



## ***Bringing people together to enjoy the Arts in Bromley***

### **Summer Newsletter 2023**

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farewell

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[www.theartsocietybromley.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietybromley.org.uk)

#### **Au revoir from our Chair**

It has been a challenging but never quiet three years! As I get ready to handover the Chairmanship of The Arts Society Bromley I look back with some amazement at all that has happened. After all in June 2020 (just before I became chair) I took over the Zoom/Webinar brief as it became clear continuing Covid restrictions and the possibility of further lockdowns meant the loss of our liberty to socialise with each other. The Arts Society team had provided a Zoom licence and encouraged us to use it to keep our members interested. We just had to learn how to use it. I gathered some help (me, Sue G, Sandy D, and Jocelyn W) and the rest as they say is history.



Who would have thought that it would seem almost normal to be home alone and talk to all of you also home alone. While our lecturer would be introduced to all of you by a team who were also home alone. However the lipstick ladies \*as we called ourselves, got to grips with Zoom technology. We had several practise sessions and are very grateful to Arantxa Sardina who gave us a trial lecture so that we could try out our new skills. It all paid off. I think we made lecture evenings look relatively easy as you sat in front of your screen. Virtual walks proved surprisingly enjoyable if not as healthy.

*\*(editors note We learned that appearance on Zoom was just as important as appearing in person so on with lipstick as usual. Covid was no excuse for neglecting ourselves – what would our mothers have said? )*

Getting together again post Covid meant a new venue had to be found as the Civic Centre had become a vaccination centre and was no longer available. A number of us worked hard to find one and we had our first in person meetings in Ravensbourne School. What a thrill to be able to meet at

last; but we were soon on the move again and are now settled in Bishop Challoner School where we have been made to feel most welcome by staff Manola Toshi-Restivo and trustee Ticky Colling.

Now we could socialise and have fun and we made up for lost time. We had our lecture evenings, Christmas drinks party, new members welcome drinks, outings to many London destinations, our first post Covid tour to Devon in 2022 and in 2023 to The Netherlands to catch the Vermeer exhibition.



*(and don't forget our end of the year Spanish evening)*

We also expanded our art community awards into a number of primary schools and charities for young people throughout the Borough. Over three years we have provided funds for projects in seven primary schools; a record number.

Poverest, Chislehurst,  
Southborough, Downe,  
Edgebury, Perry Hall,  
St Marks, Bromley

In addition, by successfully applying to the Arts Society Community Fund we have been able to help two community charities, the Maypole Project and the BYMT Open Orchestra project.



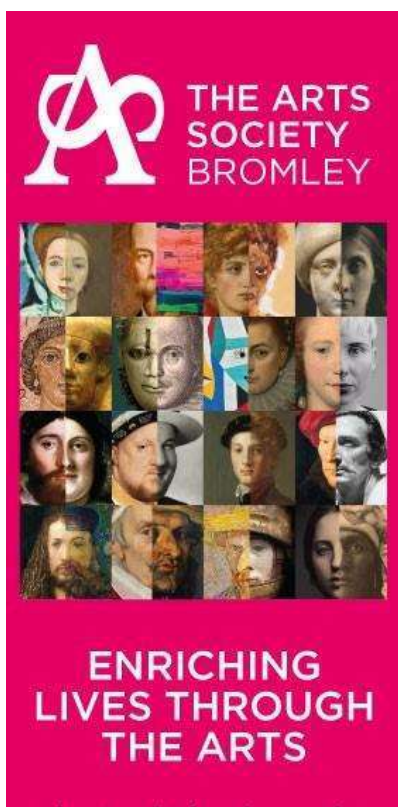
*Open Orchestra concert attended by Gwin Foley and Sue Glazebrook. "We were moved to tears by the performance."*

Despite Covid there have been two Summer Tea parties and one still to come on August 3<sup>rd</sup> this year. Come along and join up with your friends at the Langley Park Golf Club.



