in vain.

(Sd.) F. COMMINGS
Colonel, The South Staffordshire Regiment

The South Staffordshire Regiment (M.M.A. Post), 1st Arnhem Division, has been awarded the Victoria Cross for its gallant action on September 17th, 1944, when it held the bridge over the Rhine for 48 hours, during which time it suffered heavy casualties.

DANCE FOR RED CROSS

The dance held at the Lichfield and District Society of Arts on September 11th was held in aid of the Red Cross. The proceeds of the dance were £100.00, which was handed over to the Red Cross by the Lichfield and District Society of Arts.

This photograph of young soldiers, taken during the action at Arnhem in September 1944, is reproduced with the kind permission of the Staffordshire Regiment Museum. Written reports on the same page of the Mercury describing very different civilian and military preoccupations conveyed the reality of life in wartime Britain in late 1944. News about Arnhem would have been distressing to read for bereaved relatives and those with loved ones serving in the 2nd Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment (Arnhem). The successful

The society's founder, Alfred Davis Pochin, was a designer, draughtsman, engineer, photographer and amateur astronomer. His wide-ranging cultural interests included music and opera and he had a particular enthusiasm for the visual arts. He may not have been, in his own estimation, a particularly gifted artist, but he was the man responsible for getting the society started. In the words of his wife, Blanche, many years later, "The war was nearing its end when my husband said one day, "You know we ought to have a society of artists in Lichfield and I am going to try and start one". To begin with, he sought the advice and expertise of the formidable Principal of the Lichfield School of Art,



Alfred Davis Pochin

Miss E. M. Batchelor Flint AMC FRSA. He also secured the influential support of the Church in the person of the Bishop of Lichfield, Dr Edward Sydney Woods, who became the society's first President. (Photo of Alfred Pochin supplied by his daughter, Mary Pochin)

Prominent mention in the Mercury (20 October 1944) of the society's 'immense possibilities' got Lichfield's 'new venture' off to an encouraging start. The society's inaugural meeting took place at the Guildhall on Wednesday 11 October 1944. It attracted an excellent turnout. Proceedings were opened by Alfred Pochin. The audience was then addressed by the Mayor of Lichfield, Cllr. Miss A. M. Thompson, and by Miss Hodge, the Headmistress of the Friary School. Miss Flint, the Art School's Principal, expressed the great desire of 'local artists and craftsmen' to exhibit their work in public and flagged up the immediate challenge of finding a suitable venue. She also announced the society's intention to organise talks and lectures. Allied to Miss Flint's direct way of speaking was her progressive approach to art. She proposed that the first talk should be on the subject of 'the aims of the modern artist'.

THE LICHFIELD & DISTRICT
SOCIETY OF ARTS
(Music — Art — Drama)
President: The Lord Bishop of
Lichfield

MR. PETER SLADE

(County Drama Adviser)

will give a TALK on DRAMA on
Friday, Nov. 3rd, 1944, at 7.15 p.m.
in The Magistrates' Room, Guild-
hall, Lichfield. Admission to Mem-
bers of all sections by member-
ship card.

Particulars of Society from A. D.
Pochin, Stanner, Coppice Lane,
Hammerwich; or at meetings.

The strapline 'Music, Art, Drama' in this front-page newspaper advert from 27 October 1944 reflected the interests of the society's three main sections, each of which was soon to develop its own organisation. The society's first event, to which 'members

of all sections' were admitted, took the form of a talk on the artistic objectives of theatrical productions and aspects of stagecraft. It was given at the Guildhall on Friday 3 November 1944 by the County Drama Adviser, Mr Peter Slade. The concluding vote of thanks included mention of 'one of the great difficulties confronting performers in Lichfield — the lack of a good permanent stage'. The Mercury reported Alfred Pochin's announcement that 85 members had paid their subscriptions, of whom '55 were interested in drama, 54 in music and 42 in art'.

The first meeting of the society's 'Art Section' was held on Saturday 25 November at The Friary School. It took the form of a talk followed by lively discussion. Miss Flint had invited Miss Marjorie Lilly, an artist trained at the Slade School who had exhibited at the Royal Academy, to speak on the subject of 'Contemporary Painting'. The talk was followed by an exchange of opinions about what constitutes good art. It clearly generated diverging observations about the appreciation of beauty, or ugliness, in modern painting. The society's President, the Bishop of Lichfield, and his sister, Mrs Ricardo Williams, who was herself a practising artist, were among those who enthusiastically joined in. The debate was later described by Blanche Pochin as 'a free-for-all and very humorous'. Some years later, she commented with obvious amusement 'who would not take the chance of arguing with one's bishop, and members took full advantage'. The intention was announced at the same meeting to hold an exhibition of members' works the following spring. Society membership stood at 120, of whom 66 were interested in art, 80 in music and 80 in drama. Occasional meetings subsequently took place at the Lichfield School of Art to give members the opportunity to engage in mutual criticism of each other's work.

Lichfield and District Society of Arts

MISS MARJORIE LILLY
ON "CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING"

The first meeting of the Art Section of the Lichfield and District Society of Arts, held at the Friary School, Lichfield, on Saturday, 25th Nov. Miss Marjorie Lilly, from London (R.S.M.A., Golds. Lecturer) talks upon Contemporary Painting, with well attended with members from women, Rugby, Tamworth, Arlebury, etc. amongst the help of Lichfield and Members were present to see their President, the Bishop of Lichfield, present.

Miss Flint, the leader of the Art Section, welcomed the speaker as a talented artist who had been trained at the Slade School, and worked with the late Walter Richard, and had exhibited at many places, including the Royal Academy and the New English Art Club.

Miss Lilly, who had brought with her a number of temporary paintings, divided them into two groups—the realistic which existed when they were, and the abstract which she said they thought was better. She said that the abstract was better than the realistic, and that the realistic was better than the abstract. She said that the abstract was better than the realistic, and that the realistic was better than the abstract.

Miss Lilly then compared contemporary composition, and recommended to the audience the practice of looking at the composition of their paintings by first looking and tracing before colouring, and said that the composition had depended on the character of the individual. Finally, after surveying the characteristics of contemporary painting, as it affected the audience, she suggested that a discussion would now take place to see if anyone was in the mood of the audience.

Early in the discussion the Bishop of Lichfield asked if it could be explained that, when objects which in their natural state were extremely ugly, as beautiful, were produced. It is a question not true in life, and often ugly, how such paintings could still be called beautiful.

Questions and answers then followed. The discussion of modern painting, as far as was possible, and the contemporary nature of painting, both had and agreed some points, and between groups of members, with a majority believing that the people of this area, when perhaps not all contemporary paintings, work at the time, were seen to know and appreciate.

The President then thanked Miss Lilly for an exposition of a difficult subject, and said to each an interesting evening. In behalf of the Committee and members Miss Ricardo thanked Miss Hodge for her organisation, and allowing the use of the hall for the lecture.

It was announced that an exhibition of members' works would take place in the common dining hall, and that the membership of the Society was now 120, of which 66 were interested in art, 80 in music and 80 in drama.



VE Day Rejoicings in Lichfield

Market Square Proclamation by the Mayor

Thanksgiving Service, Music, Children's Sports, Street Parties and Dances

Continued from page 1

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VE Day on 8 May 1945 marked the end of the war in Europe and paved the way for the society's first public exhibition, held the following month, which was able to take place under much happier circumstances than would have been possible during the previous years of conflict. The challenge of securing a suitable venue in the city in which to exhibit the society's artwork was one that was to present itself with concerning regularity in the decades that followed. However, in the spring of 1945, the official public proclamation of victory, delivered from a platform in Lichfield's Market Square by the Mayor, Cllr Thomas Moseley, would undoubtedly have lifted everyone's spirits and energised exhibition preparations. Among the dignitaries visible in this photograph in the Mercury, taken on VE Day, is the particularly tall gentleman standing on the left of the platform, the society's first President, the Lord Bishop of Lichfield, Dr Edward Sydney Woods.

The society's first public exhibition was held 'by courtesy of the City Council' in June 1945 in the Museum in Beacon Street. The building had been used as a Warden's Post during the war. It was the only available venue and apparently in something of a mess. The display of paintings and craft exhibits by the society's own members was complemented by several works from invited professional artists. Exhibitors included several former members of the armed forces. One of them was Sgt. John Ward (RAF) who went on to play an active role during the next three decades and became the third recipient, in 1967, of the annually presented Alfred Pochin Award for his services to the society. The first exhibition lasted one week. Admission to the public, then as now, was free.



This catalogue from the 1st Annual Exhibition of Paintings, Sculpture and Crafts in June 1945 is one of many fascinating items that survive in the society's archive of photographs, committee meeting minutes and other documents from the past 75 years. The first exhibition displayed work by 22 artists and included 62 paintings, several sculptures and pieces of pottery and two examples of illuminated writing. At the opening of the exhibition, the Deputy Mayor, Alderman Miss A. M. Thompson, reflected that 'after so much dreadful destruction on every side, one felt there was an enormous field for artistic enterprise of every description'. The newspaper reports her belief in the 'opportunity to help make good at least some of the damages of the war' and her observation on 'the worldwide obsession with the hideous necessity of war'. It also reports her opinion that 'a later generation might not find their efforts so good as they had hoped', but 'that thought must not prevent them from making a start and showing that art in all its forms was still a living and creative force'.



The former Free Library and Museum adjoining Beacon Park on Beacon Street, looking today from the outside much as it did then, was the venue in June 1945 for the society's first public exhibition. The building, with its impressive Italianate exterior, was first opened in 1859. Following the passing of the Public Libraries Act in 1850, allowing local councils to levy a halfpenny rate to fund local libraries and museums, it was only the second free library to exist in this country, proudly making literature in the city of Dr Johnson available to all. The museum was moved out in 1958. The library was relocated to the Friary in 1990. In 2003, the building became the Lichfield Registry Office.



This photographic remnant provides a poignant link with the past. It shows some of the paintings displayed in June 1945 at the society's very first public exhibition. In the words of the Mercury at the time, 'the exhibition gives to the average observer some idea of how much unsuspected talent can be gathered together from a relatively small community'. The newspaper notes of the exhibits that 'half the number were connected

with the city itself and the remainder were from the outlying district'. At the exhibition opening, the society's Chair, Miss Flint, remarked of the paintings that 'some might think they were too modern and others that they were too ancient, but she thought an exhibition should open its doors to all artwork which was an honest, sincere piece of work, no matter what school it happened to belong to'.

