



BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

Annual Report 1982-83

BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

Annual Report for the Year ended 31 March 1983, given at the Fifty-fourth Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 1st September 1983 in Bluecoat Chambers.

Chairman's Report

The winter of 1982/3 was a particularly eventful one for our Society: plans conceived during the previous eighteen months eventually took shape and we are delighted to announce our completely new coffee shop and reception area and, in the concert hall, new raked seating units, a lighting grid and an interval bar.

Work finally began in September 1982 and for two to three months the Bluecoat resembled a building site as the annexe to the concert hall and the old W.E.A. offices were turned respectively into a theatre bar and coffee shop. The transformation went off remarkably smoothly and my thanks are due to tenants and other users of the building for their forbearance during the period. On Friday December 10th the bar served its first round of drinks at a jazz concert taking place in the concert hall. At 10 am on Saturday 18th December, in time for a week's pre-Christmas trading, the Bluecoat Shop opened its doors to our first customers. The almost instant success of the Bluecoat Shop was no less than we had hoped for but its reality came as a welcome boost to morale. The Shop started by selling cards and goods in time for Christmas, together with coffee and light refreshments as a side line. Soon it was evident that our customers wanted a greater selection of food and drinks and we started to serve lunches as well as morning coffee and afternoon tea. Since that decision was made, business has been steadily picking up and the Shop is generating an increasingly useful source of income for the Society. Ideally situated overlooking the garden, the Shop provides an amenity for our patrons, the value of which should not be measured in purely financial terms. The area is staffed six days a week and this means that the front door is always supervised providing a valuable security check. Equally, bona fide visitors can always ask a member of staff for directions and information, should the layout of our 18th century corridors prove too complicated. In addition to stocking items of local interest and artists' cards, the Shop now acts as an extension to the Gallery selling pictures, mostly by local artists, and here again it seems to have fitted quite naturally into our spectrum of activities.

By the new year, then, we had two out of three projects in operation; for the remainder of the year we concentrated on the concert hall development scheme. In January, funded by a grant from the Granada Foundation, we installed a lighting grid to accommodate theatre lanterns and later in the month our custom-built retractable seating units were constructed in the hall. Using the existing polypropylene seats, these units provide raked seating for the audience whilst the floor is used as a performance area. The units can be pushed back quickly allowing the floor space to continue to be used for exams, fairs and markets and other lettings which are the source of valuable income to the Society. At the same time, the old platform was dismantled and the floor re-laid to extend the new performance area. The major elements of the concert hall conversion are therefore completed and the next stage will be to provide a new back cloth and curtains and to purchase our own theatre lights. The new arrangements have been greeted with acclaim by performers and audience alike. They also produce immediate benefits in terms of management: labour and cash are both saved when promoting an event since no longer does a temporary grid have to be rigged and basic equipment hired. Underlying these capital developments in the hall is our firm resolve to increase its usage and widen the scope of events taking place there and broadly speaking, our achievements this year are already showing that the Bluecoat is now busier than before and is used by a large cross-section of people from all over Merseyside.

One of the less pleasing occurrences of the year was once again the discovery of extensive dry rot, this time in the foyer which the Gallery now uses for additional exhibition space. An application has been made to the Historic Buildings Council for assistance towards carrying out the repairs and in the meantime the Gallery has been obliged to use screens erected around the area for hanging space.

Accompanying the building work, staff changes were taking place to cater for the increased activities. In December Jean Whittle moved to the Shop and was replaced by Alison Bethel in the office. At the same time a Manpower Services Community Project was set up and two young people were employed, one to work in the Shop and one of the promotional side of the artistic programme. It was with regret that, at a time of such activity, we saw George Montrose retire at Christmas. Mr. Montrose gave us ten years of loyal service and his presence was missed by tenants and staff alike. In March Elaine Brickwood joined the Shop staff, with a background in the arts and in catering, as a replacement for Jean Whittle who left after five years with the Society. A new post was created in the form of a deputy caretaker when Philip Alcock was appointed in April following a re-organisation of the caretaking staff.

Such a year of change and upheaval could not be expected to run entirely without hitch and the staff showed their usual resilience and resourcefulness in coping with such situations. It is to their credit that the occasional difficulties which inevitably arose were kept within manageable proportions.

The Committees too worked harder than ever this year and thanks are due to their continuing hard work and support. In particular gratitude must be expressed to the work that David Robinson and Alan Swerdlow put into organising the new coffee shop and to the Northern Design Unit for their design; also to our Treasurer John Cook, who allowed the Society to use his computer facilities to maintain a close monitoring of its increasingly complex financial position. Once again we must thank Brenda Evans who looks after our back garden courtyard, entirely on a voluntary basis, with such marvellous results.

