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**artsrichmond**  
**(Richmond upon Thames Arts Council)**  
**Annual Report 2007-2008**

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## *2008: quality year for the arts*

**R**ichmond upon Thames has long, and justifiably, prided itself on the quality of its arts scene, and this year has been no exception. Once again the artsrichmond Swan Drama Awards which culminated in the Hampton Hill Playhouse in September demonstrated the range and excellence of our dramatic societies. Overall winner for the best production of a play was *Festen*, produced by the Teddington Theatre Club, and for best musical production, *Mr Cinders*, produced by BROS. There were notable awards for best young actors, male and female, in the age brackets 15-19 and 14 and under. Park Players won the Cygnet award for smaller companies with *Popcorn*, and BROS won the Wild Swan Award for a top *coup de theatre*, with the typists' scene in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. The accolade for 'lifetime achievement' went, uniquely, to a whole society, BROS, celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a long history of excellent and imaginative musical productions.

The borough's Dramatic Edge programme provides a great stimulus for school children interested in the dramatic arts. We welcome the opportunity to participate, and are most grateful to Heather Morgan, who represents us on the project and contributes her great experience of theatre and production.

On the literary side, the year saw the inauguration of the Young Laureates and Junior Laureates awards, involving young people from many schools: the first winners were Rhiannon Nagra, Young Laureate, and Pollyanna Jenkins, Junior Laureate, honoured at the Awards Ceremony at the Orange Tree Theatre in November 2007. The winners are, we plan, then involved in more events throughout the year. Young people were present in droves at the Book Picnic on Richmond Green on May Fair Weekend on Richmond Green: we were privileged to have Jacqueline Wilson talk about writing and reading to an enthralled audience from across the borough.

The 'adult' picnic which preceded it was equally exciting: author and *Times* columnist Ben Macintyre talking with Bamber Gascoigne about his books on Eddie Chapman, master double agent, and James Bond and his creator Ian Fleming – another centenary. The borough's *Book Now! Festival* achieved new strengths with better and better lists of authors attracting bigger audiences throughout both November 2007 and 2008,

and artsrichmond contributed (in addition to the Young Writers Awards) two masterly discussions with James Naughtie in conversation with Sir John Tusa in 2007 and with Lord Patten of Barnes in 2008. The Tusa event was preceded by our new form of book lunch, a Thai buffet in the nearby Thai Square restaurant, much enjoyed before people walked to the Orange Tree Theatre to fill the seats there and ask lively questions.

Music continues to be a major strength. We have numerous musical societies of high excellence which enable people to participate in performances: the Richmond Orchestra, Thames Philharmonic Choir, Kew Sinfonia, Cantanti Camerati, Barnes Choir, and Twickenham Choral Society, to name but a few, all offering performances of an incredible repertory throughout the borough, and, on the concert side, the ever-excellent Richmond Concert Society and the rejuvenated Barnes Music Society, amongst others too numerous to list here (a full list is available in our regularly updated *Guide to the Arts in Richmond upon Thames* with essential contact details). We are strengthening our relationships with the Music Trust, which oversees music education in schools, and appreciate its work at a time when so many cultural activities are taking a back seat in education.

The visual arts too are extremely rich. Richmond Art Society's two annual exhibitions continue to show works of high quality by local artists, and scarcely a month goes past without a high quality art exhibition somewhere in the borough. The Richmond and Twickenham Photographic Society offers an extraordinarily extensive programme to photographers. The artsrichmond art tent at the Richmond May Fair gives an opportunity for local artists to reach a wider audience, and our 2007 arts exhibition at the Old Sorting Office Arts Centre on Barnes Green and 2008 Photography Exhibition, for the first time in the Octagon Room at Orleans House, again attracted top quality works.

We are fortunate, too, to have two enterprising arts centres in the borough: the Landmark at Teddington and the Old Sorting Office on Barnes Green, and to have a brilliant and varied series of arts events and exhibitions managed by the LBRuT arts team at Orleans House on Twickenham Riverside.