The Society has come through the last three years in good shape, but in order to continue to grow and flourish into the future, we must all commit to bring along friends and visitors to lecture evenings and other society events.





Visitors then need to become valued members of our society. Our new publicity leaflet not only looks good but demonstrates the breadth of our many activities. Please use it to encourage people to come and try out our lecture evenings. As we all know and have experienced ourselves, the best recruitment agent is word of mouth.

So that leaves me to say au revoir and to say thank you to all of you and in particular to the hard working Committee who work tirelessly to ensure the success of The Arts Society Bromley, to our lecture evening helpers – you know who you are – and to you, our members for whom we all work hard to bring you exciting insights into the broad arena of the Arts in all its many and varied forms.

**Guinevere Foley**

### **Treasurer's note Subscription for 2023 – 2024**



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After careful consideration of the costs of running the Arts Society Bromley, the committee has decided to set the subscription rate at £55 for the up coming year. We maintain a reasonable reserve in the bank to cover unexpected

contingencies but cannot use it to cover the increase in costs that we are experiencing.

We are committed to maintaining our programme of nine lectures a year. The cost of individual lectures to members is just over £6 an evening – a cheap night out!

An increase in membership numbers would enable us to keep the subscription down so please keep on inviting friends and colleagues to join us. Try not to think of your friends in separate "boxes" such as local history group, choir, U3A, art class, book club, church house group, exercise class, drama club, walking group. Take a close look at your contacts list and offer some of them one of our new leaflets. You might be surprised by who shows an interest!

### **TAS Bromley AGM**

**October 2<sup>nd</sup>  
7.15pm**

Bishop Challoner School  
228 Bromley Road,  
Bromley BR2 0B

Followed at 7.45 by our  
opening lecture given by

Hilary Williams

*See page 9 for details*



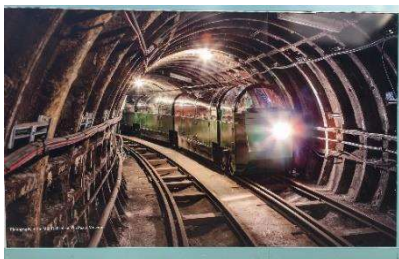
## Going out with Friends of the Arts - Whatever the weather!

On a very wet, windy and cold Thursday in November last year, I left Bromley for our first outing of the new season which was to the Postal Museum.



I must admit, if I had not booked it and paid for it, I would have probably stayed at home in comfort and warmth. However, once in London, the weather perked up a bit (it was still cold but at least it stopped raining) and I was really pleased to be out and among friends.

We had a great time getting on a post train which used to distribute post underground around London – we took an almost childish delight in the trip!



We had an excellent guide – thanks to her, we found the Postal Museum very interesting. I would not have thought the postal service could be so exciting!



Apart from the Postal Museum, we went to the National Gallery to look at the Golden Age of Venetian Painting with Hilary Williams (Hilary never disappoints – we could listen to her for hours!).



We paid a visit to the Chislehurst Golf Club, Camden Place, which was very much in the news this year as it is 150 years since the death of Napoleon III, who lived there when in exile in England. The building is Chislehurst's best kept secret.

We have a very varied programme planned for next year. I hope it will have something to satisfy everyone's tastes: a guided tour of the Royal Opera House, a visit to the Cutlers' Hall in the City (one of the important livery companies), a visit to the V&A and to Leighton House in Kensington.

Come and join us!

**Anna Taylor** Outings organiser



*Don't miss the opportunity at lectures to sign up for outings and other events if you don't have cash with you. Pay by bank transfer when you get home. Our bank details are:*

**Payee:** The Arts Society Bromley  
**Sort Code:** 20-14-33  
**Account No:** 50706515  
**Reference:** Your surname & reason for payment



## Vermeer and so much more!

Remember the excitement of going on a school trip with your chums? Well, something similar was in the air at 8.30 on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. A very cheerful and helpful Mark our designated driver for all of our few days holiday, loaded our luggage into the coach in Bromley. He turned out to be a gem! Nothing too much trouble; and after the pickup in Chislehurst he had 23 ladies and 4 gentlemen, all of a certain age to deal with. What a hero!



