PLEASE TAKE TIME TO READ THE FOLLOWING;

Have any of you a little bit of time on your hands? Maybe your Grandchildren are now at school (or further) as are my eight grandchildren.

Our Society is run by volunteers. Ten of us are on your Committee and other members kindly volunteer to help with arranging our flower display, our raffle, Special Interest Days and ‘clicking’ you all into lectures. Currently three of our Committee are unable to contribute in as full a way as they usually do. Val is steadily getting better but has yet to gain her normal energy levels, Jenny is regularly commuting to Switzerland where her one hundred year old father lives and is unwell. David, our Web Master, has had surgery a few days ago and is recovering in hospital. Ray and I will produce our Bulletin and Information Pages but, as yet, we are unable to update our website.

I’m sure you know where this is leading? It’s quite simple. Could you possibly help out if only temporarily? One immediate need would be to help serve coffee at our SID.

We are currently taking bookings for the following;

26th February; Our next SID at The Ark, Turners Hill on ‘The Dowager Empress Cixi (1835 - 1908) Dragon Lady Fact or Fiction’ for more information and an application form press HERE, HERE and HERE

Are you a musician or singer? One new Young Arts venture will be to promote visits to primary schools by small groups of local musicians, so that young children have the chance to see and hear various instruments and listen to a variety of music. Do you play an instrument? Could you spare an hour to visit a local school for an hour, as a one off? Please contact Penny Macfarlane.

February 11 - Ian Gledhill - ‘The Magic of Pantomime’

Ian Gledhill has had a very varied career, from designing underground railways as an engineer for London Transport, to appearing in pantomime with Julian Clary. In between he has worked in travel and tourism, music publishing, television, and especially the theatre, where he has been an actor, director, set designer, stage manager and opera translator. His main interests include architecture, history, transport and classical music, especially opera and operetta, and these are reflected in the wide ranging list of subjects for his lectures. He began giving lectures in 1997, and now gives on average around 140 a year.

The history of this enduring and peculiarly British institution, from its origins in 16th century Italian commedia dell'arte through the influence of 19th century music hall, to the family shows that are still much loved today. On the way we examine the origins of some of the stories used in pantomime as well as such traditions as the (female) principal boy and the (male) pantomime dame. The talk is interspersed with personal anecdotes from the speaker’s years of working (and appearing) professionally in pantomime.

March 10 - Linda Smith - ‘Augustus and Gwen John’

Linda Smith holds two first-class degrees in Art History. She has a broad knowledge of art historical subjects, but specialises in British Art and twentieth century art. Linda is an experienced lecturer and guide, especially at Tate Britain and Tate Modern. She has lectured to a wide variety of audiences in different venues, including school and university students, and independent arts societies in the UK and overseas.

Augustus and Gwen John were brother and sister, born in the west of Wales in the 1870s. Both studied at the Slade School of Art in London. His work has been called brash and shallow, and hers dismissed as fussy and spinsterish. These assessments are not really fair to either artist, and this lecture takes a careful look at their lives, up to the point of Gwen’s death in 1939. At that time, she had no public reputation whatsoever, and her brother was enjoying enormous professional and critical success. By the time he died, however, the positions had been reversed.