



THE ARTS  
SOCIETY  
BISHOPS  
STORTFORD

**NEWSLETTER**

**SEPTEMBER 2023**

## FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Welcome to this summer's edition of the newsletter. I trust this finds you all well, making the most of the rather varied summer weather, and having enjoyed our varied programme of lectures, visits, and special interest days so far this year. Your support and the friendly and engaging atmosphere at all our meetings are very much appreciated and make the work of the committee feel so worthwhile.

I am pleased to report, following my appeal from the stage, that Mick Fitch has kindly offered his services to help with publicity to enhance our image locally. Welcome, Mick and thank you for your enthusiastic suggestions so far.

To keep our society up to date we recently reviewed our Constitution and made some modifications which you will be asked to ratify at the AGM, and which will stand us in good stead for some years to come. With the house in good order and a warm and friendly committee at your disposal we would welcome your willingness to participate in the running of our society. Prospective committee members can shadow a role prior to taking over, as none of us can go on forever and, since my intention to resign at the end of my third year this November has met with a deathly silence, I insist that I will not, unless someone comes forward now, be prepared to continue in the chair beyond the AGM in 2024. Please do speak to one of the committee members at a meeting to discuss your own potential contribution to any role on the committee. The future vitality of this society depends on it.

We all look forward to the concluding lectures for this successful year, starting with the September lecture provided by Karin Fernald on the subject, "the Shakespeare of dogs: Sir Edward Henry Landseer, (1802 - 1873)".

My best wishes to all,  
Jim Barrie.

## LECTURE PROGRAMME

I hope you have had a good summer and are looking forward to the autumn and winter lectures.

The programme starts on the 12<sup>th</sup> September when we welcome Karin Fernald on her second visit to our Society. This time she will be talking about Henry Landseer, who was celebrated for his paintings of dogs and Highland stags, as well as the Trafalgar Square lions. The lecture is entitled “The Shakespeare of Dogs’: Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1802-1873)”. He was a child prodigy and became known as The Shakespeare of Dogs because of his comic, tragic and general canine paintings. He taught the Queen and Prince Albert to etch and was in demand socially with the aristocracy. However, he became too stressed and escaped to the Highlands of Scotland, where the only person who could get him to behave was his elderly widowed neighbour, Mrs Pritchard. When Sir Edwin died a pub was named after him, he was buried in St Paul’s Cathedral, and someone put black wreaths around the necks of those lions in Trafalgar Square.

“Gilbert & Sullivan and the Birth of English Operetta” is the subject of Ian Gledhill’s lecture on the 10<sup>th</sup> October. In the 1860s London couldn’t get enough of the music of Jacques Offenbach, but his shows frequently had to be rewritten for the London stage as the plots were rather too risqué for English tastes. Then along came Gilbert and Sullivan to provide wholesome home-grown entertainment. The result was one of the most successful musical partnerships ever, and even today over 130 years later their operas are still performed, while most of Offenbach’s are long forgotten. This talk tells the story of their partnership, with music from most of the G & S operas.

In 2021, Sarah Pearson gave us a Zoom lecture on the Art and Architecture of Travel and we will be delighted to see her in person on the 14<sup>th</sup> November for her talk “Power and Propaganda: Art and Architecture at the Court of Federico da Montefeltro of Urbino”.

Illegitimate by birth, Federico da Montefeltro achieved power in the Renaissance city state of Urbino following the assassination of his legitimate younger brother. Federico moved quickly to establish his position, and through a programme of artistic and architectural patronage worked to secure his place in the Montefeltro dynasty. This lecture examines the artworks and buildings commissioned by Federico and considers them as pieces of renaissance propaganda. Also included are architectural works by Francesco di Giorgio Martini and Luciano Laurana, and artworks by Piero della Francesca, Pedro Berruguete and Francesco Laurana.

January 2024

We start the New Year with a lecture by Sarah Burles on the 9<sup>th</sup> January about three of the Impressionist women artists: Marie Bracquemond, Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot, 'Les Trois Grandes Dames' of Impressionism. From the start the Impressionist group included women artists but their contribution to Impressionism has often been overshadowed by their male contemporaries. Marie Bracquemond, Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt all exhibited regularly at the Impressionist exhibitions alongside artists such as Monet, Renoir and Degas and in 1894 they were given the title "Les Trois Grandes Dames d'Impressionisme" by the art critic Gustave Geffroy. This lecture will discuss the lives of each of these artists and their work, revealing their skill and originality as well as their willingness to take risks, despite the additional obstacles they faced as women.

I hope you enjoy this varied and interesting programme and look forward to seeing you at the meetings.

Maggie Simons

## OUTINGS

I am pleased that so many of you signed up for our first two visits this year which is encouraging as, when I plan the programme, I am never sure what always appeals to you all! Our outing to Marble Hill in March was great in that we were amongst the first visitors following the major restoration and, indeed, work in the garden was still in its initial progress. The weather was kind, which allowed a leisurely walk everywhere in the grounds.

Our visit to The Shuttleworth Collection was planned with our gentlemen in mind, which they really did enjoy, AND our ladies were just as enthusiastic, particularly with having a guided tour round several of the hangars and reliving the history of how the aeroplanes were developed and then used in the first World War. The hospitality was superb and certainly contributed to an enjoyable day with a finale of having a cup of tea in the sunshine and watching some of the planes giving us a little display in the air. I thought that was just for us!