In 2008, our activity was headed by **artsrichmond's** Presidents for the year, the eminent actors Julian Glover and Isla Blair, who gave marvelously of their time to support our activities, notably their performance of *Kings and Queens* at the Orange Tree Theatre on a Sunday afternoon in June, again preceded by a Thai lunch, their hosting of our Summer Garden Party at Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare in Hampton, their much-appreciated role in presenting the Swan Drama Awards, and their attendance and ready circulation at numerous other of our events. Julian and Isla will be succeeded in 2009 by author Lee Langley and author-photographer Lady Panufnik, who are already engaged to participate in a supportive programme for local arts activity.

The support of our Executive Committee and committee chairmen is essential to this work, and we are enormously grateful for the time and effort these volunteers put in.

**artsrichmond** (which retains the 'legal' name 'Richmond upon Thames Arts Council') is a voluntary charity, working in cooperation with the borough council, but not part of the council, and very much dependent on the support of its members - the associated societies and individual Friends of the Arts and Libraries.

Our events (carefully designed *not* to duplicate the activities of our member societies) *are* aimed to bring in more supporting members and draw attention to all the spectacular arts activity that goes on in the borough - almost certainly the richest in terms of quality, quantity and value of any similar community in the UK.

Our work with libraries, working with the borough's library service, is increasingly valuable. This year we sadly had to say farewell to the Head of Arts, Libraries and Sport, Aileen Cahill, going to a top appointment in Croydon, and were please to participate in the selection of her successor as Head of Culture, Ian Dodds. We held our regular open forum on public libraries, and worked with the Library service on increasing the role of the Friends of Richmond Libraries, which operate under our aegis.

**ShowCoach**, which offers a carefully selected programme of theatre visits, excursions and holidays, with pick-up from points across the borough, has arranged an ever-expanding programme which is especially (but not exclusively) of great benefit to older people.

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This **Annual Report** includes the accounts for the financial year 2007 to 2008 and brief reports on events and activities during the calendar year 2008.

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A highlight of recent AGMs is making the principal role of the meeting a consultation with our members on their problems and what we could do to give them support. The emphasis is invariably on how to get the support of local media. The meetings produce an abundance of

ideas, and demonstrated how effective an umbrella body such as **artsrichmond** can be.

It is one of our major concerns that it is increasingly difficult to get good coverage of local arts in the beleaguered local media. The initiation of RT2, as the art section of the *Richmond and Twickenham Times*, both boded well for commitment but also restricted the extent of coverage. The new distribution arrangements for the newspaper remain untested at the time of writing, but it is already clear that reviews of amateur events are now taking second place to more lucrative professional activities, and this loss of coverage for the talents of local residents is a matter of extreme concern. We are hoping we can find the resources to make up for some of this through our redeveloped website, but this is not a substitute for wide circulation of authoritative local media.

### **New offices and new Exec Officer**

In the autumn of 2008, **Josie Shantonas**, our executive secretary who has been with us for three years, told us that she was looking for new opportunities, and regretfully left. We are enormously grateful to Josie for the professionalism and care she has put into supporting our activities, and wish her much deserved success in the future, and hope that she will continue to be involved with our work. We are fortunate to have secured the services of **Sian Morgan**, who has been a civil servant in the Department on Culture, Media and Sport, as successor.

In the summer, we were advised by the Greenwood Centre in Hampton Hill that because of the expansion of its activities it needed the space occupied by our office. We were fortunate to be able to move with the Richmond Environment Trust and other environmental bodies to delightful offices at **Phoenix Wharf on Eel Pie Island**. We are very grateful to the Greenwood Centre for their hospitality over the years, and to the Richmond Environment Trust for this new opportunity. Our new address is on page 4.