We managed to avoid all the current uncertainties of travelling abroad and crossed on The Shuttle from Folkestone with no problems. We were based in a comfortable hotel in The Hague, which for me was a revelation. The home of diplomats and political life, a pretty and historic city where the courts of arbitration and international courts of justice reside. Also the seat of the Dutch parliament.

At the hotel, we met Remco, our Dutch guide, who of course spoke perfect English as do most of the Dutch people. He managed the perfect combination of factual information, patience and humour while taking us on our first short-guided walk in The Hague. This finished with a very sociable meal in a buzzy restaurant.



Tuesday morning after breakfast we walked round The Hague and passed elegant tree lined boulevards, palaces and noble houses. We arrived at the Mauritshuis Museum housed in a Renaissance mansion with a collection of treasures from the Dutch Golden Age.



Probably the most famous Vermeer painting is housed there – The Girl With The Pearl Earring – and we were privileged to see it because only recently the museum had it returned from the Exhibition in the Rijksmuseum, where it had been on loan. Almost a private viewing!

After lunch we visited a 'hidden treasure' in The Hague – Prince William V Gallery. We discovered a very sensitive strip in the floor there, on which you must not tread. The resulting intermittent buzzing caused quite a lot of giggling and increased concern from security.

The day finished with an unusual treat, a visit to a renowned art dealer. Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder dealership is housed in a beautiful 17<sup>th</sup> century building where we received an insight into the art dealers' world. A glass of wine and nibbles ended a perfect day.

Wednesday we were off with our trusty driver, Mark, to Amsterdam. A modern city of pretty canals with a very organised road system for cyclists. We headed to the Rijksmuseum and the Vermeer Exhibition. We were not disappointed – it was wonderful. All those beautiful paintings up close and personal – I will never forget it. In addition,

Hilary treated us to a tour of the Gallery of Honour, culminating at the 'Night Watch'. One of Rembrandt's most famous works.



The afternoon took us to the Royal Palace.

Originally built as the town hall, to reflect the power



and wealth of 17<sup>th</sup> century Amsterdam, but now used for official receptions for heads of state and world leaders. Dinner was in Amsterdam then back to the hotel in The Hague.

On Thursday we were lucky enough to visit both Haarlem - which became the centre of arts during the 17<sup>th</sup> century - and Leiden, Rembrandt's birthplace. We were able to appreciate the lovely architecture and visit a museum located at the centre of the 17<sup>th</sup> century cloth trade.

Mark then returned quite a tired group back to The Hague via an unscheduled

visit to the seaside! We parted company with our guide Remco who had been such a mine of information and had kept us laughing too. That evening we all easily found local restaurants for our evening meal.

Friday saw us all packed and ready for the homeward journey. On our way to Calais, we were taken to Delft. A not to be missed opportunity to visit the birthplace and burial place of Vermeer. A beautiful town where he lived all his life, with narrow streets and picturesque canals and two beautiful churches. Plenty of that lovely blue Delft pottery was on display.



Our onward journey to Calais took us no time at all and at the port, thanks to Mark's know-how, all went quickly and smoothly and we were able to catch an earlier Shuttle back to Folkestone.

A very huge vote of thanks is due to Anita and Hilary for liaising with Heritage Group Travel to provide a packed, varied and truly interesting trip for us all. And grateful thanks to Anita also for showing such patience and unflappability throughout our 5 days. We are very lucky to have such an active Arts Society on our doorstep. Many thanks.

### **Freda Blakemore**





## Young Arts – reaching out to our community

It has been another busy year for Young Arts and we have been happy to offer support for some art-based projects in a range of local schools.