Sadly, the visit to Belton House has had to be cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control and I have expressed my disappointment and frustration to The National Trust who have not acted as one would expect of this organisation. However, these things do happen and generally we have no problems with our bookings.

28 members will be travelling with Tailored Travel on 17<sup>th</sup> September to experience The Art and History of Liverpool enjoying a guided tour on the way and visits during our 5 day (4 nights) stay and also on the way home. It is a bonus that we will have a pleasant stay at a central 4\* hotel to rest awhile!

Our anticipated visit to Frogmore Paper Mill has had to be rebooked for next year as the restoration following a fire in 2022 is not yet quite complete. I have, however, managed to book a visit to Bletchley Park instead on Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> November, which I will be selling at our lecture in

October but do put the date in your diary now as I think it will be very popular.

Following interest from many of you when our chairman spoke of an overseas trip next year, I have had long discussions with the Committee and with Tailored Travel, who I have used many times, and we have been looking at an overseas trip for next year. Finally, we decided to plan a tour to The Palaces and Art of Northern Italy. Having emailed you all, I was pleasantly surprised to receive such positive interest and was able to hand out booking forms at our last lecture. Whilst we have a short while before confirming with TT, I would ask that you all reply shortly, particularly if you are looking for a single room. As mentioned throughout, please do consider your mobility as this is a busy 6 days and we always have to consider access for all.

Meanwhile, I am already looking at outings for 2024 and will keep you advised, whilst endeavouring to keep the cost down and offering places which will appeal to all, for example, historic houses with wonderful gardens too.

Rosemary Thomson

## **DAYS OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

These are held in the months where there are normally no lectures i.e., August and January. They take place over a whole day, with a good lunch included, and allow a deeper level of study on the given subject.

This year has taken us through Taste, Trannies and Teddy Bears - Grayston Perry, in January, to The Edwardian Garden- golden and delicious' in August. Two really different and enjoyable days.

Our next Day of Special Interest is on **JANUARY 25<sup>TH</sup> 2024** when we welcome Simon Whitehouse who is 'Wilde about Oscar '! He is an experienced blue badge guide and Arts Society lecturer and also trained as an actor, so we are assured this will not only be informative, but fun!

Tickets will be on sale at our **November** meeting from 09.30.

On August **20<sup>th</sup> 2024**, Lucy Hughes Hallett, well known lecturer, will talk to us about Women Artists of the 1930's. There will be a 1- hour lecture on three different artists, to include Tirzah Garwood, and Suzanne Cooper, who is Lucys mother in- law! We have a local connection to the West Bardfield artists and the Fry Gallery in Saffron Walden, where many of these originals are held.

I hope you will enjoy both these days.

Hilary Mathews

## **YOUNG ARTS**

At the beginning of the year, Richard Whittington school, with a £300 grant from our society, purchased sketch books for the primary school children. These have been very useful for the children to document their journey through art as they progressed through the school year. We are looking forward to attending the 'Sketch-Fest ', which is to be held in the Autumn term when the children's art work and sketch books will be on display.

At the end of March 2023, Rosemary and I attended a celebration launch of the Young Curators dedicated gallery at South Mill Arts Museum. This was the second group of students who had increased their learning of Conservation and Exhibition management on the Young Curators Course run at SMA. We were very impressed at the dedication and displays that the young Curators presented to us. Of particular interest was a contemporary 'Reminiscence' exhibit in the museum which featured various articles the young people thought reflected our current times - needless to say this including a covid testing kit ! A grant previously awarded by TASBS had contributed to this, the cleaning of exhibits, and the exhibition work generally.

The committee had agreed that £300 of profit from the sales of the 'Fifty Treasures' booklets could be used to support the work of a local youth project at the Thirst Cafe. The cheque was presented to Ben, their representative, at our March meeting and Karen continued to report on the development of the project in our monthly mail chimp newsletters. The final outcome of this project, the summer photography competition

launched in July, is fully documented, along with the winning photography, in our August mail chimp newsletter. On behalf of the committee, I would like to extend a big thank you to Karen for her initiation and substantial involvement in this very enterprising project which has greatly benefitted the young people. I am looking forward to viewing the winning entries at the Thirst Cafe in Bishop's Stortford in due course.

The very proactive Art Department at Herts and Essex secondary school invited committee members once again to a private viewing of their annual A level Exhibition involving Art, Textiles and Photography work of the students. Our Chairman, Jim, and his wife, June, were delighted to attend and were very impressed with the standard of work displayed. It is hoped that the school may be able to provide us with some photographs of the work later in the year and these can then be portrayed in our mail chimp newsletter for us all to enjoy.

Moving forward, there is still time for us to capitalise on the availability of a £250 community grant made available by the national Arts Society until the end of this year. The committee were keen to support a new secondary school in town with this but, unfortunately, so far this has not come to fruition despite a number of overtures. We have been told that the staff have been extremely busy setting up the new school.

On an encouraging note, this year the Arts Society are holding an online competition for the A level / Year 13 Students or equivalent. This is good as it will negate the need and cost involved to physically transport entries required by the previous RBA exhibition. In the Art Society July bulletin, it stated that entries for this are now open so, hopefully, when the new term commences, we can encourage our local schools to participate in this competition, the closing date being the end of September. We can also use this opportunity to explore other ways in which we can support the Children's/Young persons' creativity that can result in an application to the Arts Society for the community grant as well.

I hope you have all had a good summer and I look forward to seeing you at our September meeting.

Shirley Moore