



THE ARTS SOCIETY VALE OF AYLESBURY

Founded in 1965

www.theartssociety.org/vale-aylesbury

Newsletter

March 2024

**St Peter & St Paul Church
Upton Road
Dinton
Aylesbury
Bucks HP17 8UF**

DEAR MEMBER ...

It was so lovely to see so many of you at the first talk of 2024. Commiserations to those of you who didn't manage to make it, although I know some of you tried but flooded roads made travelling dangerous or, in some cases, impossible. The lecture was fascinating, not only talking about famous people and their pets but also telling us about the changing way we looked at animals and how we treated them. It also coincided with the fact that the NSPCA (which it was then called) was created 200 years ago this year.

The long winter is, hopefully, getting behind us as we all look forward to welcoming spring. A purple patch of crocus is appearing which brings new hope to an awakening garden. Also, visits to well-known gardens always bring a renewed zeal to take another look at our own and try and emulate what we have seen, albeit on a smaller scale!

Our speaker secretaries travel to London each year, as well as going on Zoom, to find the best people to give our lectures. Our team is constantly working to make sure everything works, whether it is the technical side, thank you to all concerned, or the visits, lectures and holidays. We strive to bring you the best we can.

If you are able, do book early for our special study days as they are very popular and we don't want to disappoint anyone. We are restricted to a certain number of people owing to fire regulations. Please bear in mind that we switch off the noisy heater fans at the Spread Eagle during the lectures, so dress up warmly.

The holiday in Andalucia in September will be absolutely fascinating and I know some of you have booked already. Enjoy!

We would love to hear from you especially if you have particularly enjoyed something, as we pass on comments to Head Office (only giving the Society's name). Members may be interested in joining a Facebook page just for Arts Society members, as detailed in the latest online bulletin from the Arts Society.

Do remember to add our two visits in May and June. Each is quite different from the other but each visit looks quite unusual.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all a happy and healthy 2024.

Judy Brandis
Chairman

OUR DAY IN VENICE

I had lunch with Rosalie Sadler and Joan Dharamshi shortly after the Venice Study Day last November and asked them for their opinions.

To my great delight they simultaneously said “Carpaccio” and then proceeded to wax lyrical about the artist and his pictorial depiction of Venice around 500 years ago. Thanks to the magic carpet woven for us by Dr Antonia Gatward-Cevizli we also discovered the importance of Venice as a trading centre, the impact the wonderful goods imported into the city had on the wealthy Venetians and how they furnished and decorated their palazzi. These goods also influenced the work of Venetian craftsmen.

The painting of the two very bored ladies on their rooftop, by Vittore Carpaccio, (in the Correr Museum in Venice), was once part of a larger painting, which included Hunting on the Lagoon, (now in the Getty Museum in Los Angeles). It is possible these were a shutter. As I look at my tired kitchen blinds I am daydreaming of Carpaccio shutters, let alone portraits from the third lecture to hang on my walls.

What was noticeable about Dr Antonia Gatward-Cevizli's images was that many of them are to be found in London, so you could just take the train to London to 'visit' Venice, although by the end of the afternoon I would have liked a Tardis to take me to the real place.

So many members have expressed how much they enjoyed the day. Rosalie and I were so impressed by Antonia's lectures, that we plan to ask her back.

Mary Wellby & Rosalie Sadler
Study Day Secretaries

THREE MORE LECTURES

St Peter & St Paul Church, Upton Road, Dinton, HP17 8UF

Tuesday 2nd April 2024

Morocco Blues – why and how Morocco got painted Blue

Elizabeth Gowing

This lecture draws on Elizabeth's time in Morocco, in visits spanning more than 25 years. The lecture focuses particularly on the stories behind the blue pigment used for the fishing boats and doorways of photogenic Essaouira on the Moroccan coast, and the Majorelle Blue developed and patented by French artist Jacques Majorelle in Marrakech in the 1920s. The story of Morocco's blues takes us from Berber veils to Yves Saint-Laurent, who restored Majorelle's Marrakech garden, via Modernist Orientalist art and a protected mollusk...

Elizabeth Gowing studied at Magdalen College Oxford before training as a teacher and working in Lambeth, Hackney and Islington. She moved to Kosovo in 2006 and worked with the Ethnological Museum in Prishtina. She co-founded a charity working on education and cultural heritage projects. Elizabeth speaks fluent Albanian and is a member of the advisory board of an NGO for Kosovan tour guides, and of the board of Faktoje, the Albanian fact-checking organisation.

Tuesday 7th May 2024

“A Bit of a Carry On”

Tyler Butterworth

The remarkable untold story of "Carry On" actor Peter Butterworth, and his wife, Britain's first female TV impressionist, Janet Brown, best known for her impression of Mrs Thatcher. Using classic film and TV clips, personal mementos, and rare photographs and letters from his family's unseen collection, their son, Tyler, reveals the private story behind his parents' public lives. It's a journey that takes in MI9, the building of a theatre in the notorious WW2 Prisoner of War camp Stalag Luft III, nights at Chequers with a Prime Minister, This Is Your Life, and many more moments in their long, shared life in the theatre."

Tyler Butterworth grew up in a theatrical family and spent twenty five years as an actor working extensively in film, television, theatre and radio. He then worked as a development producer in television documentaries and was closely involved with NASA on a landmark commemorative TV series.

