



THE ARTS SOCIETY VALE OF AYLESBURY

Founded in 1965

www.theartssociety.org/vale-aylesbury

Newsletter

October 2024

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

DEAR MEMBER ...

I hope you agree that it has been an exciting, entertaining and educational year in our Arts Society.

We have had lectures from Gavin Plumley discussing the 'Seasons of the World' (I have read his book and can recommend it) right through to 'Shepard's War' via 'A bit of a Carry On'. James Campbell told us about how the illustrator E. H. Shepard went from illustrating the First World War to illustrating Winnie the Pooh. Fascinating!

Our special Study Days continue to inform us on a wide variety of subjects so do try and come along, now that we are able to 'spread the net' of subjects in the arts sphere. There is something for everyone. In 2025 we can look forward to such diverse subjects as 'The Age of Jazz' and 'How to Read an English Church'.

My thanks go to Barbara James for her organising of a holiday to 'The Moorish Heritage of Andalucia' which I understand was a great success. Next year's holiday will be in the UK.

Lynda Lovell organised an excellent outing to behind the scenes at the Albert Hall which was great fun and included some hilarious Royal incidents. We then visited Elton John's collection of photographs at the V & A – unusual! We are an eclectic Arts Society.

You will be pleased to learn that we have again fulfilled our charitable obligations. Susan Olding, our Arts Representative, helped with a programme for deaf/blind youngsters at the Waterside Theatre. This was done in connection with Vache Baroque and Buckinghamshire Council. Vache Baroque is a small opera group which provided music and small instruments for the young people. I attended and was amazed at how well they responded.

Please think about joining our friendly committee. You will not only find out more about the Arts Society, but make some new friends along the way, whilst helping to keep the Society going.

My thanks to all the committee who know exactly what they are doing without any interference from me and are a continual support in the running of our Society.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at our next lecture on 'Painting Normandy' from Turner to Monet' on the 5th November.

Judy Brandis
Chairman

STUDY DAY REMINDER

Thursday 14th November 2024

Outstanding & Precious, Unusual & Priceless - The Cabinet of Curiosities & the culture of collecting in early modern Europe.

Albert Godetzky

We start with the **Advent of Collecting**, about the beginnings of a collecting culture in Europe and the motivations that brought about the magnificent collections of art and artefacts in the Cabinets of Curiosities during the 16th and 17th centuries.

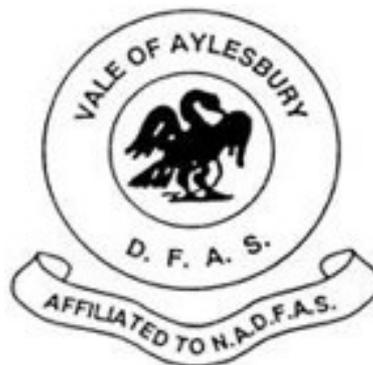
The second lecture is entitled **Scholarly Pursuits and Princely Opulence**. European collectors brought together diverse objects to impress upon visitors the erudition, the wealth and power of the collector.

We finish with **For the Greater Good**. Our greater good. We will see how the Cabinet of Curiosities shaped the nature of our modern day museums and galleries.

The booking form is at www.theartsociety.org/vale-aylesbury.

Guests are especially welcome.

Mary Wellby and Rosalie Sadler
Study Day Secretaries



NEW YEAR STUDY DAYS

Study Days are held at the Spread Eagle in Thame. Parking is available to the rear of the Spread Eagle - £5.00 for 24 hours. There is a coin machine in the car park; it is also possible to pay at hotel reception if necessary.

The pattern of the day is as follows. Coffee is served from 10:00 am. There are two lectures in the morning, starting at 10:30 am, with a short 10-15 minute break between them.

Lunch-hour is between the second and third lectures. We aim to finish the day at 2:30 pm.

The fee for the day includes coffee or tea on arrival, and a soft drink at lunch. This can be replaced by a glass of wine for an extra £2.00.

Please don't forget to bring your packed lunch.

Thursday 13th February 2025

Food, Cooking and Dining in Georgian England

Peter Ross

A fascinating and fun day about the very broad range of foods that our Georgian ancestors enjoyed, both in and out of the home.

The first lecture uses images of paintings, prints, cookery books and objects of daily life to illustrate the often hidden domestic lives of the times. It is based on the diaries of James Woodforde kept between 1758 and 1802, as well as the writings of Jane Austen a generation later.

The second lecture is about eating out in Georgian London. Venues include coaching inns, Billingsgate, Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens and the East End.

The final lecture introduces us to the difficult conditions of the kitchens, as well as the myriads of tools and equipment available to the struggling cooks of the era.

Peter Ross has a BA in the History of Art, Design and Film, a MA in London history, a PhD in the cultural history of an English criminal, and is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He has for 20 years lectured on a range of topics including English books, portraiture, and London history.

Thursday 13th March 2025

Japanese Art & Culture, the Japanese Garden & the Kimono

Marie Conte-Helm

This study day will start by charting the development of key aspects of the Japanese aesthetic in painting, sculpture and the applied arts through different periods of history. Contact with China and the West, contrasting aristocratic and military tastes and the growth of townsmen's culture in the Edo period have all contributed to distinctive visual trends and techniques. An exploration of the impact of Zen Buddhism on Japanese culture will convey further insights into the Japanese aesthetic as it has evolved through the ages.

Japan's most famous gardens provide a context for understanding the principles of Japanese garden design as it has evolved through the ages. The Japanese love of nature and the changing seasons has manifested itself in the subject matter of paintings and in the intimate and grand-scale gardens surrounding aristocratic palaces and Buddhist temples as well as Zen-inspired dry landscape gardens.

