



## April 2024 NEWS

For Full and  
Waiting List  
members

### FROM THE CHAIR

*Chris Dye*

As we head towards the end of another excellent season and my first year as Chair, we can look back on some fascinating lectures alongside two of the best and most-attended Special Interest Days. Although many committee members and others put a huge amount of work into these events, the bringing together of our programme has largely been the work of Chris Pulling. Chris has worked so hard for the Society but is sadly leaving the committee after the AGM in May. We are enormously grateful to her but hope that she can enjoy the lectures in future without the stress!

Jennifer Walker and Rosie Pensom are also leaving the committee this year. Jennifer has been Secretary for 6 years and has been incredibly efficient and supportive. Rosie has only been with us for a year, but is moving out of the area. We are very grateful to her for her input in this time – especially around developing our website.

Sadly, our President, Jenny Lush, has completed her maximum 10 years in the role and will also have to step down. Jenny has been a “guiding light” to us all in this period and we have been lucky to have her onboard.

Recently, we have been “recruiting” hard to build a new committee and unlike many other Societies, we are in a position to present nominations at the AGM for some outstanding individuals to take forward and develop Eastbourne into one of the strongest Arts Societies in the country. Full details of your new officers and committee will be in the next newsletter – after you have approved their appointment in May!

Of course, the majority of this success is down to you – the members. We are all grateful for your ongoing support and enthusiasm. You have indicated to us that you would be interested in trips, a summer lunch and a holiday. We are therefore planning two day trips this year, a summer lunch during our closed season and a holiday – probably to East Anglia in September 2025. Full details will be sent to you as soon as possible. Please also look out for an article about the arts attractions surrounding Eastbourne in the next national Arts Society magazine. We have been asked to pull this together to raise our profile – which we are very pleased to do.

Finally, I hope to see many of you at the remaining lectures before our summer break, but if not, can I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy summer break!

### NEW MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS TEA

*Monica Darnbrough*

It is always a bit daunting going to something new on one's own. I wasn't sure what to expect. I was quite surprised to see so many people walking across from the carpark to go into the hall. All the members who were greeting new arrivals were very welcoming and, when I fell into conversation, I found they were people with interesting pasts and even more interesting current pursuits. 37 people- some new members

**PRESIDENT** *Jenny Lush*

#### COMMITTEE 2023/4:

**Chris Dye**, *Chairman*

**Judith Furner**, *Vice Chairman*

**Jennifer Walker**, *Hon Secretary*

**Peter Barrow**, *Hon Treasurer*

**Chris Pulling**, *Programme Secretary*

**Maggie Clive-Matthews**, *Membership Sec.*

**Doris Hammersley**, *Hospitality Secretary*

**Rosie Pensom**

**Kate Taylor**

**Vivienne Lester** *Newsletter Editor*

of the Society and some long standing volunteers were welcomed into the hall by the sight of smiles and enticing cream scones and cakes set out on the round tables.

The hall had been nicely arranged with round tables set with linen cloths. The jam and cream scones and delicious-looking cakes were already inviting one to take a seat. The volunteers at my table told me about the society and about their various roles. Clearly there were many willing hands being put to good use. When everyone present had been served tea at their tables and had enjoyed (too many?) cakes, the Chairman Chris Dye introduced himself and spoke about the Society. He thanked the committee and the army of volunteers, especially the providers of the tea. It was not long before he was asking, even new members like me, to think about taking on jobs and possibly joining the committee. Much to my surprise I left with a big smile and a promise to think about taking on the role of secretary.



### 30 YEARS ON.....

**Jenny Lush**



In 1994 when I first joined EDFAS (Eastbourne Decorative and Fine Arts Society), we met at St John's Church Parish Hall in Eastbourne which had its limitations. This was happily resolved in 2002 when the Committee did a tour of all the local halls; much to our delight, East Dean Village Hall fulfilled all the criteria and has been home to us ever since.

