

SPECIAL INTEREST DAY

Wednesday 21st October 2026 Tessa Boase
10.30 for 11am until 3.15pm

THE HOUSEKEEPER'S TALE: THE WOMEN WHO REALLY RAN THE ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE

Working as a housekeeper was one of the most prestigious jobs a 19th and early 20th century woman could want – and also one of the toughest. A far cry from the Downton Abbey fiction, the real life housekeeper was up against capricious mistresses, low pay, no job security and gruelling physical labour. Until now, her story has never been told. Delving into secret diaries, unpublished letters and the neglected service archives of our stately homes, Tessa tells the extraordinary stories behind some of Britain's most prominent households.

TOURS AND OUTINGS

2026/27 Outings

We have yet to plan our outings for the coming season but will let members know when plans are in place.

2026/27 Tour

8 Days (7 Nights)

2nd to 9th October 2026

THE ART, HISTORY AND CULTURE OF TUSCANY AND UMBRIA

Flying from Manchester, we will stay in 4* hotels in the spa town of Montecatini Terme (4 nights) and Spoleto (3 nights), with breakfast and dinner included every day. This wonderful, fully guided tour encompasses some of the highpoints of Italian art and architecture and will include visits to Florence, Siena, Orvieto and Perugia.

Further information from the Chair, Maximilian Clay on 0777 595 651 or Freda Markham on 07702 184495.

Payments can be made at the time of booking by:
Bank Transfer [BACS] – Sort Code 55-61-31
A/C No: 00337889 The Arts Society Tarporley
or Contactless Card Payment at Lectures

Refunds will be given only if the place can be filled from a waiting list.

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BILL POWELL

TAST cannot be held responsible for any personal accident, loss, damage or theft of Members' personal property. Members are covered against proven liability to Third Parties. TAST reserves the right to engage an alternative speaker if the speaker listed in the Programme is unable to attend for any reason.

MEMBER SOCIETY OF THE ARTS SOCIETY

We inspire
We do
We give



2026 / 2027

THE ARTS SOCIETY
TARPORLEY

Hon. President - The Viscountess Ashbrook

Tarporley Community Centre, CW6 0AY

www.tastarporley.uk

www.theartssociety.org

Lectures start at 1.20pm. Coffee from 12.30am.

10th September 2026

Andrew Prince

A PORTRAIT OF JEWELS: FOLLOWING MISSING TREASURES THROUGH CANVAS

Seeing all the Tudor, Stuart and Hanoverian monarchs at the National Portrait Gallery, prompted the question “where have all the wonderful jewels gone?”. This talk traces jewels such as ropes of glowing pearls that belonged to Catherine de Medici, through to Elizabeth II, and a spectacular diamond that belonged to King James I (VI), worn by Marie Antoinette, which was stolen during the French Revolution but turned up in a tiara worn by an MP. Jewel hunting has never been more fascinating!

8th October 2026

Matthew Wilson

TINKER, TAILOR, ARTIST, SPY: SIR PETER PAUL RUBENS

Highly esteemed by the mightiest kings and queens of the age, Rubens’ career as an artist is better known than that of diplomat and informal spy. Acting on behalf of the Governors of the Spanish Netherlands, Rubens met Europe’s most significant power brokers with the aim of bringing peace to his native Flanders and to Europe as a whole, during the 30 Years War. Rubens is unique in the history of art as a painter who not only depicted the great events of his age but helped to shape them.

Christmas Lunch Tickets will be available at the October lecture.

12th November 2026

Julian Richards

PASSIONATE POTTERS - FROM DE MORGAN TO LEACH

The first of our ‘passionate potters’, William de Morgan, was a friend of Morris who rediscovered the secrets of Near Eastern lustre glazes. In contrast, the eccentric and argumentative Martin Brothers created a range of elaborate salt glazed pots unparalleled in their imaginative breadth. Sir Edmund Elton, the ‘potter baronet’, made pots which combine startling glazes with exotic forms.

