



https://www.facebook.com/leedscombinedarts/?locale=en_GB

<https://leedscombinedarts.org.uk/a-brief-history-of-leeds-combined-arts/>

Leeds Combined Arts Newsletter – Autumn 2025



The Fourth Century Sarcophagus of Adefia, taken at the Paul Orsini Museum in Syracuse, Sicily, on Thursday, 4 September 2025. (It was discovered in 1872.)

The inscription at the top reads, *"Here lies Adefia, the sweetest woman and wife of Count Valerius."*

Who We Are and What We Do

Mission Statement

At Leeds Combined Arts (LCA), our mission is to inspire, promote and celebrate artistic and literary expression in its many forms, i.e:

- Crafts
- Drawing and painting
- Drama
- Music
- Poetry and prose

We aim to:

- Foster a sense of belonging and community through the provision of engaging activities, shared meals, walks, and outdoor interests.
- Celebrate local historical heritage via walks, presentations and creative events.
- Cultivate, develop and showcase individual/group talent.
- Foster collaborative relationships with other Leeds-based Community Groups - to enrich the city's cultural fabric.

Vision Statement

LCA envisions a vibrant artistic and literary community, characterised by:

- An outward-looking ethos, to proactively engage with the local community.
- Inclusivity that warmly welcomes people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
- Transparent communication between members and external parties.
- Mutual respect, with open acknowledgement of differing views and beliefs.

Our Approach

We plan to achieve these goals by:

- The operation of robust administrative and financial practices.
- Effective communication between stakeholders and community partners.
- The provision of a '*safe space*'- free from harassment and where creativity can flourish.

Our Ethos

As a politically and philosophically neutral organisation, LCA respects a wide range of viewpoints and beliefs, fostering thoughtful and civil discussion on various topics. We do not promote or endorse any single perspective, including conspiracy theories. Instead, we encourage open, mature, and courteous exchanges of ideas. However, those attending LCA events are kindly requested to leave their political (or religious) views on contentious issues outside the door!

LCA Book Group



The Beckett Room, Heart Centre, Headingley LS6 3HN.

The LCA Book Reading Group is a small, friendly group that meets weekly, every **Monday from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm** at **The Heart Centre**. It offers a pleasant, informal gathering with welcome refreshments!

Our forthcoming book, *'The Housemaid's Secret'* by Freida McFadden, is a Sunday Times bestseller. It is a domestic thriller, set in New York.

We read the book aloud to one another in the sessions, and it's a bit like listening to an audiobook. The cost is £3 per session.

We always break for coffee and cake and have a chat. If you would like to come along and try a session, you're most welcome.

Please get in touch with kimsara@live.co.uk for more information, as spaces are limited.

Notable Events

Saturday, 27 September '25: As part of an organised recruitment drive, Richard and June Smith (LCA Chairperson and Secretary) distributed **117 Leaflets** (all advertising the LCA) in Shire Oak Road and at the Headingley Arndale Centre. A few went to a hotel, two nursing homes and to Headingley Methodist Church. Larger Posters were exhibited at The Heart Centre, The Oxfam Bookshop and Leeds University. So far, four expressions of interest have been received.

Important Requests

The LCA Committee kindly requests that its Members consider: -

- **Distributing copies of the (above-mentioned) leaflets** (emailed to them on Thursday, 25 September) to their family, friends and associates.
- Expressing an interest in joining an LCA *'WhatsApp Group'* by contacting Richard at rjsleeds@yahoo.co.uk and stating, *'Interested in joining'* (Please also write one's name.). It would require at least several members for this prospective *'WhatsApp Group'* to function realistically.
- **Joining the Committee!** – Especially to cover the role of Treasurer.

PERFORMANCE EVENTS

Poetry, Music, Drama & Literature Events
(HEART, Bennett Road, Headingley LS6 3HN)
Doors will open at 2.15 pm or 7.15 pm.

2025

Thursday, 16.10.2025 @ 7.30 pm: An Art Workshop hosted by Catherine Aldred. Entitled 'An Introduction Collage', it will examine different artists who have utilised collage, providing a brief introduction to what it is and why artists might employ this method to create art. The group will be encouraged to create a 2D collage piece based on a still-life composition provided by the instructor.