**artsrichmond** (the Richmond upon Thames Arts Council) is a voluntary organization and registered charity whose objective is to assist cultural organizations make the most of the extraordinary cultural assets in the borough. **artsrichmond** is partly financed by small grants from the borough council and the bigger local charitable trusts, but at least half our income comes from the societies affiliated to us and from our Friends of the Arts and Libraries. These are people who care about the arts in the borough and support our work, contributing because they believe it is important rather than for any membership benefits they might expect to get. We are always on the lookout for new Friends and volunteers to support us and help with our own events, all of which are designed to support other cultural activities in the borough.

In brief, our objectives can be stated as:

- **Promotion** of arts activity in the borough, most especially but not exclusively of the activities of our 90 or so affiliated societies

- **Stimulus** to participation, in particular through competitions and exhibitions encouraging individual activity
- Encouragement of **accessibility** to events by all parts of our society
- Encouragement of **diversity** of participation by performers and audiences

**Publicity and publications** RuTAC publishes each year 11 monthly four-page newsletters distributed to members and to the public, and provides a monthly mailing for members as a vehicle for societies' own cost-effective promotion.

Societies wanting electronic copies of the newsletter for distribution to their own members by e-mail are invited to inform the office.

We publish a regularly updated *artsrichmond Directory of the Arts*, listing the societies active in the arts, with contact details.

**Grants and donations** We gratefully acknowledge grants from the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, from the Richmond Parish Lands Charity, and from the Hampton Fuel Allotment Trust, and donations from St George plc, Mrs Joan Russell Williams, Mrs Kay Williams, Cllr Marc Cranfield Adams and the David King Trust.

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## Richmond upon Thames Arts Council

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**President 2007 Michael Frayn and Claire Tomalin**

**Presidents 2008 Isla Blair and Julian Glover**

**Presidents 2009 Lee Langley and Lady Panufnik**

**Vice Presidents** Rosemary Leach Sandra Green John Coombs Edie Purdue

**Holding Trustees:** *[Holders of the Council's assets on behalf of the membership]*

John Coombs - Sara Burn Edwards - Sandra Green - Howard Greenwood - Edie Purdue

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### Officers and Executive 2008

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<i>Chairman</i>	Clive Bradley CBE
<i>Deputy chairman</i>	David Ward
<i>Treasurer</i>	Pam Frazer
<i>Executive Officer</i>	Josie Shantonas until November 2008, then Sian Morgan

*Elected* : Sue Bell - Patricia Caunter – Robert Charnock - Hilary Dodman – Roger Kirkpatrick -- Barnaby Marder - Heather Morgan - Frances Neale - Greg Nicoll – Christine Reay - Nuala Rowland - Gillian Thorpe - Gillian Wade – Bernard Wigginton (update)

*Co-opted members* Francis Bennett (*Chairman – of the Friends of Richmond Libraries*) – Laurie Coombs - Cllr Pat Parsons

*Nominated by London Borough of Richmond upon Thames:* Cllr Geoffrey Acton – Cllr Jonathan Cardy – Cllr Bob King (*from September 2008*)

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### Patrons of artsrichmond

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The Mayor of Richmond upon Thames - Marcia Ashton - Lord Attenborough - Lady Attenborough - Sir David Attenborough OM CH - Lt Col Duncan Beat - Isla Blair - Sara Burn Edwards - Dr Vincent Cable MP - Helena Caletta - Clive Francis - Michael Frayn - Bamber Gascoigne - Julian Glover - Howard Greenwood - Jerry Hall - Sir Jeremy Hanley - Toby Jessel - Susan Kramer MP - Lee Langley - Rosemary Leach - Bernard Marder QC - Sir Trevor McDonald OBE - James Naughtie - Lady Panufnik - Cllr Pat Parsons - Maurice Press - Alan Price - Colin Squire - Frank Thornton - Claire Tomalin - Sam Walters MBE – Stephen Dodgson

*Convenor of patrons:* Sara Burn Edwards

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**Registered charity no: 251359**

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