We were delighted to be awarded a grant from the Arts Society's *Patricia Fay Memorial Fund* for a project at St Marks C.of E. Primary in Bromley. With the guidance of Pam Smyth, an Art Educator, the children produced some wonderful representations of flora and fauna from the 40 countries of origin they represent. These are now stunningly displayed along the school corridors, along with the word HELLO in all the relevant languages.



We chose St Marks because of its connection with one of our members. If you would like us to consider a school with whom you have a link, please let us know.



We have also enabled St Nicholas C.of E. Primary School in Chislehurst to enrich the work some of the children were doing on "Still Life" with a visit by Magic Lantern. Reports from staff, pupils and one of our committee members who attended the session were extremely positive. Magic Lantern is an educational charity, who work with schools on a topic that fits in with the children's curriculum, using images of a wide range of works of art.

Recently we put in another bid to the Arts Society Community fund for a new project at Manor Oak Primary. To our delight we were awarded the full costs and this project will commence in the next school year. We will keep you informed of the progress of this project when the time comes.

Rosemary Morgan

*Together, Rosemary and Gwin have been very successful in putting bids in to the Patricia Fay Fund and to the Arts Society project grants programme. Grant application is sometimes described as a "dark art" but they have mastered it. The results of their efforts have enabled us to expand our reach into the community. As Rosemary is keen to explain, teachers get little or no training in how to teach art in primary schools so are grateful for the help they receive from TAS Bromley and the professional artist, Pam Smyth, who has delivered the projects for us.*

*If you would like to support this work by holding a fund raising coffee morning or other event please contact Rosemary or Jocelyn by phone or via our website.*



## How do you do it? Our Programme Secretary tells all

As the Programme Secretary of the Arts Society Bromley I am frequently asked 'How do you find your Lecturers?' On the face of it it's easy. The Arts Society has a Directory of almost 400 accredited lecturers, so I just delve into the list. Many lecturers have a dozen or more lectures; our own Hilary Williams has 26 and counting, Arantxa Sardina has 9. You can see I am spoiled for choice.

But how do they become accredited lecturers? It's quite a process. The criteria are:

- Have approximately three years' experience of lecturing to adults
- Be confident with audiences of 100 or more
- Use high quality digital images
- Lecture on a range of arts subjects

Firstly, they must attend an Arts Society lecture. They may of course be familiar with our meetings and the academic excellence we take for granted but if not, they must familiarise themselves with the essence of the Society. That's the easy bit. They must then obtain two references to go forward to the first selection. At that point they must organise and deliver an hour's lecture to an audience of at least 50 with an anonymous observer. Then a report is submitted recommending or otherwise.

Finally, they face a selection panel of around 15 Arts Society members around the country. I took part in such a selection panel recently. This was held on Zoom. We had three prospective lecturers to consider who each delivered an abridged 20 minute lecture followed by around 15 minutes of questions – we were gruelling! Following each one we discussed the quality of the lecture, its structure, delivery and visuals, and whether we would recommend them joining the Directory of Lecturers. We then voted. For interest, on this occasion one was a definite Yes, another a definite No. We were on the fence with the final lecturer, she probably did not deliver the best lecture from her repertoire. In this instance our recommendation was that she try again as she possessed many of the qualities which make a good lecturer and had huge depth of knowledge at question time.

As you see, they don't all make it and even then it's not over. Lecturers pay an annual fee to be on the Arts Society register which does not guarantee them work as they are all freelance.

Have you done the Arts Society trial lecture?

Not yet

Beware -The questions are terrifying!



After each lecture we ask you for **Feedback, it's important**. Your reviews enable the Arts Society to ensure standards are maintained. If a lecturer receives too many Satisfactory or Poor reviews they are dropped.

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## Lecture Programme

### 6th November

Hilary Williams

As I said, all I have to do is to delve into the Directory to find the right selection for our forthcoming season. We are spoiled for choice knowing that professionalism is at the heart of the Arts Society.