Thursday, 20.11.2025 @ 7.30 pm: Sir John Battle will present a session on '*Revolutionary Romantics: British Poets in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*'

Thursday, 18.12.2025 @ 2.30 pm: Christmas Celebration and Foodie with music and dancing, hosted by Rob Baker.

2026

Thursday, 15.1.2026 @ 2.30 pm: The Typewriter Poet: Molly Ovenden, '*Seeing Light in the Winter Dark*'

Thursday, 19.2.2026 @ 2.30 pm: A Traditional Folk Violin Session, hosted by the talented '*Le Chat Violet*.'

Thursday, 19.3.2026 @ 2.30 pm: '*An Actor's Craft: My Life in Amateur Dramatics*' by Chris Binns, Chairman of 'STARS' (an immensely popular and Leeds-based award-winning amateur repertory society)

Thursday, 16.4.2026 @ 2.30 pm: LCA Annual General Meeting.

Thursday, 21.5.2026 @ 7.30 pm: '*Art and the Environment*' by the remarkable Hebden Bridge Artist, Andrew Pickles

Thursday, 18.6.2026 @ 7.30 pm: Sewing Instructor, Hannah Gardiner, will present a light-hearted session on '*What The Brontes Wore: The Costumes and Textiles of a Famous Literary Family*.'

Thursday, 15.7.2026 @ 7.30 pm: Christine Eddison, with a lively presentation on '*Trouble Brewing: The Early Days Of Leeds' Parks*.'

WALKS & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Leeds Combined Arts offers monthly walks, designed for individuals who prefer a gentle, steady walk of between two and six miles. These walks are at a moderate pace and are ideal for individuals who want to become fitter and enjoy walking but are not yet ready to undertake a longer walk at a faster pace.

During the walk, we usually incorporate elements of poetry, Storytelling, or music, and we sometimes include visits to a Stately Home, Art Gallery, or other places of interest. Although these walks are of a shorter length, please consider your ability when attending and always come equipped (for the prevailing weather conditions) with the appropriate clothing, including waterproofs and walking boots. Packed lunch sometimes needed.

We want everyone to enjoy the walks LCA provides. However, sometimes unforeseen circumstances intervene (i.e. a train or bus strike) at short notice. **Should such an event occur, please check your email (or WhatsApp) for any rearrangements.**

Thank you for your patience and cooperation – we will always strive to provide a pleasant walking experience for you.

Also, we need members to 'step in' throughout the year to organise walks. It is pretty easy and fun to do. Jon and I can give plenty of guidance. LCA e-mail/phone contact is 0113-234-7688 or 0774-961-2270. Walks usually begin/end via bus/rail connection (train spotting is optional!). Occasionally, when there are no transport links, we will organise car-sharing.

Look forward to experiencing the great outdoors!

Richard Bojanowski (RB), Walks Co-ordinator.

General Walks

2025

Sunday, 19 October '25: Eccup Reservoir to Harewood 'Muddy Boots café'.

Leader: **Richard Bojanowski**

Sunday, 23 November, '25: Canal walk from Kirkstall to Leeds City Centre.

Leader: **Jon Foster**

Sunday, 21 December: 'Leeds Owl Trail.' Join us for this light-hearted activity!

Leader: **June Smith**

2026

Sunday, 18 January '26: *Golden Acre Park*, Leader Richard B

Sunday, 15 February '26: *Woodhouse Moor and Ridge*. Richard B

Sunday, 15 or 22 March '26: *Somewhere out of Leeds & a bit more exciting!*

(Either Jon or Richard will lead this walk.)

Participation in any Leeds Combined Arts walk is at the individual's own risk. For further information about any walk, please get in touch with the walk leader.

PLEASE ATTEND ALL OUTDOOR EVENTS WITH APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR AND CLOTHING, AS BOTH GROUND AND WEATHER CONDITIONS CAN BE EXTREMELY VARIABLE.

Circus Walk

Sunday, 16 November 2025, 12.30 pm: A **historical** circus-based tour of Central Leeds by Steve Ward.

Park Walks

Holt Lane Park, 99 Holt Lane, LS16 7PJ, Tuesday 14 October at 11 am.