Tuesday 4th June 2024

A History of London's Royal Parks

Paul Rabbits

London's royal parks are among its most beautiful and beloved spaces: just as much as the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace or St Pancras Station, the mere mention of Hyde or Regent's Park is enough to evoke the capital in all its glory for residents and tourists alike. They have a grand history - some were royally owned as far back as the Norman conquest, others were acquired by Henry VIII during the Reformation. Since being opened to the public during the eighteenth century, they have hosted some of London's great events, including the Great Exhibition, jubilees and celebrations.

This lecture tells the story of all eight of the parks from the point when they were acquired by the monarchy until the present day, including the major historic moments and events with which they are associated.

Paul Rabbits graduated at Sheffield with a BA Honours in Geography followed by a Masters Degree in Landscape Architecture at Edinburgh. He is a qualified landscape architect and a celebrated parks and open spaces manager. He has worked for several local authorities across the UK, including Carlisle, Middlesbrough, Watford, Southend-on-Sea and now at the City of Norwich. He is a passionate advocate for public parks, and in particular, the Victorian and Edwardian bandstand; he is a prolific author on the subject. Now a UK leading expert on bandstands, he has been asked to assist in localised restoration projects nationwide. He has been a regular and popular speaker on bandstands and public parks for many years.

Dee Blackstock & Rosemary Powell
Lecture Secretaries

YOUR NEXT TWO VISITS

The Lord Leycester Hospital, Warwick

2nd May 2024

This venue has the best preserved medieval buildings in Britain, which have 900 years of unbroken history from the 12th century to this day. As well as housing the Guilds of Warwick it was a central hub for the district.

Robert Dudley, Elizabeth I's favourite courtier, was responsible for housing past or injured soldiers (named the Brethren) and run by a Master in 1571. It is still a refuge with eight self-contained flats.

Miraculously, the buildings escaped the Great Fire of Warwick in 1694 at which 250 homes were destroyed. This gives us a rare glimpse into the past of Warwick in the Middle Ages.

The Great Hall, built in the 1300's, has a magnificent beamed roof of Spanish chestnut and is still used today for various functions, including the cafe.

The medieval 15th century courtyard is virtually unchanged showing the "Bear and Ragged Staff" crest of Robert Dudley and the "Blue Porcupine" crest of the Sydney family that his sister married into.

The charming garden houses a 2,000 year old Egyptian urn and a Norman arch, used by the Master and Brethren.

After lunch we move to **Charlecote Park** which also originated in the 12th century and belonged to the Lucy family. The house was built in 1550 and upgraded in 1860's in the Tudor Style.

The magnificent **Gatehouse** built in 1565 is original – built to impress visitors as it does today. Either side of the drive is parkland, home to fallow deer and Jacob sheep, that sets an ancient scene. Sir Thomas Lucy was knighted by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester on behalf of Elizabeth I in 1565.

Lots to see here – **Great Hall** – fine library etc. Outside is a time capsule of life with service wing, kitchen, laundry, brew house and stables housing several carriages. The Park is extensive and designed in part by Capability Brown. The River Avon runs through the parkland and gardens, with a parterre to enjoy and a good tea shop.

We should arrive back at Thame by 5.30pm.

Nature in Art

Thursday 27th June 2024

Nature in Art near Gloucester is a museum and art gallery at Wallsworth Hall, dedicated exclusively to art inspired by nature in all forms, style, and media. The museum has twice been specially commended in the National Heritage “Museum of the Year” award.

A special exhibition “Treasure Hunter” honours the founder of the museum and shows many artefacts from his collection, including glass, ceramics, woodwork, sculpture, and paintings – something to appeal to anyone.

Coffee on arrival is included.

We move on at 12.30 pm to **Sudeley Castle**. Set against the stunning backdrop of the majestic castle and surrounded by striking views of the Cotswold hills, there are ten magnificent award-winning gardens which sweep around the castle and grounds. Renowned for the lovely roses, June has been chosen to show them to advantage.

Sudeley is the only private castle in England to have a queen buried within its grounds – in the 15th century church, where Katherine Parr now lies.

Entrance to the castle and gardens included. Take a picnic or enjoy one of the several eating places there.

Return to Thame approx. 6 pm.

Both booking forms are in the centrefold.

Book early to avoid disappointment.

Lynda Lovell
Visits Secretary

THE WORLD OF CANAL HERITAGE

Until mid-afternoon on Thursday 1st February, I had never heard of the Falkirk Wheel. Since then, I haven't stopped talking about it. I went home and tried to describe it to my husband - utterly unsuccessfully. Google and YouTube to the rescue. If, like me, you have never heard of the Falkirk Wheel, Google is there for you to explore and find out about this triumph of the 21st century, and to applaud all those involved in its design and construction.

Thank you very much to Roger Butler for a day meandering along the canals of this country. All was told with great knowledge and gentle humour that had us chuckling in the aisles. There was a general history of canals, their construction, architecture, geography and the people to start us off. Then came the decline in their commercial use and decay, followed by a re-emergence in recent years for holidays and leisure. We explored the canals of Birmingham, (more canals than in Venice), although a very short trip to Venice came just before lunch. The Regent Canal in London occupied the afternoon. We met listed gas holders which were moved, objections to new buildings which are now listed, a bridge that collapsed in the 19th century and rebuilt in **five** days - how long would it take now, how many enquiries would there have to be?

Thank you again Roger for wonderful day.

So, come to the Afternoon Lectures, come to the Study Days, go on the Outings, and, like me, you might come across a wonder you have never encountered before.

STUDY DAY REMINDER

There may still be some places available for our next Study Day on 14th March. James Bolton will be guiding us through Italian gardens and explaining how they influenced our own English ones.

Full details and the booking form are on our website.



Mary Wellby & Rosalie Sadler
Study Day Secretaries