### Sue Glazebrook Programme Secretary

*(Now you know why filling in the feedback form on our website is SOOO important. Never forget to do it!)*

## 2023 -2024

**Wren's London after the Great Fire** Hilary has not put a synopsis of this lecture on the Arts Society website but I think we can be assured it will be up to her usual standard.



### 6th November

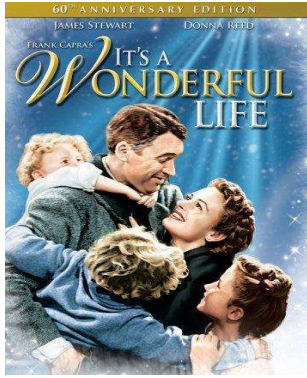
Russell Nash

**The men who made Menswear** This lecture tells the story of men's tailoring over the past 200 years, told through the lives of the men who commissioned and created and wore it. Tailors, shirtmakers, hatters and other craftspeople in London's West End, especially around Savile Row & Jermyn Street have shaped the way men dress since the Regency. How did men such as Beau Brummell, The Duke of Windsor, Tommy Nutter, Montague Burton, Alexander McQueen and John Stephen create their signature looks which influenced mens fashion? This lecture also looks at the wider cultural shifts since the early 19th century to the present day and how they affected the way that men present themselves.

### 4th December

Colin Shindler

**It's a Wonderful Life and the films of Frank Capra** The principal aim of this lecture is to understand better the films of one of America's greatest film makers by placing his work in the historical context of Jeffersonian democracy. Although Capra's films were mostly set in his contemporary America



the lecture looks at the reasons why that rural idyll, so foreign to the growth of a modern urban country, resonated so powerfully with audiences during the Great Depression. Capra won the Best Director Oscar three times in four years for *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Mr Deeds Goes to Town* (1936) and *You Can't Take it With You* (1938). Probably his best film, *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*, was released in 1939, the same year as *Gone with the Wind* so the winning run came to an end. Finally he will be asking whether this spirit of small town America still exists in the post-Trump America of the twenty-first century. More worrying, is Trump's America basically the latest version of Capra's America?

### 8th January 2024

Irving Finkel

**Diaries, Memories and the Pursuit of the Truth** The writer is the founder of the Great Diary Project, which has been set up and is now run from Bishopsgate Institute in London. Its purpose is to rescue and give a permanent home to all unwanted private diaries of any date, period, length or brevity – which are otherwise doomed to perish – to rescue them for the future. Some remarkable discoveries, some adventures, and much to consider. Why it has not been done before and, more importantly, why we do it.

### 3rd February

Steven Barrett



**Anatomy of a Painting, Bathers at Asnières by Georges Seurat** *Bathers at Asnières* (1884, National Gallery, London) is one of the best-loved pictures in any British collection. It was painted by the Post-Impressionist artist Georges Seurat, then only twenty-four and brimming with ambition. It is an impressive, light-filled canvas showing Parisians at leisure by the river Seine. During the two years it took to complete, Seurat developed new colour theories and a novel technique - Pointillism - to capture the shimmering effects of sunlight on water, grass and in the air itself. This lecture looks at the painting in detail, explores Seurat's vision and ambition, his bold new ideas and contribution to the history of modern art.

### 4th March

Caroline MacDonald-Haig

**Habitat Catalogued** In 1964 Terence Conran opened the first Habitat shop in London's Chelsea. Habitat's clarion call to colour and contemporary design saw off the lingering shades of post war austerity and revolutionized British





Retailing. From the beginning Conran spread the word of this new lifestyle look through twice yearly Habitat catalogues: copies are now collected and traded by a new generation of interior decorators and designers. In the early 70s, then a design journalist, I worked for Terence Conran copy writing and editing the Habitat Catalogue. Crazy, demanding and inspiring times, full of tension and humour, working with some of the best designers, art directors and photographers in the UK. This is a rare insider's view of how Terence Conran's vision and determination changed the way we lived then, and the way we live now.