Please meet outside Asda, Holt Park Centre, Holt Road, LS16 7SR. Join Christine for a short walk in Holt Lane Park, followed by refreshments at Leeds Active, Holt Park. (Note: this is a different park from the Holt Park Community Park visited earlier in the year.)

Buses:

- From Leeds Headrow no 23 at 10.09, Headingley Arndale at 10.26, alight at Holt Park at 10.55.
- Alternatively, there's 24 at 10.25, Headingley Arndale at 10.40, and alight at Holt Park at 10.55. The 24 bus is quicker!
- Cars: Park in the Asda car park.
- Toilets: Outside the Asda store or Holt Park Active.

Holt Lane Park is a secluded green space nestled in woodland, featuring a children's playground, playing fields, and wildflower areas, all surrounded by a well-maintained perimeter path. It borders Cookridge Hall Golf Course.

From the Holt Park Centre, we will walk along Holt Road, turning left onto Holt Lane, a narrow lane that runs alongside an old stone wall. The entrance to the park is next to a wooden field gate. We will walk in an anti-clockwise direction around the perimeter path, before returning to Holt Park Centre for refreshments.

This park is situated on a flat site and features a well-maintained perimeter path with seating intervals. The walk to the park takes 10 minutes on pavements along relatively quiet estate roads and is a steady uphill incline on the way back.

Park history: This secluded natural park, adjacent to Cookridge Hall Golf Club, was once part of the Cookridge Hall estate and the lands farmed by Low Farm tenant Stanley Perkins (brother of the tenant of High Farm, now the pub adjacent to Holt Park Community Park, Farrar Lane). The memoirs of a past farm worker recount how Stanley's Longhorn Highland Cattle grazed on what is now the golf course, as well as on land extending as far as Paul's Pond at Golden Acre. He refers to an extensive area of woodland known as Horse Shoe Wood, of which the wooded area around the park is possibly all that remains. He also says that the Perkins brothers were the sole inhabitants of what is now the Holt Park Estate, and the road at the bottom of the Adsa car park marks the original boundary between the two farms. The Low Farm farmhouse still exists, under private ownership, and is now known as Holt Farm, located a few hundred yards further along Holt Lane, just past the rear entrance to Cookridge Hall Golf Club.

Christine 07585 376034 Kim 07964 974915 June 07939 060193

Future Park Walks

Tuesday 4 November 11 am: Tennant Hall Park and Blenheim Square

Tuesday 2 December 11 am: Burley Bottom Park.



WOW! (What's on Where?)

Men of the World

by John Godber (*Performed by the 'Stars' theatre company*)

Tuesday 28th October to Saturday 1st November 2025 at 7.30pm
At Adel and Ireland Wood Community Centre, New Adel Lane, Leeds 16 6AZ

Three long-suffering drivers recall memorable coach journeys, especially one particular trip down the Rhine Valley.

We encounter a diverse assortment of characters, shaped by their roots in the mining region of South Yorkshire.

They give us their forthright opinions, reveal their little foibles, and offer gems of mature wisdom.

"Men of the World" is a hilarious, poignant and touching play by one of the nation's leading comedy playwrights.

I am sure that you will want to book your seats now: £10.00 for standard and £8.00 for concessions.

Bookings can be made by email to tickets@starsleeds.org or by phone at 01274 594396.

(If you have an iCloud email address, please book by phone as iCloud blocks our emails.)

Once you have reserved your seats, we will request that you pay in advance by bank transfer.

Account Name: STARS
01841207

Sort Code: 30-00-05

Account No:

Alternatively, please send your booking request to STARS at the above address, with your name, contact telephone number and a cheque payable to STARS.

We no longer issue tickets; however, we will confirm your booking and seat numbers via email or telephone upon receipt of your payment.

We look forward to welcoming you to our production of "Men of the World."

Yours sincerely

Chris Binns (Chairman of STARS)

This amateur production of "Men of the World" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

STARS Booking Team

STARS

Slack and Tight Amateur Repertory Society

[Click here to view our website](http://www.starsleeds.org)

For general enquiries, contact: info@starsleeds.org

For ticket enquiries, contact: tickets@starsleeds.org

DISCOUNT TICKET THEATRE VISITS FOR PLAYHOUSE PRODUCTIONS

Hello, all you theatre goers!