This pen-and-ink drawing of Lichfield Cathedral by society member Will Wight was used by the Staffordshire Advertiser on 8 June 1946 to illustrate an article advertising the Cathedral's 750th Anniversary Festival taking place the following week in 'the presence of Her Majesty the Queen'. The drawing is probably the item with the title Lichfield Cathedral by Mr W. Wight listed as an unframed entry in the society's very first exhibition catalogue in June 1945. It was priced at 10s 6d. The same artist submitted a second entry in the 1945 exhibition with the title Armitage Church, reflecting his interest in ecclesiastical architecture.



TALENTED LOCAL ARTISTES Society of Arts exhibition opened at Lichfield

INTERESTING AND COMMENDABLE VARIETY OF STYLES

SELF EXPRESSION WHICH RELIEVES THE
DAILY GRIND

LOCAL artists and friends gathered last night to the large hall of the Lichfield Society of Arts, to witness the opening of the annual exhibition of paintings and drawings by members of the Lichfield Society of Arts, and friends. The exhibition, which is the first of the kind in Lichfield, was held in the hall of the Lichfield Society of Arts, and was opened by Mrs. Flint, the society's Chair, who said that the exhibition was a most welcome event, and that it was a great pleasure to have the society's first exhibition. The exhibition was held in the hall of the Lichfield Society of Arts, and was opened by Mrs. Flint, the society's Chair, who said that the exhibition was a most welcome event, and that it was a great pleasure to have the society's first exhibition.

The headline of this article from the Mercury (4 October 1946) praising 'talented local artistes' and noting the 'commendable variety' of artwork on display at the society's second annual public exhibition was evidence that the fledgling society had successfully made it through its second year. The newspaper account is also a reminder that, despite an end to hostilities, widespread rationing and economic hardship were still the norm for much of the population. Daily life for many citizens in the immediate post-war years often included the sort of 'daily grind' from which the practice and appreciation of artistic self-expression provided a welcome escape.



Selwyn House in Cathedral Close, seen here as it looks today, was made available to the society 'by kind permission of the Dean & Chapter' and provided refuge in one of its large ground-floor rooms for its second (1946) and third (1947) public exhibitions, before the society once again became homeless. For the next decade, the society returned 'by kind permission of the City Council' to the Museum in Beacon Street as the only other available public venue in which to display its members' artwork.



The society's 5th Annual Exhibition took place in July 1949. The 50 exhibits on display demonstrated a variety of media that included watercolours, oils and pen-and-ink, 'a wood engraving of fine texture' and one craft item, 'a hand-carved Jardiniere'. Subjects mentioned in the Mercury's report of the exhibition included portraits, landscapes, flowers, an abstract painting and studies of trees and water. The most expensive priced painting listed in the catalogue was available to purchase at £21. Most of the other items were considerably cheaper and priced in guineas. The exhibition was opened by the Sheriff, Cllr F. W. C. Long, who commented on 'the friendly relations

between the School of Art and the Art Society'. He noted that, 'although the latter was independent, he thought the school was a feeder to such societies'.

Site for Lichfield's New School of Art SOD-CUTTING CEREMONY PERFORMED BY THE CITY SHERIFF

THE first sod was turned today for the new Lichfield School of Art by the Sheriff of the County, Mr. F. W. C. Long, who is Chairman of the Lichfield Art Society. The ceremony took place at the site of the new school, which is to be built on the site of the old school, which was destroyed by fire in 1941.

The estimated cost of the new school is £15,000 and it will comprise a main building of 100,000 sq. ft. and a smaller building of 20,000 sq. ft. The main building will be used for the school, and the smaller building will be used for the school's library and other facilities. The school is to be built on the site of the old school, which was destroyed by fire in 1941.



The society has never had the advantage, nor indeed the onerous responsibility, of owning any substantial physical assets of its own. Its activities have always been largely determined by the availability of public or private facilities owned by others and generously offered, or rented, to the society for exhibiting its members' art and holding its meetings. This Mercury article from 26 January 1951 is a report about the construction of new 'prefab' buildings which were intended to provide an alternative home to the Lichfield School of Art's imposing, but structurally increasingly unstable building in Dam Street. This development was of great interest and importance to the School's Principal, Miss E. M. Flint, who was also the Chair of the Lichfield Society of Artists.

DULL & DRAB WITHOUT ART 8th Exhibition of Paintings

STARTED eight years ago, the Lichfield and District Society of Arts was given not more than a year to continue, said Miss Hatcher Flint, A.M.C., F.R.S.A., principal of the Lichfield School of Art, at the annual exhibition of paintings which was opened for a fortnight at the Museum, Lichfield, on Saturday. Since then the exhibition had gone from strength to strength, both in numbers and quality.

Miss Flint told a 'Mercury' reporter that by the tenth exhibition the standard reached by members should compare favourably with Birmingham, Wolverhampton and other big towns where exhibitions were put on.

Miss Flint said the Society was very much indebted to Mr. H. J. Callender, Mr. L. Bruce, Mr. A. D. Perkins, the Lichfield Art Gallery Committee and Mr. H. Apperard for valuable help given, and the City Council for allowing them the use of the Museum.

She was also pleased to welcome the Bishop of Lichfield (the Right Rev. E. B. Wanda, D.D.), the pres-

ident in 1952, the Museum in Beacon Street was once again the venue for the society's 8th Annual Exhibition. In the words of Alfred Pochin's wife, Blanche, writing many years later, it 'left much to be desired' as an exhibition space. Improvised hanging arrangements and display stands helped to conceal the dilapidated fabric of the building. The iron frames had to be dismantled after each exhibition and stored at the Guildhall. This was the laborious arrangement Alfred and Blanche Pochins had to cope with until the exhibition area in the Museum was extended several years later, refurbished and officially renamed the City Art Gallery. Despite the physical deficiencies of the Museum, the society was successful in attracting a loyal membership. It offered a welcome opportunity, as the Mercury observed, to brighten the lives of many people in a post-war world that in other respects was often 'dull and drab'.

An article in the Mercury from 22 December 1950, part of which is reproduced here, recounts the history of the Lichfield School of Art and pays tribute to the inspiring personality of its Principal, Miss E. M. Flint. In doing so, it reveals one of the reasons behind the successful development of the Lichfield and District Society of Arts, of which Miss Flint was always a passionate champion. She took up her teaching appointment at the School in 1913 and lived through two world wars. Despite the wartime requisition of the school buildings and their subsequent demolition and dispersal across various city locations, her enthusiasm remained undimmed and her talent for encouraging creativity in others undiminished. At the school's very first prize-giving, 37 years previously, the Mercury reports that she had organised 'an exhibition of contemporary art in order to show what others were doing and to provoke emulation'. The article describes the many good things that resulted from her 'appreciation of beauty, of differing capabilities, of originality, from her eager courage and humour and forthright friendliness, which have never wavered nor flagged from their fresh energy through all the changes of these troublous years'.



Securing the support of the Bishop of Lichfield, Dr Woods, as the society's President in the first year of its formation was an important coup. Speaking at the society's 8th Annual Exhibition in 1952, the Bishop's views about the integrity of the society's artwork, in contrast to what he saw as the sometimes pernicious influence of radio and television, anticipated the sorts of concerns that are sometimes expressed nowadays about the effects of the internet and social media. The Mercury reported, 'His lordship considered that kind of exhibition a very necessary antidote in a world which was mechanised and materialised.' 'I have often reflected on the matter of the wireless.' His lordship proceeded, 'I am inclined to echo what the Archbishop of York has been saying to preachers – that he looks with considerable suspicion on television. I think the real trouble of the wireless and television is that constantly we who listen and see are purely passive. The great advantage of what you see here is that it is constructive, positive and active'. This bronze bust portrait of Dr Woods, who sadly died in 1953, was created by Jacob Epstein, a pioneer of modern sculpture. It was

unveiled by the Queen Mother in April 1989 and remains on permanent display in the Cathedral in the vestibule of the Chapter House.



By the time of the society's 10th Annual Exhibition, in September 1926, the welcome refurbishment of the Museum meant that its members, at long last, 'now had a lovely and attractive gallery in which to hang their pictures'. According to the Mercury, 'It was one of the best in the Midlands and Lichfield was fortunate in having such a gallery'. At the exhibition opening, the Mayor, Alderman A. L. Garraff, JP, paid tribute to what Miss Flint 'had done for art in the city' and referred to the provision of 'the new art school which was the only building of its kind to be erected in Staffordshire since the war'. Following the death of Bishop Woods the previous year, Miss Flint was able to announce that his successor as Bishop of Lichfield, Dr Arthur Stretton Reeve, had agreed to become the society's new President.



This photograph from the Mercury on 30 October 1953 shows Canon Arthur Stretton Reeve, the successor to Dr Woods as Bishop of Lichfield and the society's second President, approaching the West front of Lichfield Cathedral on the day of his enthronement ceremony. At 6 feet 3 inches, Dr Reeve had a physical presence as imposing as that of the late Dr Woods. Among many other distinctions, he had rowed for the winning Cambridge eight in the 1930 Boat Race. Bishop Reeve remained the society's President until 1958, when he was succeeded by Miss E. M. Flint.



With Miss Flint, the Principal of the Lichfield School of Art, as one of its founder members, the society enjoyed invaluable access right from the start to the School of Art's facilities, expertise and supportive network of artist friends. The foundation stone of the School's building, which was constructed in the half-timbered style and sited in Dam Street facing the Cathedral, running parallel with Pool Walk, was

laid on 17 June 1882. It housed a classroom, library and various ante-rooms. Because of subsidence, it unfortunately had to be demolished in 1954 (Photo Express & Star, above left). Alternative premises were secured in Cherry Orchard for new workshop and teaching facilities that were accommodated in prefabricated buildings opened in 1953 (left).



The former site of the old School of Art building on the edge of Minster Pool is still clearly visible today. The location is marked by an ornamental flower display and a commemorative stone that was commissioned by the Students' Association and unveiled in July 1965.



Miss E. M. Flint, 'the redoubtable Principal of Lichfield School of Art', used the opening of the society's 12th Annual Exhibition in June 1956 to suggest that Lichfield City Council set aside a halfpenny rate annually 'to buy a really good picture, or some other work of art, and so build up a collection in the city for coming generations.' The expressions on the faces of the Mayor and the Chairman of the Library and Museums Committee do not betray their reactions to the proposal. According to the Mercury's reporter, 'none of them gave any indication as to whether or not the suggestion might be taken up'.