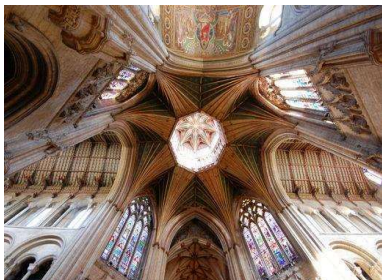
## 8<sup>th</sup> April

Imogen Corrigan

### **Stone on Stone, The men who built Cathedrals**

Standing in the nave of Ely cathedral when she was 14, she stopped listening to the guide saying how long and how high and started wondering how on earth ordinary human beings created sky-scraping, dizzyingly high buildings on which even the top-most parts were delicately decorated. How, why and for whom were my questions. For God, for personal redemption and to make a living are the answers to the last two of those, but the "how" was harder to fathom.

In this lecture we meet the Master Masons who both designed the buildings and ran the site. They commanded everything whether it was sourcing the vast quantities of wood and stone, recruiting the workforce or knowing enough about their various trades to be able to create heaven on earth out of the cacophony of thousands of chisels and hammers. These men were charismatic leaders, but they were continually checked by their fellow Master Masons in the interests of making a building as strong as possible - we only see their successes, after all. They were real people who got into trouble with the law, who occasionally cheated on contracts, who liked to start a job but not to finish it. On the other hand, their creations remain to this day, some breathtakingly beautiful in their exquisite detail causing us, centuries later, to stand in a nave and wonder.



## 13<sup>th</sup> May

Gavin Plumley

*(note -this is the second Monday in May)*

**Bruegel, Seasons of the World** In 1565, Pieter Bruegel the Elder was commissioned to create a series of paintings for a dining room in Antwerp. The images, charting the course of a year, changed the way we view the world through art. Landscape had previously been a decorative backdrop to dramas both sacred and profane. But in Bruegel's hands the landscape and our interaction with it became the focus. Looking at paintings such as The Return of the Herd, Hunters in the Snow and The Gloomy Day, this

lecture explores how Bruegel pioneered a whole new way of thinking about the environment and our individual places within a shifting cosmos.

### 3rd June

Isabelle Kent

#### **Gateway to the World, Lisbon and the Art of Empire**

When Vasco de Gama set sail from the port of Lisbon in 1497, he was leaving behind one of the great Gothic jewels of Europe, but when he returned he brought with him the world. With the Age of Exploration came wealth, power and an empire that spanned four continents, from Goa to Brazil. This lecture looks at some of the treasures that came to Lisbon, from Japanese nambam screens to inlaid bejewelled boxes and carved African ivories, and how the art and particularly the architecture of Lisbon responded in the form of the great Jerónimos Monastery at Belém.

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### **MARSH AWARD FOR VOLUNTEERING 2023**



#### **Congratulations to all the Tate Volunteers!**

The volunteers from Beckenham, Bromley and North Kent are delighted that we have been honoured to receive one of the Marsh Awards this year. The group have been volunteering in the Tate Archive and Library since 1976, preparing and collating press cuttings to be stored in the basement for researchers to study; it is interesting and rewarding work once a month in a friendly setting. The award was presented at the AGM of the Arts Society this year and will feature in the next copy of the Review.

'The Marsh Charitable Trust celebrates the outstanding contributions of those people who are committed to social, cultural and environmental causes.' (Marsh Charitable Trust website)

The letter accompanying the award reads:

'Your joint efforts and dedication to working in the archives of the Tate Britain are exceptional and have been recognised by the judging panel as outstanding. Therefore, we have pleasure in enclosing a cheque for the sum of £500 to spend in any way you desire.'

**Ann Dyer Tate Volunteer**