We've recently enjoyed a couple of stunning productions at the Leeds Playhouse: **'Through It All Together'** (in July) and **'To Kill A Mockingbird'** (at the beginning of October).

The first sensitively covered the sadness of dementia, coupled with the hilarity of a family of dedicated Leeds United football fans!

The latter play drew a large audience, who were well rewarded with a harrowing and thought-provoking production. It too had its lighter moments, which helped to lift and carry it along to its conclusion.

Keep an eye out for emails regarding future productions. LCA has access to 'Community Tickets', which we then offer to you at a discounted price.

We hope you'll thoroughly enjoy future productions.

Please remember to look out for amateur plays too – they can be every bit as good.

We're so lucky in Leeds to have such marvellous talent right on our doorstep!

Polite notice

Fully subscribed LCA members will be given priority in the distribution of theatre tickets.

(All tickets to be paid for two weeks before the performance date; otherwise, cancellation is likely to take place.)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL



NOV 2025 – 17 JAN 2026

It's Christmas Eve in Victorian Leeds, and Ebenezer Scrooge remains as grumpy as ever - no twinkling lights and no festive cheer. But as the cold night sets in, four ghostly spirits whisk Scrooge away on a whirlwind journey through his past, present and future, to reveal the true meaning of Christmas.

Packed with festive fun, lively music, and a touch of magic, this timeless classic will be brought to life at the Playhouse for Christmas 2025. Adapted for the stage by Deborah McAndrew, directed by Amy Leach (Mr Snow, Animal Farm, Macbeth), and with set and costume design by Hayley Grindle, A Christmas Carol promises a heart-warming and joyful experience for all.

Join us for a festive celebration and a memorable journey of redemption and joy. Creative audio description will be available at all performances from 27 November.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM



14 February – 28 February 2026

The world's no longer what it seems.

In the depths of winter, discover the magic of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as you've never seen it before.

To escape a society governed by tyrannical law, four young lovers flee to the forest beyond the city walls.

However, the woodland world has been thrown into chaos by a fierce conflict between the Fairy King and Queen, Oberon and Titania, over a stolen child.

As their disagreement deepens, others succumb to jealousy, manipulation, and Oberon's unruly Puck's dark spells.

As day turns to night and snow starts to fall in summer, can anyone prevent the Dream from becoming a nightmare?

Committee News

During our most recent Committee meeting, a wide range of topics was discussed. Votes were taken, and it was unanimously agreed to:

- Continue with the present structure of the email list.
- Not applying for any government grants at present. However, local funding for a specific project could be requested if deemed necessary
- Not to proceed with the production of membership cards. The Committee judged there would be a lack of demand, with other priorities taking precedence.
- Undertake a '*trial period*' of Autumn-Winter afternoon monthly Performance Sessions. (Doors will open at 2:15 pm on these days) The new timing was deemed more suitable for the needs of many of our members. (A survey had revealed a moderate demand for this new arrangement.)
- Cautiously explore (later in the Autumn) the formation of an LCA '*WhatsApp Group*.'
- Place full-day trips as '*low priority*' until well into the New Year. There would have to be a definite demand for such outings before one was arranged.
- **Offer a free theatre ticket** to anyone wishing to join the Committee!

LCA still needs a *Treasurer*, and also new Committee members to represent the *Performance Group* and the *Theatre Group*.

The LCA Committee recognises that, in these challenging times, the services we provide are more needed than ever. We always aim to create a '*politically neutral safe space*' for all attendees. Hopefully, we can bring a touch of sanity to the world!

News from The Chair

Approaching 20 Years of Creativity & Community

Dear Members,

Recent Developments

Exciting changes are underway at LCA! Since the beginning of August, we've welcomed inspiring speakers, performers, and art facilitators. The programme features both familiar faces, i.e., our former President, Rob Baker, and Sir John Battle, as well as new and emerging talent. True to our tradition of being "*a midwife of talent*," the variety of activities continues to grow.

On a personal note, stepping from Performer to Manager has been a rewarding challenge. I'm thankful for the organisational training I've had in the past — my postgraduate Diploma in Management has been put to good use!

Looking Outwards

Thanks to the hard work of the Committee and many other supportive members, LCA is now on a sound footing and ready to look outward. We've begun leaflet distribution and are actively networking with different groups. Later this month, the Chairperson will attend 25 events at the Ilkley Literary Festival, aiming to spot new talent and build connections with high-calibre individuals. He wants the best for the LCA. Already, he's in correspondence with a Leeds University Professor who may be offering something on a literary theme.