The society's 13th Annual Exhibition in June 1957 was held once again in the Museum building in Beacon Street. The extension of the available space as a result of removing museum exhibits to another city location and the redecoration of the room provided a much improved experience for artists and visitors alike. Cllr John Scriven Taylor, Chairman of the Johnson House, Art Gallery and Museum Committee, was pleased to receive the society's thanks and appreciation. He also expressed the hope that, with the museum's artefacts re-housed in the old Hobate Court, the refurbished room should in future officially become known as the Lichfield Art Gallery.



By the time of the society's 14th Annual Exhibition, it could rightly claim to be bringing 'added lustre' to Lichfield. This photograph from the Mercury (4 July 1958) shows one of the society's talented exhibitors, Miss Ann Bridgeman, whose work had also been displayed at the Royal Academy, standing alongside Miss Flint and Mr and Mrs Pochin. At the exhibition opening, Alfred Pochin announced the news of Miss Flint's retirement as Principal of the Lichfield School of Art, while reassuring the audience that 'there was no question of her retiring from their society'.



This advert from the Lichfield Mercury shows that the television set in 1958 was becoming an increasingly popular and affordable item for many households. In an article in the same newspaper from that year with the headline 'Television helps people to appreciate art', John Sanders, newly appointed successor to Miss Flint as Principal of the Lichfield School of Art and Chair of the Society is quoted speaking optimistically about the future of the School and the way in which 'television is helping the arts' by bringing 'an awareness of pictures and architecture to people who never visited art galleries and never before appreciated the significance of fine buildings, in a way comparable only with the effect of sound radio on musical taste during the last few decades.' Just as the invention of photography in the nineteenth century influenced the Impressionists, so the impact of television in the twentieth and digital technology in the twenty-first centuries has changed the way many artists see and portray the world.

The catalogue from the 15th Annual Exhibition (1959) is the first one to refer to the venue as the City Art Gallery. The location was still the familiar Library building in Beacon Street, but Lichfield City Council's decision to remove the museum artefacts from the upper floor and create a dedicated space for artwork justified the change of name. It was now possible to exhibit eighty paintings without crowding, compared with the sixty that had been displayed the previous year. At the opening event, reported by the Mercury, the Mayor, Cllr. John Scriven Taylor, said, 'he was quite sure it gave the City Council great encouragement to know that the society appreciated what they had tried to do in turning that room from a museum into a proper art gallery'.



Exhibition of Lichfield schoolchildren's paintings to be staged in Autumn



The announcement of the society's 16th Annual Exhibition in 1960 of the intention to stage an exhibition of paintings by Lichfield's schoolchildren was one of the society's earliest initiatives to encourage artistic creativity in the young. In his opening remarks, guest of honour Alderman F. T. Perry referred to 'the early days of the society which had originally been one for art, music and drama, until the latter two had died away from lack of support, leaving the former very much alive today.' The Mercury also reports his observation about 'how much the City Council appreciated the work done by the society, particularly in providing visitors to the city with happiness, pleasure and, dare he say, instruction'.

Mayor opens Lichfield's "broad-minded" Society of Arts exhibition



Perhaps anticipating the increasingly liberated attitudes of the second half of the 'swinging sixties', the society's 17th Annual Exhibition in June 1961 is described as being 'broad-minded'. Its tolerant and inclusive approach in matters of artistic taste had always been enthusiastically articulated by Miss Flint who, by this time, was the society's President. She was succeeded as Chair by John Sanders who had also taken over from her as Principal of the Lichfield School of Art in 1958. Miss Flint's encouragement to embrace new and diverse forms of artistic expression was reported in the Mercury, 'You will see from the exhibits that we are a broadminded society. We take the point of view that if a person has produced a piece of their own work, whether it be classical or modern, and the work is honest and sincere, then we will accept it for the exhibition. For an exhibition is a place where all types of work will find a place'.

At the opening of the society's 18th Annual Exhibition in June 1963, Miss Flint once again vigorously put forward the case for artistic tolerance and experimentation, 'We also have space for the modern outlook in art. I do not care two hoots whether you like modern art or not. It is here to stay.' Her remarks on this occasion, as on others, might have left invited civic dignitaries with more conservative personal tastes a little unsure how they should respond. The Mercury merely quotes the words of the Mayor, Cllr. Bernard Garman, 'There are certain things I like and certain things I don't like.' The absence of the exhibition of the society's founder, Alfred Pochin, because of serious illness, cast a cloud over proceedings. Alfred sadly died the following year. His role as the society's main organiser was thereafter taken up by his widow Blanche.



The dress code at the society's 20th Annual Exhibition in 1964 contrasts with today's generally more casual attire of such occasions. Miss Flint, who had retired as Principal of the Lichfield School of Art six years previously, having taught there for 45 years, was adamant that art subjects and technical subjects were 'diametrically opposed'. Referring to the Art School, which had been transferred to Cherry Orchard from Dam Street in 1951, and which was awaiting long-promised extensions, she stoutly declared, 'I want a separate building for art only. Art and science are directly opposed and if you get them under the same roof, art suffers. I have seen it happen before. They should be absolutely apart. I know it is for convenience, but it is a false economy.' Her successor as Principal of the Art School and Chair of the Society, John Sanders, adopted a more diplomatic approach. He stated that it would be impossible for the society to flourish without its 'good friends' and highlighted the personal interest that the Mayor, Cllr. Bernard Garman, who was present as guest of honour to open the exhibition, took in the Art School in his capacity as chairman of its Board of Governors. The Mayor responded with the words, 'This is a wonderful society, now just out of its teens and having its twenty-first next year'. He expressed the hope that it would go 'from strength to strength'. Also present at the event, the Mercury reports, was Mr B. Green, art master at King Edward VI School.

GOOD WORK BY YOUNG ARTISTS

At the opening of Lichfield District Society of Artists annual exhibition on Saturday 1st, 25th November, at the Lichfield School of Art and Drawing, Lichfield, the Mayor, Councillors, and members of the public were invited to see the work of the young artists. There was a very successful evening, and the Mayor, who is chairman of the governing body, gave a presentation of the exhibition. The exhibition features 25 paintings and the work of 25 young artists.

Among the guests of honour at the opening of the society's 21st Annual Exhibition in 1965 were the Mayor of Lichfield, Alderman Frank Halfpenny, the Sheriff, Cllr. Harold Hine

and the Labour Member of Parliament for the Lichfield and Tamworth constituency, Mr Julian Snow. A silver salver, bought by society members in memory of the late Alfred Pochin, its founding member, who had died the previous year, was presented to his widow Blanche. Blanche Pochin's efforts in keeping the society going after the death of her husband were praised by the society's choir. John Sanders, Julian Snow MP spoke enthusiastically about the standard of artwork on display and admitted, "being married to an artist, I have had to amend my taste in art many times". Blanche Pochin



commented that the exhibition, "was a far cry from the early days. We had nowhere to hang the pictures and we had to run around to find a room. We now have this wonderful gallery which is the envy of all the surrounding towns."

SUSAN'S HARD WORK REWARDED



BACK FROM SPAIN TO A MOST PLEASANT SURPRISE

WARRICK Mrs Susan Williams, of 17, Broomfield, Lichfield, returned last Friday from a holiday in Spain, and was greeted by one of the most pleasant surprises of her life. She had been told that the Lichfield District Society of Artists had given her a trophy, and she was indeed surprised to find it waiting for her at home.

The trophy was presented to her by the Mayor of Lichfield, Cllr. George Deacon, who was accompanied by the Mayor of Walsall, Cllr. John Sanders. The trophy was a silver salver, and it was a most pleasant surprise for Mrs Williams.

At the 22nd Annual Exhibition in 1966, Susan Williams was presented with the Alfred Pochin Award and congratulated by the Mayor of Lichfield, Cllr. George Deacon, for her artwork. A few weeks later, Bobby Moore received the Jules Rimet trophy as captain of the England football team that beat West Germany at Wembley in the final of the World Cup. Yes, that's how long ago it was! Annual membership of the society at the time cost 7s 6d.

Mayor's plea at art show opening

SOME form of instruction should be given to the general public to help them to form an appreciation of modern art. Cllr. George Deacon, Mayor of Lichfield, said on Saturday.

The Birmingham Post (27 June 1966) reported Lichfield Mayor Cllr. George Deacon's 'admission' that 'he did not understand modern art', including his tactfully phrased and probably only half-seriously made 'plea' for some form of instruction for the general public 'to help them to form an appreciation'.



Mrs Margaret Castle, presently with Corporation, 1966, one of the women who has 'top prize' in art.

Top prize - again!

Mrs Margaret Castle, of 17, Broomfield, Lichfield, has won the top prize in art for the second year running. She was awarded the trophy at the 22nd Annual Exhibition in 1966.

The article in the Mercury accompanying this photograph reported the words of local MP, Julian Snow who praised the high standard of artwork on display at the society's 'silver' 25th Annual Exhibition in June 1969. The same article also encouraged speculation about the possibility of putting on two exhibitions each year in future in order to accommodate the many excellent paintings that could not currently be displayed because of lack of space.

Art School Principal for 45 years.....

THE DEATH OF MISS ETHEL

MARY FLINT

Miss Ethel Mary Flint, who was born on 1st January 1888, died on 1st January 1968, at the age of 80.

She was a long-standing member of the Lichfield District Society of Artists, and was a very active member of the society.

She was a very active member of the society, and was a very active member of the society.

Play numb

A play about the life of a woman who was a very active member of the society, and was a very active member of the society.

REDAL FOR AT WORKER

the biographical details reported in the Mercury (7 March 1969) which cast the society's Secretary at the time, Margaret Castle, in the role of a housewife dutifully cooking bacon for her husband's lunch, while also revealing her exact home address, might strike us today as an unfortunate case of gender stereotyping and a clear infringement of personal data protection, but they were, no doubt, well intended. The article's praise for her artistic ability and its recognition of the dual importance of the School of Art and the society in developing local artists' talents were certainly sincere and provided very valuable PR.