Special thanks are due to Barbara Foran for her work in organising so well the performances in the Concert Hall and elsewhere, in spite of being under-staffed; to Bryan Biggs for the continuing high standard at the Gallery and finally my personal thanks to Alison Edis in making my role as Chairman so easy and enjoyable.

Treasurer's Report

As reported last year, the Committee was resolved to see through the expansion schemes despite the economic climate and although we have received generous aid from public and private sources, our total income in this year of transition fell short of our total expenditure by £18,750. Part of this shortfall represents improvements to the building including the cost of the raised seating unit in the concert hall and the two brand-new areas of activity, the Shop and the bar. These are of course expected to generate income for the Society and, in line with the requirements of the English Tourist Board, who partly financed the project we have transferred to fixed assets the capital cost relating to these areas amounting to £17,329, thus leaving a net deficit for the year of £1,421 transferred to the general fund. The expenditure nevertheless represents a deterioration in the Society's liquidity and the Committee's preoccupation for the coming year is to consolidate the benefits bestowed by our new facilities so that we can continue to develop the use of the building in a time of increasing uncertainties about public sector finance of the arts. This includes the launching of an appeal fund, the formation of the Bluecoat Friends, the active enlargement of business sponsorship and the close monitoring of the Society's costs.

Gallery

The Gallery, admission to which is still free to the public, attracted over 36,000 visitors to a programme which once again featured artists from both within and outside the region, and the year also saw some exhibitions international in flavour.

Seven young New York artists were represented in *Urban Kisses* in December, the exhibition's only provincial showing. One of the exhibitors, *Mike Glier*, visiting Liverpool to produce a special free-hanging drawing on canvas for the show, provided a large audience with a lively slide lecture as an introduction to some current New York art. *Graphic Rap* was the title of a densely packed display of contemporary comics from Europe and America. This proved extremely popular, attracting good reviews and a large audience, a response echoed at each venue of its national tour, organised jointly with the I.C.A. Further collaboration with this London gallery and the Arnolfini, Bristol, took place on *Histories*, a one-man show by the South American born artist *Glenn Sujo* who now lives in this country. A tour was also arranged for another Bluecoat-initiated exhibition of over 100 drawings from a twenty-year period by *Derek Boshier*, the British artist now resident in Texas. This show was accompanied by *Gerard Mermoz*'s postcard pieces and object sculptures. The Scottish Arts Council's large exhibition, retrospective in nature, of paintings, drawings, watercolours and tapestry by *Elizabeth Blackadder* delighted an audience, many whom were previously unaware of this major Scottish artist's work.

A summer sculpture exhibition showed twelve artists from the north of England selected by *Graham Ashton* from an open submission. A number of painters, displaying very distinct approaches in their work, — *Graham Crowley*, *Tim Jones*, *Maurice Cockrill*, *Mike* and *Veronica Knowles* and *Mike Lawson* — each had exhibitions showing a substantial number of pictures, whilst the *Bluecoat Invitational* gave eight Merseyside Artists, who had not previously exhibited widely, a chance to show.

Exhibitions of a craft and design nature included *Michaela Gibbon*'s bridal accessories completed during her year's residency at Liverpool Polytechnic; Frank and Bridget Egerton's popular colourful wooden toys; and *Work Together* in which *Lesley Sunderland* and *Jonathan Heale* demonstrated their range of activities by a selection of decorated furniture, fabrics, clothes, ceramics and prints.

The regular evening classes in life drawing and etching continued and a number of talks by artists were arranged, including a series on drawing organised in conjunction with Liverpool Polytechnic.

Music & Dance

The Sounds Scintillating concert series, launched at the beginning of the 1981/2, season continued with increasing success during the 1982/83 season. At a time of increasing economic hardship, theatres and places of entertainment reported a sharp decline in attendance and the prospects for the small-scale promoter were undeniably bleak. The Promotions Committee's faith in adhering to its policy of promoting early music and contemporary music concerts was justified. The audience figures rose quite dramatically in some instances, even before the concert hall conversion and bar was complete and it was felt that the Bluecoat was beginning to become associated with a particular type of event. The early music concerts were linked by a baroque theme, and once again the North West Early Music Forum organised workshops with two of the visiting ensembles which proved to be both highly successful and enjoyable. Two of the visiting groups, *Musick for the Generall Peace* and *Philomel*, were from America, whilst *L'Ecole d'Orphee* and *The Sixteen* were British. All aspects of baroque music were explored, from the prominence of the trio sonata to the performance of Boismortier's rarely heard cantata *Acteon*. The contemporary music concerts continued in an equally adventurous vein. The first concert combined *The Rova Saxophone Quartet* from America playing structured improvisation, with the British group *Alterations* playing free improvised music. Other visitors included *The Songmakers' Almanac* and *the Michael Nyman Band*. Michael Nyman's visit coincided with the release of two films for which he had written the music: Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract* and Richard Loncraine's film of Dennis Potter's play *Brimstone and Treacle*. By far the most popular and exciting concert was *Electronic Music Now* presented by the composer Tim Souster and trumpeter John Wallace. The programme combined live music with taped music and involved almost three tons of sound equipment. The tapes had been prepared for an eight channel system and the audience set enclosed within the eight speakers.