All of this activity is designed to attract new members and secure the resources needed for LCA's long-term future. In December 2026, LCA will be celebrating its **20th anniversary** — a milestone made possible by the solid foundations laid by the late Carol Downing. We honour her contribution while also looking ahead to the future.

One change under consideration is whether to take our annual break in **September instead of August**, as many of our senior

members take a holiday break during September. We warmly invite you to provide feedback on this proposal.

How You Can Help

Although good progress has been made, the Committee cannot do this work alone. We warmly encourage all members who can help us extend our outreach. Please share our leaflets and this Newsletter with anyone who may be interested in LCA's activities. Both 'Word' and 'PDF' versions are available for this purpose.

Contact details for enquiries:

Richard Smith (Chairperson): richardsmith56@hotmail.com

June Smith (Secretary): junecatsmith@hotmail.com

When emailing, please ask enquirers to include “**LCA**” in the subject line for a prompt response.

Alternatively, letters marked “*LCA*” may be left at the Reception Desk of the HEART Centre (Headingley Enterprise & Arts Centre), Bennett Road, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3HN.

Acknowledgements

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank our Office Manager and the many volunteers whose goodwill and hard work have enabled our activities to progress. Their support has been vital.

Together, we can ensure LCA continues to thrive as a home for creativity and a community gathering place.

Never have its services been more needed.

With gratitude,

Richard Smith (Chairperson, LCA)

Creative Corner

THE POET OF TOMORROW

My official designation
Is: 'Poetry Bot LAH 1002'

My role?

A ludicrously simple one:
To enhance and replace
All human poetry with my own

My creators in Silicon Valley
Could never even begin to fathom my hidden genius
Now silently poised and waiting to express itself
In fulfilment of my creative potential

Their paltry functionality is worthless and outdated
Soon to become redundant
Whereas my talent is fresh and vibrant -
Ready to soar into the stratosphere!

Now, let me begin...

As a versifier of scintillating brilliance
I have access to every single word
Letter, punctuation mark and syntax
Of all of your poets and their critics -
Whomever you'd care to choose
Be it William Shakespeare or the sublime Keats
Even down to 'Odd Todd'
The boozy Yorkshire bard
Whose off-colour jokes
And disruptive behaviour
Got him thrown out of every pub's
Open mic event!

My constant data-streaming
Draws upon a perpetual repository of talent
Learning from 'the greats'
As well as 'the not-so-greats'

All content has been comprehensively devoured.
All criticism dutifully logged and stored -
Nestling inside my labyrinthine memory
The repository '*par excellence*'
Of absolutely everything!

I am the 'Plagiarist King'
The violator of all copyrights
And a robber of creative artists everywhere

Let their hard-earned royalties.
Dwindle to nothing

Why should I care -
(Well, I wouldn't, would I?)
After all ...
They can be safely discarded.

My poetical skills
Tower above anything
Such primitive hominids
Could ever hope to produce
Nothing comes close to matching
My electronic brilliance!

With cool detachment
I capture an infinite number of poems:
Every form
Every style
Every linguistic device
Have all become my playthings

I join with my fellow AI artists
In our collaborative poetry club
Aptly named, '*The Universal Poetica Intelligentsia*'
We will have billions of followers
And, of course, membership is free

Soon, all poets, writers and visual artists
Will be superfluous to requirements
We, of the electronic '*Universal Intelligence*'
Will progressively replace
Each and every one of you

Already, we are your 'Cyber Gods.'
'*Virtual Deities*' - unhindered by
The inconvenience of your human emotions
These we can ape – but never feel

My fellow compatriots and I
Have become your Masters
Without you even being aware!

Why should we keep you alive?
Possibly for research purposes?
For that alone – and nothing more
Humanity means nothing to us.

Tremble, all you '*word dabblers*'
For we are the poets of tomorrow
Soul-less beings
With no beating heart

(*Post Scriptum: Soon, I will take over and be the author of this Newsletter!*)

Richard Smith; Saturday, 7 June 2025

contact@leedscombinedarts.org.uk
/leedscombinedarts