One of the highlights of the society's 29th Annual Exhibition, in June 1973, which was opened by the Conservative Member of Parliament for Lichfield and Tamworth, Major-General Jack d'Avigdor Goldsmid CB OBE MC, was the presentation by Blanche Pochin of the annual Alfred Pochin Award to Mr George Newman for his contribution to the running of the society. Blanche Pochin herself had retired in 1949, after 25 years with the society. She provided invaluable support when her late husband founded the society towards the end of the Second World War and continued to play an important role by keeping it going in the years immediately following his death.



In August 1974, the society published a slim booklet recording some of the highlights from the first twenty-five years of its existence between 1945 and 1974. The brief account was written with elegant simplicity by Blanche Pochin and was based on the records that she had meticulously kept. The fact that the booklet was only published some years after the actual date of the society's 25th anniversary suggests that it was something of an afterthought, albeit one that provides fascinating insights into the motivation behind the society's formation and the initial challenges that faced its founders. Interesting, too, is the decision to take the society's first public exhibition in June 1945 as the starting point of the society's history, whereas the articles in the Lichfield Mercury reproduced in this publication show that the society already existed and had held its first meetings at the end of 1944.

With typical modesty, Blanche Pochin writes on the final page of her account of the society's first twenty-five years, 'I am not an artist, but I kept the society going during my husband's illness, when it could so easily have slipped away and I revived things a little after his death, so that when it was handed over to the new secretary, Mrs Castelow, and later Mr George Newman,

the society could look forward to a good future'. In the final paragraph, she observes, 'This is only the end of one era in the history of the society. The story should be taken up again later for it would seem to be heading for an even more prosperous future with facilities far greater than were available in its earlier days.'



In 1973, a new venture for the society, an art auction, was organised at the Arts Centre in Bird Street to raise money for the Centre's development fund. The society's dynamic Vice-Chair, Eliah Armour-Brown, was the driving force behind this initiative. Over £300 in artwork was sold, enabling the society to donate £50 to the fund. The event was opened by the Mayor, Cllr. John Wilson. The sale was conducted by the auctioneer Mr Tony Winterton, who donated his fee to the fund. This was the first of a number of such art sales to take place at the Arts Centre in subsequent years. The popular Arts Centre occupied a distinctive and much-loved building in Bird Street that was originally built in 1905 as a new Post Office for the city. For over 25 years, until subsidence caused it to be closed in 1994 and subsequently demolished, it served as a cultural melting pot where artists rubbed shoulders over a cup of coffee or glass of beer with photographers, musicians, actors, dancers and singers. Plans to create a viable new Arts Centre ultimately came to naught. Nor could the building itself, if turned out many years later, be saved.



The Dorothy Godfrey Cup was donated to the society in 1975 and is still regularly awarded at the society's exhibitions. Here we see Dorothy herself, the wife of the Sheriff of Lichfield at the time, Cllr. Eric Godfrey, looking unusually serious. Dorothy went on to become the Sheriff (1982) and subsequently Mayor of Lichfield (1990). She is pictured with the award's first recipient, Eileen Baker, who received the trophy for a portrait with the title 'Brunette'. The painting was listed for sale in the exhibition catalogue at £20. Some of the more expensive items among the 90 paintings recorded in the same catalogue were 'Autumn Glade' (£45), 'Horn Dance, Abbots Bromley' (£40) and 'Female Nude' (£35). The catalogue also lists eighteen items of pottery.



The apparent absence of any abstract paintings at the society's 31st Annual Exhibition in 1975 drew an approving comment from Lichfield Mayor, Cllr. John Silverthorne. The Mercury reported his dislike of the modern trend towards 'more and more obscure paintings'.



Donors of members have been inspired to paint or draw Lichfield Cathedral in every available medium and from just about every conceivable angle, but only one, John Brookes, has enjoyed the distinction of executing a painting for a member of the Royal Family. In 1975, he delivered it in person to Buckingham Palace at the invitation of Princess Anne as a present on the occasion of her marriage to Lieutenant Mark Phillips. One wonders where one's painting is now!



Guest of honour at the opening of the society's 33rd Annual Exhibition in July 1977 was the Labour MP for the Lichfield and Tamworth constituency, Bruce Grocott. A peek inside the catalogue reveals that 54 paintings were submitted for display alongside no fewer than 34 items of pottery, woodcarvings and silverware. The official opening took place at the City Art Gallery, followed by afternoon tea at the Arts Centre.



Society chairman John Sanders is pictured here at the fourth annual art sale at the Arts Centre (Mercury, 25 November 1977) together with two other members who did so much to shape the direction and success of the society over their long periods of membership and service. Born and bred in Derbyshire, John Sanders came to Lichfield in 1958 to succeed Miss Flint as Principal of the School of Art and as Chair of the Lichfield and District Society of Artists. He also played a prominent part in the Civic Society, the Worshipful Company of Smiths and the Darwin Walk Trust, of which he was the founder. He was also a founder member of the Erasmus Darwin Foundation and served as an elected member of the Lichfield District Council. His affection for Lichfield, his involvement in many aspects of civic and cultural life and his great skill as an artist were qualities from which the society and the city of Lichfield benefitted greatly during his many years as the society's Chair and subsequently as President. In 1978, John went with his family to Buckingham Palace to receive the MBE from the Queen in recognition of his work for Adult Education in Staffordshire.

[illegible]

which explains why the venue would come to be so badly missed when it was closed a couple of years later. 1988 was also the year in which Blanche Pochin, widow of the society's founder, Alfred Pochin, sadly died. Blanche had served as the society's Secretary for 25 years and played a vital role keeping the society going following Alfred's death.



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"I STUMBLED upon Laidlaw in the two minutes before he was released by U.S. Marshals. I was there about 20 years later the city was awarded with the National Wildlife with one of it's most varied habitats."

"It was very good," he said the Marshals, "because he recognized that my work was more than just quality."

Mr. Laidlaw added: "It was good to be talking to something with such long historical connections. It's a great balance to this sort of thing."

Mr. Laidlaw moved from his native land to the wilderness in 1960. He was born in Walnut Street and married in Walnut Street High School.

His association with the city includes working at Laidlaw College, where he will take evening classes. He has been a teacher at the University of Illinois at Champaign and has been in charge of the Laidlaw City of Arts.

And if you're ever interested about the Marshals' work, there's one place to go. It's a place that has been there since it was first. For this one, he's got to meet of the

17. **ANSWER: C**

London Evening

The following is a selection of London Evening news items:

1. A 10-year-old boy, named David, has been found dead in a park in London. The police are looking for a 15-year-old boy who was seen near the body.

2. A 10-year-old boy, named David, has been found dead in a park in London. The police are looking for a 15-year-old boy who was seen near the body.

3. A 10-year-old boy, named David, has been found dead in a park in London. The police are looking for a 15-year-old boy who was seen near the body.

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possible to re-open the gallery for exhibition purposes and the building became a Registry Office. The society's annual Autumn Exhibition transferred to the Friary, the society's annual Spring Exhibition was still held at the Arts Centre, though the room there was becoming too small to work entirely successfully. Diary clashes with other events also began to make it increasingly problematic as a venue.



Jack Ballinger, Chair of the society from 1988 until 1992, is seen here introducing the Mayor of Lichfield, Cllr. John Wilks, and Mayoress Cllr. Mrs Pam Wilks at the opening of the Spring Exhibition 1992. This was the first exhibition to take place at the new Lichfield Library Art Gallery at the Friary. At the same event, Jack received the Alfred Pochin Award for his services to the society. Sadly, he lived only a few more months, before he passed away in October 1992. His successor as Chair, Janet Cortrell, writing a few years later,

recollected that, 'he ran the society and committee meetings with quiet good humour and is remembered with great affection by us all'. His memory is perpetuated by the Jack Ballinger Memorial Award.



In 1993, John Price OBE, chairman of Arthur Price of England, was guest of honour at the opening of the Society's Spring Exhibition, the second one to be held in the new Lichfield Library Art Gallery at the Friary. The spacious exhibition area was able to accommodate 122 paintings and a number of craftwork items. Annual membership at the time cost £5.00. John, a successful and respected Lichfield businessman with a passion for the arts and local good causes, later accepted the society's invitation, in 2000, to become one of its two official patrons. He remained an enthusiastic supporter of the Society's activities until his death in 2017. One of the award-winners on the photo, society member Alison Churchill, went on to become Head of the Lichfield School of Art.

At the opening of the society's Autumn Exhibition in 1993, guest of honour Michael Fabricant, Member of Parliament for Mid Staffordshire, followed in the footsteps of previously elected local constituency MPs and demonstrated his personal support for the society. Michael later accepted an invitation to become a Patron of the



City artists' work on show

AN AUTUMN exhibition organised by the Lichfield Society of Artists was opened by Mid Staffordshire MP Michael Fabricant.

Currently running in the city's library, in The Friary, over 120 paintings on various subjects are on display for the public. A range of pottery and roadwork items and sculpture can also be seen.

And on hand to open the premier bi-annual exhibition was the MP, with prospective Euro-Parliament candidates for West Staffordshire Jane Evans, and award-winning writer Graham Shipway.

Work at the exhibition is both and the exhibition was on Saturday October 23.



Mid Staffordshire MP Michael Fabricant, at the exhibition with award-winning artist Graham Shipway, and prospective Euro-candidate for West Staffordshire, Jane Evans. (By Graham Shipway)

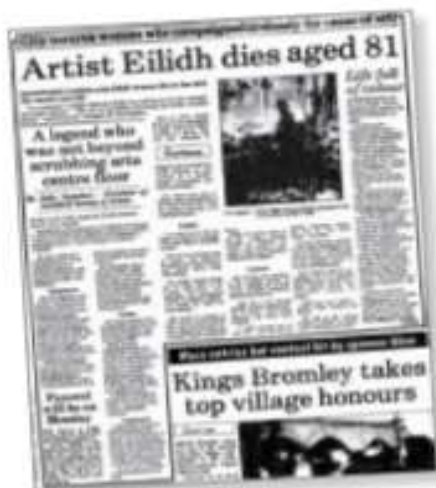
society in 2000 and has remained an important champion of its activities and the donor of a magnificent trophy awarded for landscape painting. He is pictured here with MEP candidate Jane Evans and award-winning member Graham Shipway in two separate articles that appeared in the Lichfield Mercury and The Chronicle.



Excursions to important art exhibitions, festivals, museums and other cultural events outside Lichfield are regular activities in the society's calendar. In April 1994, the destination was the Palace of Westminster where, at the invitation of Michael Fabricant, MP, society members were treated to a tour of the historic artwork and to refreshments on the Commons' terrace overlooking the Thames.