Eastbourne – the Suntrap of the South – was the venue for the NADFAS Annual General Meeting and Conference in 2004. Being the 'home team' our Society was heavily involved with its planning and the running of the three-day event: a mayoral reception, dinner in the Winter Garden, coach trips all over Sussex and the AGM in the Congress Theatre meant it is still talked about.

We continue to be served by dedicated Committee members who, with the help of volunteers, ensure the smooth running of lecture days. Our technical teams have come a long way from operating temperamental slide projectors; today's technical know-how greatly enhances our enjoyment. Visits, Holidays and Special Interest Days have always been popular, and the philanthropic scope of the Society has developed, with the money raised on the monthly raffle adding to the amount we donate to local arts-related projects.

Membership numbers have remained steady. Compared with some Societies, we have managed to sustain a full quota of members who continue to enjoy some outstanding lectures. Long may it last!

### VISIT TO WEST DEAN

**Kate Taylor**

On 3 July we will have a very special day trip to West Dean College of Arts and Conservation near Chichester. We currently fund a student prize at the college and are delighted to have been able to arrange a trip to visit the students' workshops, the gardens and a private tour of the house (not usually open to the public). The trip will be by coach from Eastbourne and cost £45. Bookings have already opened but do please enquire at the Visits Desk if places are still available.

### SUMMER LUNCH

**Kate Taylor**



And before we let you go for the rest of the summer, we will be having a lunch at the very popular Hydro Hotel in Eastbourne on 30 July to mark the end of our 23/24 season. A three course lunch will be offered, including welcome drink and gratuities for £36.50. It will be an excellent opportunity to socialise and get to know fellow members. Bookings, including menu choices, have to be made by 30 June. Please enquire at the Visits Desk.

## CHARITABLE PROJECTS

*Peter Barrow*

An important part of our society's ethos is that we support local arts-based organisations however we can. This is embedded in our constitution, which describes our objects as the "advancement of the aesthetic education of the public, the cultivation, appreciation and study of the decorative and fine arts, and the giving of aid to the preservation of our national artistic heritage"

One way we do this is that, each year, we make some grants to local arts-based organisations out of our reserves. The Arts Society very much encourages this, and makes an annual grant of £250 available for precisely this purpose. In addition, this year we added a further £1,750 out of our own reserves. I thought you might like to know how we used this money.

The largest donation we made this year was £750 to the **Towner 100 Community Appeal**. You'll all be well aware of the Towner, Eastbourne's iconic and renowned art gallery, but you may be less aware of great work they do (but can only do with the community's help) with young people, those with mental health diagnoses and those who are resident in the more deprived parts of town. For more details, please have a look at <https://townereastbourne.org.uk/support/towner-community-appeal-2023>.

Our next largest donation was to **Holy Trinity Arts**, a group on Seaside Road which runs arts workshops for all interested adults, and there are plans to run further workshops for mums and younger children. All faiths and none are welcome and the group reaches out to some of the hard-to-reach in our community. It's quiet, gentle and effective, and the money is needed to buy, amongst other things: easels, canvases, brushes, paints and re-usable floor coverings, to protect the carpet in the hall where the group meets.

The next organisation we decided to support, with a donation of £275, is one that you may be familiar with. It is **Compass Community Arts**, an Eastbourne-based charity which describes itself as "an intergenerational, co-creative, artist led organisation for anyone vulnerable to social isolation, lived trauma, mental illness and hidden disabilities". This is the second year we have supported Compass Arts, which continues to do wonderful work in and around the town. For more information, please have a look at their website: <https://www.compasscommunityarts.co.uk/>.

Our final two donations were both specifically student-related. The first was a donation of £225 to sponsor the **Eastbourne Rotary Schools Art** competition. The second was a donation of £250 to fund The Arts Society Eastbourne Student Prize for another year at **West Dean College** – which, as you'll have seen elsewhere in this newsletter, you have the opportunity to visit this summer, at their Open Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> July!

