



# NEWSLETTER Spring 2024

Issue 18

## Chair's Introduction

*Three of this year's brilliant lectures already enjoyed, the year is speeding past!*

The most important item of news is the refurbishment of the Capitol Theatre. Horsham District Council voted for this to go ahead at the February Council Meeting so work will commence in the spring of 2025 and last approximately 18 months.



Following a very useful meeting with the HDC Head of Leisure and Culture - Nick Jenkins and the Capitol Manager - Matthew Effemy, your committee are now evaluating a number of venues around Horsham town to decide where we might

relocate to for the closure period. This will be for the period January 2025 to January 2027 (as we have no lecture in December 2026), following the pantomime which should be the first production in the newly refurbished Capitol.

Your committee plans to have a list of viable options by April, and will move to firm up our plans following that, in time to announce our temporary venue at the live AGM in July. We sincerely hope to hold all lectures on the published dates throughout the temporary relocation.

Meanwhile, all the rest of our 2024 lectures programme will proceed as advertised in the Capitol Theatre. Your continued support and membership this year, and during 2025 and 2026, is really important to ensure we have a vibrant, thriving Society to help us return to the lovely, refurbished, Capitol in early 2027.

## **Changes to the Committee**

Your committee are all volunteers who love the Arts and give of their time freely. This spring we have had a couple of changes. Your Secretary Jean Grainger has stepped down after three years dedicated service, thank you Jean. Your new secretary is Jane Wilcock who was Lectures Secretary. The Lectures Secretary is now new committee member Rowena Kerr.

Another new, member Mandy van Reysen, will begin to explore the role of Arts Volunteering Secretary, working with schools and voluntary groups to encourage arts participation as part of our 'charitable' outreach.

All other Committee members remain the same for now and we have added a few photos so that you can identify us. You will see all of us live, on stage, at our Annual General Meeting in July and you will be asked to 'vote in' all next year's committee, as usual.

The committee always needs to succession plan so please consider putting yourself forward to join us, without obligation. We will especially need a Treasurer next year, so if you have book keeping or accountancy skills, please speak to our treasurer Ken Runcorn at the desk. The committee meets on the first Wednesday morning of each lecture month at my house in Horsham.

## **Annual General Meeting.**

Throughout the pandemic The Arts Society Horsham held its AGMs by email and post, having circulated all the papers to members beforehand. We continued this practice in 2023, although there were a couple of written representations that it should be a live event. A 'show of hands' at our September 2023 lecture indicated that approximately 50% of the members present requested a live AGM. That will take place on stage on **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July in the Capitol Theatre**. Papers will be emailed, or posted, to all members in advance.

The live AGM will commence about 10.15am on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 before the lecture that follows. You will receive notice in advance and will need to come to the Capitol a little earlier than usual.

## Visitors

In an effort to raise the profile of the Arts Society Horsham, I have begun to invite a number of local figures to attend our lectures and learn about the Society and our contribution to artistic education and awareness for the people of Horsham area. We have had HDC Councillor Jon Olson, (LibDem) lead on Culture, Leisure and Open Spaces, Jeremy Quin MP (Cons) elected representative for Horsham, and Andy Bliss (QPM) High Sheriff of West Sussex, responsible to HM King Charles for Law & Order and Volunteering and Charity in West Sussex. Each has enjoyed their visit and report that they had learned a great deal about our work, which they will promote as appropriate.

In future, I hope to invite Lady Emma Barnard of Parham, Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex, and the Vicar of Horsham, amongst others. If you have a suggestion about an opinion-former we could invite, please let me know.



*Ann Rattray*  
*Chair*

## Finance

The financial year so far has been solid in terms of the expected income being received and in controlling costs to budgeted levels. Consequently, we expect to have a modest surplus at the end of the financial year in June. Arts HQ has committed to not increasing the per capita Recovery Charge levied on us for their services, and our lecturers' fees are contracted well in advance. This leads to our proposal to keep the Membership Subscription at £45 and the Visitor Fee at £8 for the coming year.