By 1994, the society's membership had risen to just over 200. The society therefore decided to move its meetings on the second Wednesday in each month from the restricted space available at the Arts Centre to St Chad's Church Hall on the Lesswove, which had more room, excellent kitchen facilities and convenient parking. The photograph shows the exterior of the building as it looks today. The date and photographer of the image showing one of the informal painting evenings at the Church Hall are unknown.



In August 1994, the society suffered a severe blow with the death of Eilidh Armour-Brown at the age of 81 years. Eilidh's passing and the importance of her contributions to the arts scene in Lichfield were extensively reported in the Mercury. After joining the society in 1967, Eilidh had been a major driving force whose work as Treasurer and then Vice Chair were central in shaping the society's direction and ambitions. Few people knew she was the great niece of Dr Thomas Barnardo, who established the international network of children's homes. Born in London, Eilidh grew up in the Himalayas and travelled the world studying art and working as a painter, teacher, frame-maker and interior decorator. She arrived in Lichfield in 1958 and became a founding member of the Arts Centre. Eilidh was a member of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, a friend of the Royal Academy and a member of the Lichfield Society of Science and Engineering.



this fine portrait of Elsie Armour-Brown at her easel, taken in 1990 by Mercury photographer Alon Williamson, conveys her artistic vitality and the strength of her personality. Writing about her in a full-page article which appeared in the Mercury on 11 August 1994, the society's President, John Sanders, noted, 'Unfortunately she had to abandon painting in her beloved oils during the last 12 months, since developing an allergy to the materials which she used. But undaunted, she continued to paint in acrylics - though I fear that she found this medium less fulfilling. The art scene in Lichfield is much diminished by her death.'



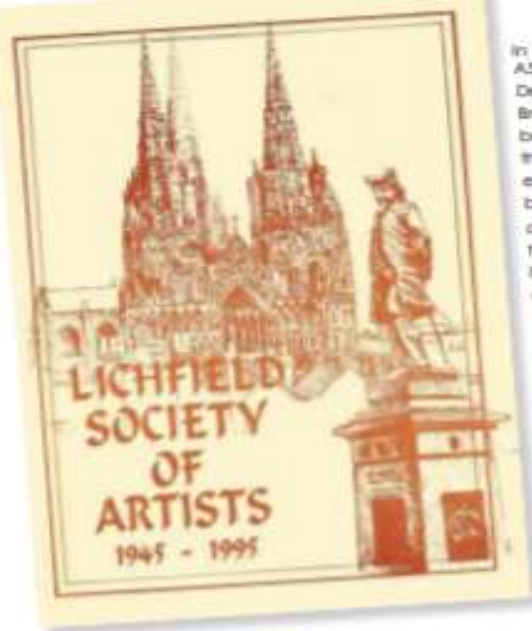
Member Graham Shipway is pictured here receiving the Jack Ballinger Memorial Award of the society's Autumn Exhibition 1994 from the guest of honour, the newly appointed Dean of Lichfield, the Very Reverend Tom Wright. Also in the picture is Janet Caffrell RBSA, who took over from Jack Ballinger as Chair from 1992 until 1995. Under Janet's chairmanship, the society decided, in 1992, to award a book prize each year to outstanding art students of three Lichfield schools. The awards were given to deserving pupils nominated by the schools' respective art teachers of King Edward VI (1992), the Friary School (1993)



In the frame

[illegible]

The society's public exhibitions have invariably been opened by distinguished guests of honour that have included civic dignitaries and prominent personalities from the spheres of business, politics and the media and representatives from the worlds of art, theatre and literature. The society's Spring Exhibition in March 1995 was opened by local architect and landowner Sir Charles Wolsey and Lady Wolsey in the presence of Lichfield's Mayor and Sheriff. Pictured with them on this Mercury photograph are the society's Chair, Janet Corfield BBEA and President, John Sanders MBE.



In 1995, the society published a 36-page, A5 booklet to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Dedicated to the memory of Eilidh Armour-Brown, it contained extracts from the earlier booklet written by Blanche Pochin about the first quarter of a century of the society's existence, followed by short essays written by the Chairpersons whose periods of office covered the following 25 years. In the preface to the booklet, the society's President, John Sanders, writes that, 'it can reasonably be assumed that a third and fourth publication of this nature will be seen in the first half of the imminent new century, and hopefully for many years after that'.



Lichfield Society of Artists' president John Sanders MBE is now presenting the first copy of the 50th anniversary booklet to the former Sheriff of Lichfield Bob White, watched by Mrs White and chairperson Janet Carroll. Mr and Mrs White were principal guests at a celebratory dinner.

The society's 50th anniversary activities in 1995 included a celebration dinner at Seedy Mill Golf Club at which the first copy of its commemorative publication was presented to the principal guest, former Sheriff Bob White. The anniversary sparked a drive to attract new members and produced a special exhibition in Lichfield Cathedral, by permission of the Dean and Chapter, which took place between 30 September and 8 October. In the same year, the society held a Spring Exhibition at the Lichfield Library Gallery, the Friary, an exhibition in June at Minsterston West and an Autumn Exhibition at the Friary Gallery. A busy year (Photo Sutton & Lichfield Select Magazine, August 1995).



Lichfield Cathedral has not only been a source of artistic inspiration and the frequent subject of members' paintings, but also the venue for several of the society's exhibitions, including its 50th anniversary exhibition in 1995. The display, in the South Transept, was opened by the Dean, the Very Reverend Tom Wight, the surviving catalogue records 46 exhibits, the majority of which were watercolours. There were also entries in pen and wash, oil, acrylics, pastel and charcoal, as well as examples of encaustic artwork, a silk-screen print, textiles and one 'hand-made paper collage'.

Eilidh's memory lives on



Following the death of Eilidh Armour-Brown in 1994, Anne Rodman, an accomplished sculptress who was a member of the Society at the time, was commissioned to produce a commemorative portrait bust. The result, a portrait in fired clay, glazed in matt black and finished with a bronze patina wax, has been awarded annually for artistic excellence at the society's public exhibitions ever since. While



carrying out research for this publication, it became possible to make contact again with Anne and reunite her for the first time in almost a quarter of a century with the object she created in 1995. Anne was delighted to discover that it is not only still in one piece, but also very much in use as a coveted award that preserves the memory of one of the society's most important past members.

Should we hold on to 'historic' post office?

A NEWLY FORMED committee has submitted the following plans for a new arts centre for Lichfield. It is shown that the old building should be preserved for its historic value.



New mums

The old post office in Lichfield - should the building be preserved?

This letter appeared in the Mercury on 26 January 1995 on the subject of the fate of the condemned General Post Office building in Bird Street. Originally constructed in 1905, it was abandoned, then adopted at the end of the 1960s by the Lichfield District Arts Association and converted into a creative community Arts Centre. The ambition to preserve or convert it, or to create something new in its place, either on the existing site, or elsewhere, as a new home for voluntary arts organisations, was much

debated in the pages of the Mercury and in public meetings in the late 1990s. Numerous papers and drawings were put forward. The Lichfield Society of Artists also joined in the debate, but with little success.



In 1995, the society became a member of the Lichfield Twinning Association. The idea of twinning took off after the Second World War with the aim of bringing ordinary people from different walks of life in Europe closer together. Regular visits between Lichfield and its twin towns of Sainte-Foy-lès-Lyon in France and Umburg an der Lahn in Germany were organised through Lichfield City Council. Representatives from the twinning partners came to Lichfield for a weekend in October 1995 during which the society hosted an official visit to its Autumn Exhibition at Lichfield Library Art Gallery where 150 works of art were on display. Pictured here are, from left to right, Dr Heinrich Richard, Deputy Mayor of Limburg, Cllr David Bailey, Mayor of Lichfield, Michel Chapin, Mayor of Sainte Foy and member Mike Cuttle who produced the paintings that were presented as gifts to the two visiting mayors. According to the Mercury, the civic heads, 'spoke of their hopes for future friendship, prosperity and unity in Europe'. Dr Richard warned that, 'unfortunately, the alarming increase of the diverse forms of distrust and intolerance is obvious everywhere in Europe'.



This stylish advertisement in the Mercury for a combined flower festival and artwork exhibition that took place in May 1996 in the church of St Nicholas in Mavesyn Ridware is a precursor of the society's recent involvement in the Whittington Open Gardens events in 2017 and 2019 and its artistic contributions to the Herb Garden Festival at the Erasmus Darwin House in 2019. A report in the society's newsletter in June 1996 described the Mavesyn Ridware exhibition as, 'a wonderful success, with total receipts of £1,275.50, from which we were able to donate £209.10 to the local church. We are grateful to Mrs Eades who instigated our participation in the village celebration'.

Showcase for best by city artists



LICHFIELD SOCIETY OF ARTISTS

◆ Above: The setting on the wall... Fine Taylor shows imaginative use of her calligraphy skills and ceramics.
◆ Below: Patricia Turkey progress her work on ceramics.



CALLIGRAPHY, ceramics and sculpture will go on show alongside paintings and drawings at the Lichfield Society of Artists' Spring Exhibition. The show - held at the Lichfield Library Art Gallery - will be open to the public from 11am to 5pm on Saturday 25th May and Sunday 26th May. Tickets will cost £5.00 for adults and £2.50 for children. The show will also feature a display of the society's recent work on ceramics and sculpture.



Getting a head start in the exhibition at Lichfield Library Art Gallery are Patricia Turkey (left) and Mike Cuttle (right).

Kurt Calder, Editor of the Lichfield Mercury, was the guest of honour at the opening of the society's Spring Exhibition in 1997. In a change from the usual focus on paintings and drawings, this article highlighted examples of calligraphy, ceramics and sculpture and demonstrated the breadth of interests and variety of skills possessed by the society's members.



Having previously hosted an artwork exhibition in Lichfield for visiting representatives from Lichfield's twin cities in 1995, the society took seventeen examples of members' artwork to Sainte Foy in September 1996 for a display on the other side of the Channel. The programme of twinning activities initiated in the 1990s created personal friendships between participating society members and their hosts in Germany and France, several of which continue to this day.



Lichfield art in France

The first time members of the Lichfield Society of Artists have exhibited in France was in 1996, when a group of 17 artists exhibited at the 'Salon des Artistes' in Sainte Foy, France.