## LECTURE FEEDBACK

*Kate Taylor*



At the start of the current lecture season, in September 2023, we introduced a new way of collecting feedback on lectures. The committee wanted a straightforward way of allowing everyone to give their opinion on every lecture. From the September lecture onwards, I have been offering you a little round counter and encouraging you to vote with it as you leave the hall after the lecture. The options for your vote are Excellent, Good, or Not Great. The reaction to the new system has been really positive, and thank you so much to the 100+ members who take part every month. You may be interested to know that we have now introduced the same system for our Special Interest Days as well, following a member suggestion. The committee takes feedback very seriously - it helps us plan future lectures, and we also pass it on to The Arts Society. I may also have asked you what it was you particularly liked or didn't like about the lecture - these additional

comments are also so helpful. If I don't manage to catch you, then please do email me any comments on [tase-lectures@hotmail.com](mailto:tase-lectures@hotmail.com). From Sept 2024, I shall be taking over as Programme Secretary, and so will be busy looking after the lecturer and not free to hand out the counters. If this is something you think you could help with, I should be delighted to hear from you - please speak to me at a lecture or email me as above. And please, keep voting and commenting!

## UPCOMING PROGRAMME

*Chris Pulling*

As we head towards the concluding lectures of the season, we can join with the Nation and celebrate the bi-centenary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute with our lecture centred around Grace Darling whose daring rescue of steamship passengers off the Northumberland coast in 1838 brought her international fame and celebrity,



leading her to become the 'poster girl' for the RNLI.

Our final lecture in May will be with Caroline Shenton, who will be giving her lecture on '*Packing up the Nation: Saving London's Museums & Galleries in the Second World War*'. This will be a gripping and sometimes hilarious story of how a band of heroic curators and eccentric custodians saved Britain's national heritage during our Darkest Hour.

## SPECIAL INTEREST DAY

*Patricia Ollivere*



### Stabat Mater – a medieval Latin hymn on the suffering of the Virgin Mary at the Crucifixion - A Journey through Holy Week

By Patrick Craig



Patrick's talk began with a film of his recent Palm Sunday and all the clergy and choristers processing and singing around the outside and into St Pauls Cathedral. Our attention then switched to Jerusalem and we heard two differing and very beautiful Hosannas. Patrick sang an excerpt from Handel's Messiah followed by the St Pauls Choir singing music by John Rutter

Good Friday laments followed with a historic recording by Jessye Norman singing a very poignant "were you there". Miserere – a psalm in which mercy is sought especially Psalm 51 or the music written for it. We heard many beautiful and various miserere by Allegri, Raj and Byrd also Purcell's 'Hear my Prayer' and the St Paul's Choir singing the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm. As we come to the end of Good Friday darkness descends and Jesus' life is coming to the end.

Stabat Mater. Our attention is now focused on the Cross and the music of Good Friday. Patrick sang some more beautiful choral music. Christ has been taken down from the cross and stripped of his garments. We are shown some truly beautiful pictures and sculptures of Mary cradling Jesus in her arms with such suffering, love and tenderness. The lectures ended with a video of Patrick, having been given permission to enter a deserted San Marco Basilica Venice and he sang a Sabat Mater by Vivaldi with his truly beautiful voice matched only by the splendour of San Marco itself. The clip finished with Patrick standing with a beautiful smile on his face.

A memorable ending to a thought provoking series of lectures. There were many wonderful psalms sung and music played, as was well as paintings and sculpture shown too numerous to mention in this review. Patrick gave us a very special day. He is a truly gifted singer and an accomplished lecturer and we all came away in a very reflective but uplifted mood.

Victoria Baptist Church is a new venue for the Art Society and proved to be very apt considering the subject matter and the lectures taking place in the chapel itself. The building is very well appointed with plenty of spacious rooms and facilities. A big thank you must go to the committee and volunteers for all their hard work making sure the day ran smoothly and serving us with such a delicious lunch of sandwiches and a choice of THREE cakes.



**Further information about our future programme, visits, holidays and other news can be found on our website, search: The Arts Society Eastbourne**

**Note:** For security reasons, the front door of East Dean Hall is locked at 2.00 pm on lecture days. The Arts Society insures full members at lectures and on visits against proven liability to third parties. Our privacy policy may be viewed on the website.