And finally, Bernard Leach, the father of English studio pottery, not only married the arts of Japan and England but created a legacy that is still alive today.

10th December 2026 (at 11.30am)

Susie Harries

THE ART OF THE JOKE

Artists have always used jokes to make serious statements - about themselves, the world, and the nature of art. This lecture looks at artists’ jokes from medieval monks’ marginalia to Banksy turning supermarket walls into social satire. When Van Gogh attacked formal art education and Salvador Dali got at Picasso, they did it in paint. Trompe l’oeil, parody, visual puns, the moustache on the Mona Lisa - all in fun, all deadly serious: artists’ jokes that tell you a lot once you know.

NB Coffee from 11am, Christmas Lunch at 1pm

(booked members only). If you wish to attend only the lecture: please phone or email the Chair (see overleaf).

14th January 2027

Tom Flynn

A SHORT HISTORY OF ART THEFT

Are stolen works really stashed in some millionaire’s mountain hideaway, or is the story more tawdry and mundane? What proportion of stolen works of art are recovered? Are museums improving their security to tackle art thefts? Are we beginning to see the end of highprofile museum heists? This talk draws on thirty years of writing, reporting and lecturing on art theft, its perpetrators and their motivations, and throws light into the darkest recesses of international crime syndicates.

11th February 2027

Tim Schroder

THOMAS CROMWELL, THE GOLDSMITHS’ CO AND THE MINT

This lecture looks at the king and his world through the lens of the institutions concerned with gold and silver, the Mint, the jewel house and the Goldsmiths’ Company. At the heart of all this sat Thomas Cromwell, who we all now know through Hilary Mantel’s novels, but who is shown in a rather different light in this lecture. February is the Donation Lecture, support

February is the Donation Lecture, supporting our Young Arts Projects

GUESTS

Please book your Guests with Ruth Ford on
Tel: 01606872689 / 07871 769432 or email:
guests@tastarporley.uk
Guest fee is £10.00 on the day, by cash or card

11th March 2027

Stephen Kershaw

GALLA PLACIDIA: THE EMPRESS AND THE FALL OF ROME

This lecture traces the fall of the Roman Empire through its art and one of its heroines. At the centre of a perfect storm of Goths, Vandals, Huns and contesting Romans, stood an orphan girl of ‘nobility, beauty and chaste purity’, who became one of the world’s most powerful women. Not only did she leave her mark on the history of Rome, but she was also the driving force behind some of its most impressive art and architecture.

8th April 2027

Benedict Morrison

CINEMA FROM THE RUBBLE: THE POST-WAR POLITICS OF EALING STUDIOS

Ealing films have a reputation for cosiness, whimsicality, and an ever so gentle subversiveness. We will revisit them in the light of post-war European New Waves, such as the masterpieces of Italian neo-realism. Set amongst the ruins, Ealing films documented lives in bombed cities. Viewed as comedies of rubble, they take on a more serious set of meanings than their whimsical reputation suggests.

13th May 2027

Jacqui Ansell

FIT FOR A KING: VAN DYCK AT THE COURT OF CHARLES I

Had Van Dyck not arrived at the Stuart Court the stiff body language of Jacobean portraiture may never have been enlivened by Renaissance values. We explore the way in which Van Dyck’s male sitters exude elegance and why, with his depiction of sumptuous satins and shimmering silks, he was hailed as ‘the first that ‘ere put ‘ladies’ dress into a careless romance’.

10th June 2027

Connie Gray

THE GOLDEN AGE OF FASHION ILLUSTRATION

It was not until the early 20th century that fashion illustration became a defined artistic medium with its own visual language. This lecture looks at the pioneering group of artists, largely forgotten today, and the period when art and fashion merged to produce spellbinding artistic renditions that combined visual storytelling with sublime draftsmanship, elegance and style.

**Followed by The Annual General Meeting.
Tea and cakes will be served after the AGM.**