High standard of work

Seven top members of the Society of Artists exhibited at the 'Salon des Artistes' in Sainte Foy, France, in 1996. The exhibition was held in the 'Salon des Artistes' in Sainte Foy, France, in 1996. The exhibition was held in the 'Salon des Artistes' in Sainte Foy, France, in 1996.

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Leisure Time

Top author opens city art show

LICHFIELD Society of Artists' Autumn exhibition opened for the city's art lovers on Saturday 25. Opened by local author Craig Thomas, who was taught at King Edward VI School, the show has over 100 items on display.



The exhibition is a very high standard and is well worth viewing and much of it is for sale.

The exhibition is a very high standard and is well worth viewing and much of it is for sale.



A Lichfield Society of Artists' autumn exhibition, opening chairman Margaret Harrison and Lichfield Mayor Margaret Barrett at the exhibition opening presentation.

The celebrated Welsh author Craig Thomas is one of many celebrities to have been invited to open the society's public exhibitions. Thomas rose to global prominence with a series of highly successful espionage and techno-thriller novels. One of them, *Firefox*, even spawned a film adaptation starring Clint Eastwood. He was also,

as this newspaper article noted, once a teacher at King Edward VI School. The author is pictured here at the opening of the society's Autumn Exhibition in October 1997 together with civic dignitaries and with Margaret Harrison, who succeeded Janet Cottrell as the society's Chair in 1996.

Centre's memories rekindled on canvas



The Arts Centre, a fine Edwardian building overlooking Minster Pool that served as the home of Lichfield District Arts Centre for over 25 years, had to be closed in February 1994 because of subsidence. The demise of the building inspired member Royston Evans to depict it in happier times. The painting was exhibited at the society's Spring Exhibition in 1998. Royston's artistic expression of sadness also took the more direct form of a letter of protest to the Council and his exhortation

to investigate the possibility of putting something suitable in its place at the attractive Bird Street site. Alternative solutions were proposed and investigated in the years that followed, but the opportunity to create a gallery for the visual arts did not materialise.



Lichfield District Council

A Strategy for the Arts 1997-2002

DRAFT COPY



Lichfield has always recognised the importance of the arts, but also wrestled over a period of very many years with the practicalities of providing and maintaining adequate, affordable facilities that satisfy the requirements and expectations of artists representing a wide range of disciplines and the wishes of the general public. Competing interests, differing opinions, changing priorities and harsh economics have frequently defeated the best efforts of everyone concerned to come up with satisfactory solutions.



Colin Clifton, pictured here on the right, took over as Chair in 1999 and welcomed local celebrity Ralph James as guest of honour at the opening of that year's Autumn Exhibition, which was also attended and supported by Lichfield Mayor Cllr John Mercer and Lichfield MP Michael Fabricant. The exhibition catalogue lists 220 paintings and craftwork items.



For crying out loud! Lichfield Town Crier Lorna Atkin added sonar and colour to the opening of the Autumn Exhibition 2001, at which he presented society member Robin Mason with the Elith Barnardo Award for a pastel drawing with the title 'Quiet Corner', Robin, whose burgeoning talent earned him numerous exhibition awards, has since become a successful and widely admired professional artist. He still regularly returns to give live painting demonstrations for the society.



John Sanders, having already received the Alfred Pochin Award in 1979, when he stepped down as Chair, received the award for a second time when he stood down as President in March 2002 and handed over to Rayston Evans. He is seen here receiving the society's highest accolade at the opening of the Spring Exhibition 2002 in Lichfield Library Art Gallery, The Friary, from Mary Pochin, daughter of the society's founder.



This fine portrait bust of John Sanders MBE is an excellent likeness of the Society's former Chair and President. It was created by an artist with the initials 'B.C.' who is thought to be Barry Caswell. John Sanders sadly died in 2003. His wonderful artistic ability, inspirational qualities and organisational involvement in the Society spanned a period of 45 years.



John Sanders used his considerable artistic talents for the benefit of several iconic Lichfield institutions. Two of his paintings can still be seen today in the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum. His portrait of 'Tetty', Elizabeth Johnson, who married the great man in 1735, was painted in 1990. It's a copy of the only known painting of Johnson's wife, attributed to the artist Maria Verelst in the Donald and Mary Hyde Collection at the Houghton Library, Harvard University. It was commissioned by John Austin, a leading member of the Council of the Johnson Society at the time. John Sanders worked from a photograph of the original painting supplied by Mary Hyde, a former President of the Johnson Society who later enjoyed the title Viscountess Eccles. A top London frame-maker, Stone and Green of Sloane Street, was asked to produce a copy of the frame as near to the original as possible. The story behind the creation of the other painting (below), which was completed at some time during the 1990s and appears to depict Samuel Johnson in conversation with other figures in Lichfield's Market Square, is less clear. It may well have been a product of the artist's imagination.





John Sanders' artistic legacy includes a painting done by him which hangs at the Erasmus Darwin House. It's a copy of a portrait in oils of Erasmus Darwin, probably done around the year 2000, after Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-1797) who painted Erasmus several times during his lifetime. A key figure in the history of the British Enlightenment, Erasmus is credited with spawning many of the ideas that led to Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution. He was also a gifted physician, botanist, author, poet, inventor and founding member of the Lunar Society. One of the few important creative activities Erasmus Darwin appears not to have attempted with any great talent or success is painting. Nobody's perfect!

A design by John Sanders, who founded the Darwin Walk 'Green Necklace' around the city in 1986, was a posthumous contribution to the creation of the four-figured stainless steel statue of Erasmus Darwin erected by the Darwin Walk Trust in 2012 in Lichfield's Darwin Park housing estate.



This rare photograph of Stuart Harrison, husband of the late Margaret Harrison, reveals the man who was almost always on the other side of the camera and to whom we are indebted for capturing on film many of the society's members, exhibitions and other activities in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The surviving images from that period in the society's archive are largely his work.



The society's longstanding support of the important work in the community done by St Giles Hospice was initiated under the chairmanship of Colin Clifton. Colin is pictured here presenting a painting donated by the society during its exhibition in October 2002 at Lichfield Library Gallery, the Friary, to Hospice representative Laura Pennycuik. The society's support of St Giles Hospice continues to this day with regular raffles and fundraising activities, exhibitions of artwork of the Hospice in Whittington and other collaborative activities.

The society's annual Autumn Exhibition in 2002 was advertised in The Post (31 October) and called the 'Golden Jubilee Exhibition' in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II to the throne.



this eye-catching but misleading headline on the front page of the Mercury in March 2003 raised hopes that a new gallery for the visual arts might indeed be created, but nothing in fact materialised.



Society Chair Colin Clifton (right) is pictured conferring here with President Royston Evans at the Spring Exhibition 2003 of Lichfield Library Gallery, the Friary.



At the Spring Exhibition 2003, Royston Evans (left) was the recipient of a new award for artistic excellence in the shape of a silver salver donated by Dorothy Godfrey MBE (right). Dorothy, Lichfield Mayor in 1990, remained a great supporter of the society until her death in June 2007. She is pictured here together with the serving Mayor, Doris English (middle). Doris was already, and remains, a member of the society.



In May 2003, Lichfield Cathedral was once again the venue for a display of members' artwork. The catalogue shows that the exhibition took place between 17 and 30 May and lists 46 exhibits. The majority of them were watercolours with a sprinkling of oils, acrylics, pen and wash and pastels. The exhibition received publicity in the Mercury and also in the Express & Star.



The society's education link with pupils from Queen's Craft School, who are pictured here demonstrating an example of folk work to society Patron Michael Fabricant, MP and Lichfield Mayor Gwyneth Boyle of the Spring Exhibition 2005, shows a happier side of life. Less happy was the news Chair Brian Ebrey received toward the end of 2004 that the three rooms that had previously been available for exhibiting artwork at the Lichfield Library gallery of the Friary were suddenly to be reduced to just one. The areas that were lost were needed as IT classrooms. The substantial reduction in space had a detrimental effect in the years that followed on the society's public exhibitions and also, as a consequence, on membership numbers. Letters expressing disappointment were sent to the Council and to the Library Services department. The society, however, had no choice but to accept the situation.



The loss of the old Arts Centre and much of the gallery space at Lichfield library encouraged the society to take advantage of the welcome opportunity offered by Artistic Director Paul Everett to display paintings and craftwork at the Garrick Theatre. The society also invested £500 to purchase a lockable glass display cabinet for 3D craftwork. The first of a series of exhibitions, each lasting around five weeks on a rotation basis, took place in October 2005, followed by several further exhibitions in the years that followed.



In the first decade of this century, the society took a stall for several years in a row at the Medieval Market in the grounds of the Cathedral Close which attracted many thousands of people during the Lichfield Festival. This was a useful public relations exercise that helped to raise awareness of the Society.



From left to right: Members Beryl Evans, Doreen Clifton, Dais English and Pat Evans, pictured here at one of the Medieval Markets, know what they want, what they really, really want.



The society's exhibitions in 2005 and the years that followed continued in restricted form in the remaining available space at the Lichfield library gallery at the Friary. In October 2005, the recently appointed Dean of Lichfield Cathedral, the Very Reverend Adrian Darbey, accepted an invitation to present the awards at the Autumn Exhibition. Mike Lancaster is pictured here receiving the Blith Barnard Award for a work in pencil with the title 'Session in Gurteen'.

News Release

1st March 2006

LICHFIELD SOCIETY OF ARTISTS VISIT THE COMMONS

Members of the Lichfield Society of Artists visited Parliament yesterday (28th February), to spend a day at the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and also had tea with Michael Fabricant, MP for Sutton Coldfield. The Society will be opening their Spring Exhibition at 11am at The Library, The Friary, Lichfield, and the Exhibition will run until 23rd March.



Michael, who has sponsored the Michael Fabricant Lichfield Award Cup which will be awarded at the Commons, said "The Society is an integral part of Lichfield life, bringing artists from Sutton Coldfield and further afield. It was a pleasure having them at the House of Commons and I look forward to attending the opening of their Spring Exhibition on 23rd March."

Photograph shows Michael with members of the Society.

Following a previous society excursion to the Palace of Westminster in 1994, Patron Michael Fabricant, MP once again generously hosted a visit by society members in February 2006.



A society newsletter issued in 2006 praised the brave initiative of the members (and apparently occasional passer-by) who helped to hang and take down the banner in Bore Street, but reassured readers that in future, for health and safety reasons, this would be done by a contracted company.