The risk area is in the cost of establishing and supporting an alternative venue for 2025 and 2026 and the potential for a reduction in membership numbers over that period until we can re-establish ourselves back at The Capitol.

We are prepared to cover this risk from our Reserves and hope that you will all stay with us and continue to enjoy our outstanding lectures at our new venue.



*Ken Runcorn  
Treasurer*

## Lectures

As Ann was saying earlier, we had a change of Lectures Secretary, so Jane reports on the October and November lectures, and Rowena takes over with the January lecture.

The first thing we learnt when **Jennifer Sturdy** joined us for our October lecture was the difference between a harp and a lyre. Jennifer, resplendent in the robes of a Mesopotamian queen, told us about **The Gold Lyre of Ur**, and the making a replica of the oldest known stringed instrument, unearthed at Ur in present day Iraq by Leonard Woolley in 1929. Jennifer took us through the history of the instrument and its discovery, and the three years it took to make this stunning replica, using the nearest they could find to the original materials (cedar wood and bitumen from Iraq, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan, mother-of-pearl from the Persian Gulf – and cow-gut strings from Norfolk!).



Jennifer finished her presentation with a recording of the lyre being played, and, as an extra special bonus, brought with her the replica the same group made of the silver lyre, now in the British Museum.



Carrots and propaganda — not two words which instinctively go together. However, after **Anne Haworth's** lecture in November — **A Homage to the Carrot! The artistic legacy of a humble vegetable** — we had to change our minds. Starting with the most recent example (from the Second World War, when a campaign promoting carrots to help see in the dark was used to mask the development of radar), Anne took us back to a time when this root vegetable wasn't just the

orange colour we see today, but also yellow and purple.

With examples, most from 16th and 17th century Spanish and Netherlandish art, she examined a genre of paintings which in their time conveyed a comforting sense for the ruling elite that they lived in a harmonious world, a land of plenty, where people lived their lives in happiness. The recently conserved and uncovered face of the woman in the painting *The Vegetable Seller* at Audley End would seem to indicate otherwise.

The November lecture was my last one as Lectures Secretary. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in this role, and would like to thank all my Committee colleagues over the years for their support, especially my predecessor Barbara Norris.

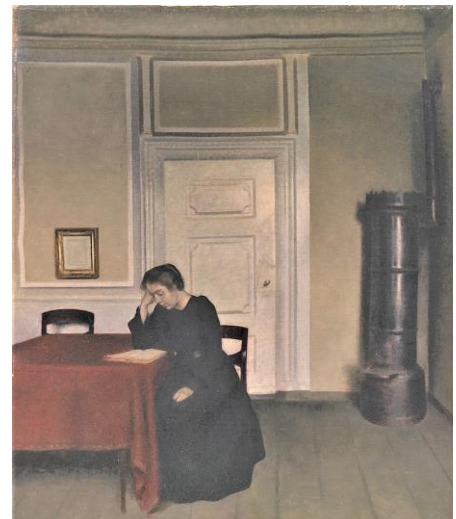
I wish my successor, Rowena, all the best for the future.



*Jane Wilcock,  
emeritus Lectures Secretary!*

**New Year** and a fantastic new start to the Arts Society year 2024! Dr Kathy McLauchlan treated us to a most fascinating lecture on a lesser-known Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916) who bucked the trend of the time for vibrant colours and opulent interiors and developed his own style of portraying the interior space in an almost monochrome palette.

Dr McLauchlan's lecture "**Hammershøi and the Life of Interiors**" illustrated the early influence of the young artist and his discovery of the Flemish masters such as Vermeer as well as the contemporary artists across Europe. The artistic style of Hammershøi is certainly unique which at times had been described as "odd"!



However, looking back now, we can only recall the haunting beauty and mesmerising impact on our senses; the evocative empty spaces, often with a single female figure, shaped only by subtle lines embedded in light and shadows. It is the very abstract spaces that invite us to reflect and meditate ... that surely is where Hammershøi has triumphed!