During the summer months Spiral Dance Company and the Bluecoat jointly promoted *Summer Dance* a week of dance activities for all ages. There were three courses, a junior course for 13 to 16 year olds, an adult evening course and an adult day course. The participants all enjoyed the courses and expressed the wish to see more activities of this kind. Also during the summer the popular courtyard concerts of music took place. As well as the regular brass and wind band concerts there were two events of a more unusual nature. The first was a visit from Stanney Comprehensive School Gamelan Orchestra. The gamelan is a percussion orchestra of bronze gongs and tuned percussion instruments native to Indonesia. The pupils of Stanney Comprehensive School had made their own gamelan which was remarkably authentic sounding and came complete with dancers dressed in traditional sarongs. Another adventurous enterprise involved a group of young musicians from the Wirral who gave a performance of part of Stockhausen's *Seven Days*.

Contemporary dance continued to enjoy enthusiastic support. The dance and mime mailing list had doubled during the season. The performers had all been to the Bluecoat before. *Mantis Dance Company* performed to capacity audiences and the company members themselves suggested they return for a longer period next season. Other guests included *Spiral Dance Company*, *Fergus Early* and *Maedee Dupres*. Both Fergus Early and Maedee Dupres brought dance with a difference to the Bluecoat. *Are you right there, Michael, are you right?* was the title of Fergus Early's solo show which retold the life story of his own father who had died when Fergus was a small boy. Using slides, taped interviews with family members, music and dance, he recreated the remarkable life story of Noel Early who had served in the Indian Medical Corps. The story was told with great feeling and humour and made a great impression on the audience. Maedee Dupres' show *Face On* was also highly personal. In three sections, childhood, youth and maturity, she explored the development of the individual using song as well as dance. Unusually for small scale touring dance, live music throughout, composed and led by Lindsay Cooper. As in previous seasons, all dancers gave classes and workshops open to the public and all were most popular. The season closed on a light note with *Moving Picture Mime Show*, who presented a programme called *Creatures from the Swamp and Other Rubbish*, a wry look at the consumer society. Much of the imagery was derived from the 1950's horror movies. The second half of the programme *Handle with Care* was a masked piece telling the moving and at times very funny story of two elderly men in a nursing home, terrorised by a formidable nurse.

The concert hall, as ever, was used as a venue for very many other functions apart from the Bluecoat's own promotions. The range of events was enormous: from music exams to the W.E.A. and Liverpool City's *Learning in Liverpool* week; from Liverpool Mozart Orchestra concerts to the Liverpool Education Authority's Festival; from the local Neptune Singers concert to rehearsal space for the Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera and the Royal Ballet. This, together with a regular stream of book fairs, stamp and record fairs, craft fairs and assorted meetings, means that the Bluecoat is used each year by large numbers of the public, not only local but also visitors to the region. The diverse nature of these activities is a side which often escapes the individuals who use the building. It is important, however, because for the arts it puts into perspective the Society's work conserving an important historic building as a contemporary centre. The Bluecoat is appreciated on many different levels by thousands of people.

Covenants & Donations

The Society is most grateful to the following benefactors for their generous donations and grants: (£10 and over)

c = covenanted donation

Associated Biscuits Ltd.....	50.00	
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Summer Dance: Timothy Lamford, Artistic Director of Spiral Dance Company, with young participant.
Photo: Liverpool Daily Post and Echo.

Graham Crowley *So and Sew*
Oil on canvas 60" x 48"



Gary Panter
Illustration from cover of RAW 3
Graphic Rap exhibition organised by
Institute of Contemporary Arts and Bluecoat
Gallery



Leslie Sunderland and Jonathan Heale: *Four Poster Bed*. Photo: Lesley Sunderland.