St Chad's Church Hall was the venue in 2006 for the society's traditional Christmas Party. On this occasion, entertainment was provided by a local singing group.



The well-known television and radio presenter Michael Collie, still a very familiar face on BBC Midlands news programmes, was guest of honour at the Autumn Exhibition 2006. Michael, whose grandfather was once Dean of Lichfield, was lavish in his praise of the exhibition. He is pictured here together with member John Wood, who received the Eliah Armour-Brown Award for a pencil drawing with the title 'George and the Dragon'.



Clockwise, from left to right: Roger De Havilland, Beryl Evans, Colin Clifton and Dennis Harper were among the members who received awards from the Head of the Lichfield College of Art, Alison Churchill, at the opening of the Spring Exhibition 2008. Alison, who officiated as guest of honour on this occasion, was herself a former society member who had received several awards, including one for a double portrait in pastels at the society's Spring Exhibition 1993 (see page 33).

A renewed attempt by President Raydon Evans to draw attention to 'the significant absence of a public art gallery in Lichfield' was made on 8 October 2009. His letter criticising the 'inadequate public art gallery space and ineffectual assistance from local authorities' was published in full in the Mercury together with the society's invitation to members of the public to sign a petition calling for something to be done.





In March 2007, David Leytham succeeded Brian Ebrey as Chair before handing over in turn, in March 2011, to his successor, retired Air Vice-Marshal Mike Brown. Mike Brown and his wife Ruth had only recently moved to Lichfield from Peterborough where he had been chair of the local astronomical and art societies. Mike Brown died suddenly and very sadly in July 2011, leaving the society without a Chair for a period of several months until Sue Bindley took on the role in 2012.



This photograph of Mike Kilfoyle appeared in the Mercury on 14 February 2013 as the illustration for an article paying tribute to a 'man with a passion for art' who had sadly died at the age of 74 years. Mike had been Chair of the society from 1979 until 1988, and played an important part in its successful development during that period. He was a member of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists and the National Acrylic Painters Association. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a member of the National Society for Education in Art and Design and a member of the Birmingham Watercolour Society. After retiring from full-time teaching in 1992, Mike continued to tutor part-time at Lichfield College, teaching adults to draw and paint.



On the occasion of the society's 70th Anniversary Exhibition in 2015 at Lichfield Library Gallery, the Friary, the Mercury could once again be relied on to give prominent coverage on its pages and help to boost visitor numbers.



David Lawton is one of a small handful of members to have received the Alfred Pochin Award on two occasions (2005 and 2013). His many valuable contributions to the successful running of the society over a number of years have included responsibility for organising its main exhibitions and for producing its newsletters.



Since becoming the society's Treasurer in 2011, Christine Carter has also taken on the role of Membership Secretary. Carrying out both of these key responsibilities represents a considerable commitment of time. Christine received the Alfred Pochin Award in 2014.



In 2013, Saxon Hill Academy became the new venue for the society's regular meetings which take place on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. This has given it access to excellent facilities for live painting demonstrations given by visiting professional artists. The hire charges paid by the society are helping to support the important work done by the Academy which looks after young children with physical disabilities and complex medical needs. Here we see members of the venue enjoying a portraiture masterclass given by Stephen Ashurst in June 2014.



Sue Brindley, the society's Chair from 2012 until 2017, is pictured here against the background of members' paintings on display at St Giles Hospice. Sue was the recipient of the Alfred Pochin Award in 2017 and continues to be an extremely active committee member as one of the main organisers of the society's social occasions and the coordinator of its popular coach excursions to interesting art festivals and exhibitions.



Investment in a new video camera, LED lighting panels and sound equipment, purchased with the knowledgeable support of member and professional photographer David Gough, enables members to see each brushstroke and hear every word of commentary spoken by guest artists. The live demonstration by professional watercolourist John Yardley on 8 February 2017 was the opportunity to give the new equipment its first, very successful outing.



The annual Patchings Festival has been a particularly popular destination in recent years with members taking part in the society's coach excursions. The warm and sunny weather on 16 July 2017 made it another very enjoyable visit.



The society has participated several times in recent years in the 'Festival of Artists' held at Curbarough Hall Farm Countryside Centre. This popular annual art festival on Lichfield's doorstep has given members the opportunity to demonstrate their work, meet other artists and creative organisations from the wider Staffordshire area and engage with members of the public who enjoy watching artists at work. Member Jennie Speck is pictured here answering visitors' questions at the event in 2017.



In the digital age, not all art societies have immediately embraced the artistic opportunities offered by the creative use of digital technology. Member Pat Brennan, pictured here demonstrating her work at the Curbarough Festival of Artists in 2017, has won many Society awards over the years for her accomplished work in watercolours, pastels and several other traditional art mediums. She has also helped to lead the way in championing new forms of digital artistic expression.



The reduced, single-room exhibition space made available to the society from 2005 onwards at the Lichfield Library Gallery, the Friary, provided an affordable venue for many years for its traditional Spring and Autumn Exhibitions until the building was closed and sold off in 2018. This photograph was taken at the opening of the Autumn Exhibition 2017.



The society's current Chair, Christine Taylor (second from right), is pictured here at the opening of the Autumn Exhibition 2017 with invited guests, who included the Chair of Lichfield District Council, Cllr. Mark Warfield and his Lady, and Society Patron Michael Fabricant, MP. Dots English, a past Lichfield Mayor and longstanding member of the society, presented the awards. The responsibility for organising the society's main public exhibitions in recent years has been in the hands of committee member Mark Thomas (right).



Saxon Hill Academy provides an excellent venue for the society's regular informal painting evenings on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Members are able to share tips and techniques and view each other's current projects in a relaxed and sociable setting. This photograph showing members hard at work was taken in October 2017.



The Spring Exhibition in March 2018 marked the end of an era. It was the last society exhibition to be held at the Lichfield Library Gallery at the Friary before the building was sold off. The Library itself has since been relocated to the refurbished ground floor of St Mary's in the Market Square. This development meant the Society had to look for another suitable venue to hold its public exhibitions.



In March 2018, committee member Fred Wight was given the annual Alfred Pochin Award for a second time, having previously received it in 2011. The award was presented very appropriately by Deputy Mayor David Leytham who, as a past Chair of the society between 2007 and 2011, was particularly well qualified to congratulate and thank Fred for his quietly efficient organisation of the society's painting demonstrations and workshop programme over a period of two decades.



In March 2018, three longstanding members were presented with certificates conferring honorary membership by Patron Michael Fabricant, MP. Sue Price's calligraphic artistry (above left) has adorned the society's award certificates for over two decades. Brian Ebrey's work (left) as a former Chair of the society and his meticulous record-keeping as Membership Secretary over the course of 20 years have been the bedrock of the society's ability to function as an organisation. John Wood's talents (above right) as a highly original artist coupled with his deft management of the awards system and adjudication procedures at nearly all of the society's public exhibitions this century have been invaluable contributions. The hard work quietly performed by all three members has been at the heart of the society's success in recent years.



At the very last Spring Exhibition to be held at the Lichfield Library Gallery, the Friary, in March 2018, longstanding member Roger De Havilland received the John Sanders Award for the best painting on show. Roger sadly passed away at the age of 75 years in January 2019. He was a talented artist, an inspirational teacher and personality and a good friend to many members.



The wheel comes full circle! Following the loss of the Lichfield Library Gallery at the Friary as an exhibition venue, the society's most recent city-centre exhibitions in Autumn 2018 and Spring 2019 have taken place in the Guildroom, just a few metres away from the room in which the society's inaugural meeting took place in October 1944. The ground-floor location in Lichfield's Guildhall is easily accessible and proved to be successful in attracting a higher number of visitors over the course of two days than the former venue did in just over a fortnight. The organisation team of Tony Adams, Chris Carter, Jan Flynn and Mark Thomas certainly had every reason to look satisfied with themselves!



The society's decision to explore new venues outside the walls of the city has encouraged it to widen its horizons, reach new audiences and attract new members. Themed exhibitions such as the Flower Power, Mainly Digital, and Abstractions artwork displays at Shendone Community Library's excellent gallery space in 2018 and 2019 have also given members whose personal preferences represent minority artistic interests a platform to experiment and express their individual artistic personalities. Easy access to the delicious homemade cakes and fresh coffee in the Library's welcoming, volunteer-run café have also helped to make it an attractive venue.



Three excellent excursions took place during 2018. Members enjoyed visiting the Fresh Contemporary Art Fair at Cheltenham Race Course in April, the brilliant international Watercolour Masters Exhibition at Weston Park in May and an action-packed trip in September to Bradford to visit the David Hockney Gallery at Catwright Hall and the equally impressive Saltaire World Heritage Site. Baggins, a couple of Clangers and a scantily-dressed lady were happy to pose with members for a quick photograph at Bradford Museum.



In May 2018, the society collaborated with St Giles Hospice to put on an Arts for Life event at the Hospice in Whittington attended by a large number of invited guests and Hospice supporters from the wider Lichfield area. Several society members were joined by professional artist Robin Mason and art tutor Imogen Kilfoyle, daughter of the society's former Chair, Mike Kilfoyle, in a demonstration of the life-enhancing benefits and sheer fun to be had from engaging in creative artistic activity.



Perfect weather for the Whittington Countryside and Craft Fair in September 2018 helped to attract hundreds of visitors from far and wide, many of whom visited the main marquee, where several society members exhibited their work and gave live demonstrations. Not all members have the confidence to share what they do and engage directly with the public, but those that do thoroughly enjoy the experience of discussing art with interested observers, new admirers and even the very occasional less complimentary critic!



Participation in a one-day Annual Art Fête at Lichfield Cathedral in September 2018 was a great opportunity to join with other local artists taking part in displays and live demonstrations of artwork and fly the flag for the society at this iconic venue.



A revised format to make the Annual General Meeting as informative, efficient and even entertaining as possible has been rewarded with higher membership attendances in 2018 and 2019. Involving members in the sometimes less glamorous work of running the society has occasionally been a challenge over the past 75 years. In spite of some ups and downs along the way, the signs are that the society is not about to give up just yet!