Then **St Valentine's Day** came and we were being dazzled by the dapper looks through the centuries of menswear fashion from dandies to teddy boys! Russell Nash's lecture "**The Men who Made Menswear**" took us on a tour of Savile Row and Jermyn Street where many of the talented tailors, cutters, and hat makers of London had established themselves since the Regency period.

Names such as Henry Poole, Anderson & Sheppard, Thomas Burberry and Hardie Amies designed and created bespoke garments for kings, princes, notably the Duke of Windsor, politicians and celebrities of the day. We also learnt about the influential designers such as Montague Burton, Tommy Nutter, Cecil Gee and John Stephens ('King of Carnaby Street') who contributed massively to the cultural shift in the post-war period, and into the 1960s, of the new youth culture who were eager for self-expression and identity. Finally, we know all about bespoke and tailor-made! Suit you Sir!

**March** was all about compasses! In this fascinating lecture Richard Whincop, using a pair of digital compasses, skillfully and meticulously, charted and illustrated the seamless integration between **art and architecture** in the High Renaissance period. This 'mutual enrichment' might even be described as a match made in heaven, as the early Renaissance painters working with the architects and stone masons, used the common tools of compass and set square to create art that reflected the divine order of the cosmos. Many Renaissance artists including Giotto, Brunelleschi, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo all worked in this way.



Then, Richard put forward the case that these 'life partners' became estranged bedfellows around the 19th Century with the demise of the guilds and the rise of the bourgeoisie and art academies across Europe. Art became a commodity, promoted through the art dealers, art exhibitions and private commissions.

Modernism of the 20th century with its 'clutter free' interiors only deepened the schism, and the estrangement of art and architecture seemed complete. But here Richard offers some optimism for reconciliation and we were somewhat reassured that the estrangement was only a trial separation!

**In April**, we will be exploring art and architecture of an ancient kind - **Persepolis of the Persian Empire!** See you soon!



*Rowena Kerr*  
*Lectures*

## Membership

Our membership is steady and growing. It is still below our record figure of 500, and we would love to reach this number once again. Membership is currently 412.

Last October and November, we offered complimentary tickets to encourage new people to join. Unfortunately, it did not result in attracting new members, so we are not planning to repeat it in the near future.

However, if you have any suggestions on how we can reach out to new members we would love to hear from you. You can send any thoughts to [horsham@theartssociety.org](mailto:horsham@theartssociety.org) or come and chat with any committee member in the Capitol foyer on lecture day.

Lastly, keep an eye out for membership renewal information, which will be distributed in June. Membership renewal will also be on our website <https://theartssociety.org/horsham>



*Pat Trout,*  
*Membership*

## Visits

**2024 started off with a very enjoyable visit to Chichester** – despite the ghastly weather and initial concerns about all the roadworks and traffic upheaval in Horsham! Our destination was Pallant House and the *John Craxton: A Modern Odyssey* exhibition. Most of our group were not familiar with this rebellious painter, graphic artist and theatre designer, who fled the grey, dreary confines of 1940s England to begin a hedonistic love affair with Greece that would colour his life's work.

Before viewing the artworks, we had an excellent lecture by Liz Walker, who is very knowledgeable, engaging and amusing. After lunch, there was time to revisit the gallery and view Craxton's monumental *Landscape with Elements* tapestry in the Cathedral. Then, after tea and coffee, we set off for the trip home through stunning – but very waterlogged – Sussex landscapes. As we approached Billingshurst, I doubt if I was the only one yearning for Cretan sun and bright blue skies!

**Sussex, as we know, is full of hidden treasures**, and we hope to unveil a few on our next trip on 25 April. Our first stop is the English Martyrs Catholic Church in Goring-by-Sea. This 1970s, spireless, red-brick building draws thousands of visitors a year from around the world thanks to a stunning reproduction of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling. Who knew?

It was painted about 40 years ago by Gary Bevan, a church parishioner who was inspired by a pilgrimage to Rome in 1987 to undertake this task, despite having no formal training as an artist. Working mainly at night, it took him over five years to complete this labour of love. Goring has never looked back.