The final lecture introduces us to the kimono, a traditional garment worn by both men and women in Japan. Rich in symbolism and encapsulating the best in textile and techniques through the ages, the kimono has a fascinating history that reflects wider aspects of Japanese life and culture.

Professor Conte-Helm is a long-established Arts Society Lecturer, and has held senior academic posts in various UK universities. She was awarded an OBE in the 2011 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to UK-Japan educational and cultural relations, and the Order of the Rising Sun, Golden Rays with Rosette by the Government of Japan in 2019.

**The application forms are in the centrefold.
Guests are especially welcome.**

If we do NOT receive a signed form, confirming your responsibility for your lunch and that you will remove any rubbish and food debris, we unfortunately cannot accept your application.

Mary Wellby and Rosalie Sadler
Study Day Secretaries

FORTHCOMING LECTURES

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

Tuesday 3rd December 2024

The Nativity in Art from Giotto to Picasso

Clare Ford-Wille

The Nativity must be one of the most popular subjects of all with artists, north and south of the Alps, from the 13th to the 20th centuries, such as Giotto, Fra Angelico, Rembrandt and Rubens. Sometimes the scene takes place at night, sometimes during the day. The lecture will explore the many variations of the scene and the possible meanings, depending upon whether midwives, Joseph or shepherds are present, and analyse the various postures and gestures of the Virgin as she adores the Christ Child.

Clare Ford-Wille has an Honours degree in History of Art, Birkbeck College, University of London. Her regular commitments include Centre for Lifelong Learning, London University, National Gallery, V&A Museum, WEA, Morley College, the City Literary Institute, the Art Fund and National Trust. She also leads study tours abroad.

Tuesday 7th January 2025

The Age of Jazz

Sandy Burnett

This lecture, covers one of music's most important genres: a fascinating blend of rigorous structure, free-wheeling creativity, close-knit ensembles and imaginative improvisation. Drawing on his experience both as musicologist and gigging musician, Sandy will shed light on jazz from the inside. His talk covers the early years of jazz up to the Second World War, and touches on the disparate influences which lay behind the emergence of jazz. Musical illustrations range from the blues, ragtime and the very first jazz recordings through to classics by Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and the Duke Ellington Orchestra, and the dawn of the Swing Era.

Sandy is one of the UK's most versatile music commentators, enjoying a career that combines broadcasting, performing and lecturing. After studying at St Catharine's College, Cambridge and working as music director for the RSC, National Theatre and in London's West End, Sandy Burnett spent a decade as one of the core team of presenters on BBC Radio 3. Combining engaging scholarship with hands-on expertise, he devises and leads cultural holidays all over the world, is the author of the *Idler Guide to Classical Music*, is a highly sought after double bassist on the London jazz scene, and was appointed the Academy of Ancient Music's Hogwood Fellow for the 2018-19 season.

Tuesday 4th February 2025

not 6th as on the Fixture Card!

A Carpet ride to Khiva – Exploring the revival of 15th century Timurid Carpet designs from Persian illuminated manuscripts

Chris Aslan

This is a narrative approach to the revival of 15th century carpets in Khiva, a desert oasis in Uzbekistan. Illuminations on vellum – containing the only surviving representations of textiles from this era – flourished, despite the Islamic prohibition on representative art. They are all we had left of Timurid Carpets until Chris's workshop began to weave them to life again. The lecture will examine the traditional role of carpet weaving and embroidery in the social lives of Central Asian women and how social and political influences led to the decline of textile production.

Chris Aslan was born and spent his childhood in Turkey and war-torn Beirut. He studied Media and Journalism at Leicester University, before moving to Khiva, a desert oasis in Uzbekistan. He established a UNESCO workshop reviving 15th century carpet designs and embroideries, becoming the largest non-government employer in town. He took a year out in Cambridge to write *A Carpet Ride to Khiva*. Chris then spent several years in the Pamirs mountains of Tajikistan, training herders to comb their yaks for their cashmere-like down, followed by a spell in Kyrgyzstan establishing a wood-carving workshop in a walnut forest. He is based in North Cyprus and when not lecturing for The Arts Society, he writes, his latest book being *Unravelling the Silk Road*.

**Dee Blackstock & Rosemary Powell
Lecture Secretaries**

OUR DAY WITH VICTORIA & ALBERT

Thursday 22nd August 2024

Our first venue was the Royal Albert Hall . Both tour guides were entertaining and informative. Interestingly, music was deemed essential to all walks of life - but the poorest had to stand to listen to the music. They had their own entrance and stood at the very top of the hall and were free to roam or promenade - hence 'The Proms'.

The mushroom-shaped discs made of fibre glass high above the audience were cleverly installed to disperse the sound around the Hall evenly, erected only since 1952 – before that, the sound travelled up into the roof - not helpful. Technical innovations of sound equipment have been installed throughout the hall so everywhere receives the same perfect sound. We also enjoyed a short organ recital of Nimrod which was a treat.

The Fragile Beauty Exhibition at the V&A was thought provoking. The photos were mainly in black and white and some were truly stunning using light and dark superbly. Interestingly, nearly all the photos were studies of people - no pets and few buildings. People of all genders, races, creeds and colours. Photos of film music and fashion stars. The most poignant were of Negro families and children coping with poverty and prejudice in America. Portraits of Malcolm X and of Martin Luther King were special.

The title 'Fragile Beauty' was clearly shown by portraits of Marilyn Monroe in very pensive poses off-camera taken two months before she died. Also, a wall full of people who died of AIDS, who suddenly disappeared from society (a fraction of the 36 million worldwide).

The most beautiful and moving of them all, was the amazing study of the 9/11 skeleton of a tower block, with a tree and branches in the foreground - life and death - Fragile Beauty.

Lynda Lovell
Visits Organiser