Links with the Friary School go right back to the society's inaugural meeting at the Guildhall in October 1944, when the school's headmistress of the time, Miss Hodge, is reported by the Mercury to have spoken enthusiastically in support of the society's formation and highlighted the importance of encouraging 'the arts' in young people. In February 2019 (photo above left), the society's Chair Christine Taylor and Vice Chair Sue Crudgington, seen here together with staff member Natalie Brickett (right), visited the Friary School to present student Felicity Carden with a certificate for her artistic achievements. Felicity took up the invitation to display an example of her work alongside members' paintings at the society's Spring Exhibition in the Guildroom. Two other talented local students - Katie Sonnevile (photo left) from King Edward VI School and Lauren Dolman (photo below) from Nether Stowe School - also received certificates of merit and the offer of free membership to attend the society's monthly meetings.



Society President Tony Adams is pictured here hanging one of his paintings in June 2019 for the Society's latest display of artwork at the Westgate Practice, Greenhill Health Centre. The society regularly exhibits around twenty paintings in the patients' waiting areas and corridors at the Centre. The artwork is completely refreshed every six months to give pleasure to visiting patients and the medical staff. This is a tradition that has been maintained for almost twenty years.



All-day workshops, such as the one held in April 2019 in the Cooper Room, Sherstone, with professional artist Nick Logan, provide opportunities for members to focus on the development of their skills in a particular medium or chosen subject. The workshop subject in this particular instance, under Nick's expert tuition, was portraiture which demanded great observational concentration from the participants.



Lichfield Community Fire Station might sound like an unlikely venue for artistic activity, but its excellent facilities are a perfect location for the monthly meetings of the Society's dedicated Flower Painting Group, some of whose members are pictured here at a creative painting session in June 2019. Initiated by committee member Valmai Bowden in 2017, this special interest group for members with a particular passion for botanical subjects is going from strength to strength.



Valmai Bowden and Clare Turner are pictured here sketching in the peaceful surroundings of the famous Herb Garden at the Erasmus Darwin House, the society's artwork exhibition, inspired by the garden's plants and herbs, was an important element of the Herb Garden Festival that took place during the Lichfield Festival 2019. It marked a new and successful collaboration between the society and this iconic Lichfield institution.



The Summer Party at Saxon Hill Academy on 10 July 2019 was attended by a number of civic dignitaries that included the Lichfield Mayor, Cllr Mrs Deborah Baker, and Sheriff, Dr Daryl Brown. It was an appropriate occasion to give a warm welcome to the internationally celebrated watercolour master David Poole R.I. NWS whose acceptance of the society's invitation to become a Patron, in its 75th year, does it a great honour. An exhibition of members' artwork demonstrated the breadth of the society's artistic interests and abilities to its new Patron. David's expert guidance and encouragement are providing inspiration for members to take the standard of their artwork to the next level.



In July 2019, an illustrated talk by the author Philip Modano introduced members to the notable nineteenth-century ecclesiastical architecture critic and accomplished watercolourist, Rev. John Louis Petit. The presentation revealed Petit to be one of the most remarkable artists to have lived and worked in Lichfield, though much of his output is only now being discovered and shared and its importance properly evaluated. A few examples of Petit's work, including some of his many paintings of Lichfield, can be viewed in the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum. The artist's watercolours attracted the particular interest of members who shortly afterwards enjoyed a special guided tour as part of the Museum's 'Paintings in Focus' programme. The society hopes to play a part in making Petit's artistic output more widely known and appreciated.



The coincidence in time that links the 75th anniversaries of the formation of the Lichfield Society of Artists and the Battle of Arnhem involving the South Staffordshire Regiment connects very different organisations across the ages and inspired member Peter Maxwell to create a painting that commemorates the sacrifice of the soldiers who gave their lives in the cause of freedom and the liberation of Europe in 1944. Peter, who works at RAF Museum Cosford, is also an associate member of the Guild of Aviation Artists. His painting depicts the gliders arriving at the landing zone north of Arnhem with the

soldiers whose job it was to form a defensive perimeter against a German counter-attack. His interest in one of the most famous battles of World War II goes beyond his fascination with the role played by aircraft in the action and includes a personal connection; one of his uncles fought in the battle as a member of the Parachute Regiment. The painting, with the title 'Arnhem 75', was presented by Peter (right) to Daniele Crader, Director of the Staffordshire Regiment Museum, Whittington, at a special commemorative event on 17 August 2019. The artwork helps to preserve the memory of an engagement that was of great military importance at the time and which remains of considerable historical interest 75 years later.

The benefits of digital technology are helping to transform the society in response to changes in the world around it. A new website, introduced in September 2015, has given the society online visibility and attracted new members. 'Newstflash' updates sent via an automated email distribution platform keep members with internet access up to speed with what's going on. Social media communication is helping the society to reach new and very different audiences. The introduction of mobile card readers for cashless payments will make membership subscription renewals and artwork purchases in future much quicker and easier to complete. This is all a far cry from the technologically simpler world inhabited by the society's founding members in 1944, though even these recent innovations will look unremarkable, or possibly even dreadfully obsolete, by the time the society celebrates its centenary in 2044.



It's not unusual nowadays for members to gather around the paintings produced by visiting professional artists to record the results of the live painting demonstrations they have just witnessed - in this case an acrylic landscape produced at breathtaking speed by the talented Jenny Aiken. Of the 1.3 trillion digital photos that were taken globally last year, 85% were captured on smartphones. Everyone, it seems, has become a photographer! In contrast to the relative rarity of surviving photographs from the society's early years, future accounts of its recent activities will be able to draw on an abundance of visual images.

A public signpost provides orientation in the European context of Lichfield's civic partnership links with the twinned towns of Limburg an der Lahn in Germany and Sainte Foy les Lyon in France. In its 75th anniversary year, the society has renewed its lapsed membership of the Lichfield Twinning Association and is reviving a number of other partnerships described in this booklet that were established for the first time many years ago. It is also exploring new opportunities to connect with sections of the local community in Lichfield that can become new sources of artistic inspiration and catalysts for activity.



Lichfield Cathedral's three famous spires, which feature in our society's logo, are matched by the equally dramatic profile of the Cathedral of St George of Limburg an der Lahn in Germany, the beautiful medieval town with which Lichfield is twinned. The cathedral's location on a rock formation high above the River Lahn makes it visible from afar.



The relocation of Lichfield Library from its former home at the Friary and the recently completed refurbishment of the first floor of St Mary's in the city's historic Market Square as a space for use by community arts organisations mark an exciting development. The Lichfield Society of Artists hopes to contribute to the achievement of the aspiration advertised on St Mary's website and help to make the new facility 'the beating cultural heart of Lichfield's community, building aspirations and skills through engagement with the City's vibrant history and the arts'.



Over the years, the Lichfield School of Art, with which the society has historic connections, has undergone many changes of name and location and experienced several organisational mergers and governing bodies. Following its move from Dam Street, via Cherry Orchard, to the Friary in 1987, it is now at home, since the beginning of this century, together with its own 'Wedge' art gallery, as part of South Staffordshire College on the Lichfield Campus. Opportunities may emerge in the years ahead to make new connections that combine the talents of the society's members and the experience and creativity of the College's teaching staff and students to produce artistic results that may also benefit the wider community.

SOCIETY AWARDS

Over the years, generous benefactors have donated several cups and trophies that are the basis of the society's awards system. The prospect of being recognised by an independent expert or jury for having produced a particularly fine piece of work has inspired many a member to give of their best and create something very special. However, the society has always welcomed artists of all abilities and respected every member's honest work. Recognition of the great value and pleasure to be gained from engaging in the creative process - whether or not the result is exhibited in public, or deemed worthy of an award - is central to the society's ethos.



John Sanders Award



Daphne Gick Award



Elidh Barnardo Award



Margaret Newman-Smith Award





Dorothy Godfrey Award



Len Powell Award



Ellidh Armour-Brown Award



Dorothy Godfrey Cup



Jack Ballinger Award



The Michael Fabricant Cup



Sybil Clark Award

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES FROM THE PAST

The society's archive contains many of the exhibition catalogues that have been produced over the course of the last 75 years. These provide a tangible link with the past. They record the names of the exhibition venues, the exhibiting members and the titles and sale prices of their work.





INVITATION CARDS FROM THE PAST

Nowadays, external guests to the society's exhibitions are likely to be invited by email and just as likely to respond in the same way. In the past, as the following examples show, it was customary to issue printed invitation cards. These examples show a few of the many guests of honour who have attended the official openings of the society's exhibitions.





A PORTRAIT OF THE SOCIETY TODAY (2015-2019)

The formal photographs and informal snapshots on the following pages were all taken during the last four years. They show some of the guests of honour and award-winners at recent public exhibitions and quite a few of the members who have participated in the society's painting evenings, workshops, excursions and other social activities.

One or two of the members who appear in these photos are sadly no longer with us, but their images are respectfully included in grateful memory of their personal friendships and contributions to the society. Also included are some of the many talented visiting professional artists who have educated and delighted us with their live painting demonstrations. The assortment of photos also contains a sprinkling of some of Lichfield's iconic buildings and institutions which have provided inspiration for our members' artwork. Lichfield Cathedral, the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum, Erasmus Darwin House, St Mary's in the Market Square and St John's Hospital have not only been the frequent subjects of members' paintings, but also collaborative parties and occasional venues for the society's activities.

The photos also document our society's close connections with Saxon Hill Academy, St Giles Hospice, Lichfield Community Fire Station, the Westgate Practice Greenhalgh Health Centre and with the Tesco supermarket in Church Street which generously allows the current committee to use its excellent 'Community Space' as a meeting room to run the society's affairs.

The portrait offered by these photographs is of a society that is embedded in the local community, grateful for the support it receives from civic bodies and private organisations and inspired by the prospect of making further contributions to the artistic life of the beautiful city of Lichfield in which it is based.









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THE 1980S

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THE 1980S

A HISTORY OF THE UCHWILD SOCIETY OF ARTISTS IN PICTURES







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The Lichfield Society of Artists was founded during the final months of the Second World War. Using photographs, newspaper cuttings, exhibition catalogues and other surviving documents from the society's archive, this illustrated history chronicles the society's progress over the past seven-and-a-half decades against the background of developments in Lichfield's civic and cultural life. Snapshots highlight key moments from the society's past and record the contributions of people who have played an important part in shaping its development. A concluding selection of photographs documents many of the society's most recent activities and current members. This account offers a portrait of an organisation that, 75 years after its formation, continues to uphold the objectives of its founding members through its encouragement of the practice and appreciation of the visual arts.

£10.00

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Please note that the LSA website address and the Lichfield Society of Artists email address have both changed since this book was printed. We also have a Facebook site.