*"When it's spring again, come see again...  
tulips from Ar-un-del" ♪♪♪*

From there we will carry on to Arundel Castle to visit the annual Tulip Festival, which is regarded as one of the top such displays in Europe. (En route, we will sing the Sussex version of Max Bygraves' famous number – be warned!). Our visit includes a self-guided tour of the Castle plus a tour of the award-winning formal gardens. We are praying for good weather! The response to this visit was overwhelming. Several members admitted they had never been inside the castle, despite having lived in



Horsham for years. Sometimes the greatest treasures are to be found on one's own doorstep!

**On 23 May we are heading to Tate Modern** to see one of the most eagerly awaited exhibitions of the year: *Expressionists: Kandinsky, Münter and the Blue Rider*. This landmark show tells the story of a diverse group of avant-garde artists who came together in Germany in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to experiment with form, colour, sound and performance. Though only short lived, the pioneering Blue Rider (Der Blaue Reiter) movement left a lasting legacy and influenced abstract and modernist art in Europe and beyond for generations to come.



*Franz Marc Tiger (detail) 1912*

Our Tate “package” includes an introductory talk on German Expressionism and a buffet lunch before we enter the exhibition. The show features more than 130 works that are being brought together in the UK for the first time in 80 years. As many of the artists are not so widely known here, this promises to be another fascinating voyage of discovery!

**Plans for our June visit** are advancing and details will be announced shortly.

**Options for the new season** starting in September include a guided tour of street graffiti in London's East End to tie in with our October lecture on Banksy. We are also considering a visit to the Palace of Westminster, but with a general election looming on the horizon, we may postpone this. Although all attempts to find out when Glyndebourne will resume its popular behind-the-scenes tours have been unsuccessful, we remain hopeful. There is no shortage of fascinating places to visit and we look forward to presenting an interesting programme.



*Vivien Smith  
Visits*

## Shelley Memorial Project



The Arts Society Horsham is delighted to support [The Shelley Memorial Project](#), and we look forward to seeing a public artwork in the Park, to commemorate Horsham's very own Percy Bysshe Shelley. It will be a welcome addition to the town, and put Horsham firmly on the heritage map.

We demonstrated our support to the Project last year with a funding contribution, which we obtained from Arts Society HQ funds. Then, at our March lecture this year, we held a private viewing of the four scale models, or maquettes, for members to choose their favourite in order of preference. There was much interest and discussion! Afterwards, the maquettes were returned to Horsham Museum for the remainder of the public consultation, which ended on 6 April.

On 16 April the Selection Panel, consisting of members of the Shelley Memorial Project and representatives from Horsham District Council, selects the chosen artist from the four finalists, guided by the public consultation, including Arts Society members!

## Directory Day



**What is Directory Day?** It's an annual event at Westminster Central Hall, hosted by the Arts Society HQ, and committee members from all over the country are invited. It's when the Lecture Secretaries choose the speakers who will present at the monthly lectures in the coming year. On the day, 150 lecturers each give a 2 minute presentation, from which 400 delegates get to decide which ones to put on the shortlist for their local society. Afterwards, the lecturers are available at 'market stalls' for more detailed chats from interested parties.

You can imagine it's a mammoth task, but thanks to Jane, our outgoing Lectures Secretary, Horsham is well ahead, with bookings made already for all of 2025. So when Ann and Rowena went to this year's Directory Day in March, they were planning for 2026. It was Rowena's time at the event, and here's what she had to say afterwards:

*“Our first taste of the Directory Day did not disappoint! It was an immersive “sweet shop” experience, giving us a sugar rush that lasted the whole day! Westminster Hall is a magnificent setting! The presentations were so well organised and well paced that we were not overwhelmed with information. It was great to meet the different lecturers at the ‘market stalls’, some already known to us and new ones of course. A brilliant day all in all and we came away with a big bag of “pick ’n mix” to savour! “*



Stephen Sandham  
Publicity

## More Committee Members

Here’s Mandy, our newest recruit, and Greg our amazing webmaster.



Mandy van Reysen  
Arts Volunteering



Greg Hobbs  
Webmaster & IT