The Moving Picture Mime Show: *Handle with Care.*

Accounts

BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

Balance Sheet as at 31st March, 1983

	Notes	1983 £	£	1982 £	£
FIXED ASSETS	1		87,302		71,079
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks at lower of cost and net realisable value.....		1,010		421	
Debtors		15,465		9,143	
Bank accounts		974		5,751	
Cash		341		60	
		<u>17,790</u>		<u>15,375</u>	
DEDUCT: CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors and receipts in advance		<u>29,094</u>		<u>9,035</u>	
NET CURRENT (LIABILITIES)/ASSETS			<u>(11,304)</u>		<u>6,340</u>
			<u>£75,998</u>		<u>£77,419</u>
Financed by:-					
GENERAL FUND	2		<u>£75,998</u>		<u>£77,419</u>

Colin R. Wilson Chairman
John K. H. Cook Hon. Treasurer

BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS
Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31st March, 1983

	1983	£	1982	£
INCOME				
Rent of offices and studios.....	22,896		20,603	
Hire of halls	19,555		18,564	
Gallery receipts and commission	3,794		4,084	
Box office receipts for promotions	2,587		2,081	
Profit on shop and bar sales	2,227		168	
Sundry income	77		141	
	51,136		45,641	
DEDUCT: EXPENDITURE				
Salaries, wages and pensions	46,686		38,585	
Heat, light and cleaning	8,925		7,849	
Rates and insurance.....	5,978		5,815	
Telephone, printing, advertising and postages (1983 including shop)	14,294		9,610	
Sundries	2,132		911	
Audit and accountancy.....	633		586	
Restoration, repairs and conversion (1983 including shop and bar)	45,396		48,464	
Legal and architects fees.....	150		579	
Depreciation on furniture and equipment.....	1,106		422	
Gallery fees and expenses	6,613		6,378	
Promotions fees and expenses	10,454		9,248	
	142,367		128,447	
GROSS DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR TRANSFERRED TO INCOME AND EXPENDITURE APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT		£(91,231)		£(82,806)

BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

Income and Expenditure Appropriation Account for the year ended 31st March, 1983

	1983	£	1982	£
TRANSFERS FROM INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
Gross Deficit.....		(91,231)		(82,806)
ADD: Grants and Donations (£1,000 and over stated separately)				
Merseyside Arts Trust	31,863		32,607	
Merseyside County Council	11,500		8,500	
Arts Council of Great Britain.....	10,000		—	
Granada Foundation	5,000		—	
Liverpool Development Agency	4,642		14,137	
Higsons Brewery	2,500		—	
Ocean Transport & Trading PLC. (P. H. Holt Trust)	1,500		1,500	
English Tourist Board	1,148		—	
Historic Buildings Council	—		10,200	
Liverpool City Council	—		10,000	
The Pilgrim Trust.....	—		2,000	
Covenants.....	816		958	
Other Grants and Donations	2,628		873	
Profit on "Week at the Bluecoat"	—		878	
		71,597		81,653
ADD: Interest on Bank Deposit.....		884		732
Excess of Expenditure over Income		(18,750)		(421)
Capital expenditure on shop and bar transferred to fixed assets		17,329		—
TRANSFER TO GENERAL FUND		£(1,421)		£(421)

BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

Notes to the Accounts

1. FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold Property £	Equipment £	Furniture £	Total £
COST				
Balance at 1.4.82.....	67,447	13,773	5,845	87,065
Additions during year	—	16,825	504	17,329
Balance at 31.3.83	<u>67,447</u>	<u>30,598</u>	<u>6,349</u>	<u>104,394</u>
DEPRECIATION				
Balance at 1.4.82.....	—	13,196	2,790	15,986
Charge for year	—	784	322	1,106
Balance at 31.3.83	—	13,980	3,112	17,092
Written down value at 31.3.83	<u>£67,447</u>	<u>£16,618</u>	<u>£3,237</u>	<u>£87,302</u>
Written down value at 31.3.83	<u>£67,447</u>	<u>£577</u>	<u>£3,055</u>	<u>£71,079</u>

No depreciation is charged on freehold property as it is not considered necessary in view of the building's very long anticipated useful life and the consequent small amount involved.

Depreciation is charged on equipment and furniture in order to write the assets down to their expected residual value over their anticipated useful life. The rates used are:

Equipment 12½% of cost
Furniture 10% of written down value

2. GENERAL FUND

Balance at 1st April 1982.....	£ 77,419
Less: Transfer from Income and Expenditure Appropriation Account	 (1,421)
Balance at 31st March 1983.....	<u>£75,998</u>

Report of the Auditors of the Trustees of the Bluecoat Society of Arts

In our opinion, the annexed accounts, which have been prepared under the historical cost convention, give a true and fair view of the state of the Society's affairs at the 31st March 1983, and of its deficit for the year ended on that date.

Chalmers, Impey & Co.
Chartered Accountants.

Liverpool
30th August 1983

**BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS BLUECOAT CHAMBERS
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