

The Arts Society Farnham Newsletter 2022-2023



From our Chair - Shi Hutchinson

Dear Members

The 2022/2023 year of The Arts Society in Farnham, has been active again, and this is my chance to thank our committee and volunteers for all the work they do, they all have their own responsibilities, and yet always happy to help each other if necessary.

Our Tours organised by **Joanne Watson**, travelled to Northern France and have recently returned from Malaga. Visits organised to Lullingstone Castle and to Japan House and The Design Museum by **Lesley Gerhold**, plus our Study Morning in September 2022 on 1000 years of British Theatre by Andrew Davies organised by **Rosie Rose**. All successful and enthusiastically received.

Our Treasurer, Sarah Ann Hallet who previously had been the Study Secretary having moved with her husband permanently to Somerset kindly carried on during the pandemic and has now handed her role over to **Glennis Turner**, who we are very pleased to welcome.

The Programme Secretary **Valerie Nourse**, organised the most varied and exciting year of lectures, and has another full year booked with so much to look forward to.



Susan Allison, who organises our marketing and publicity, has designed the most eye catching posters, and her leaflets with all our forthcoming lectures have attracted many guests and new members which have boosted our membership numbers. I would like to add even when Susan was on holiday visiting her daughter in Australia, she joined us for our committee meetings on Zoom, and carried on with her work on line, morning our time, evening with her, so a little glass of wine by her side, made us all smile with a little wistfulness.

Cathy Tole, our Membership Secretary, most of you know either from the desk as you enter the great hall on Lecture days, also helping many members with their standing orders working long hours at home. Our Social occasions, the new members coffee morning, our popular Christmas lunch at Waverley Abbey, the Christmas drinks in the cellar bar after the December lecture, another popular event and so many compliments on the mince pies last year, these alone



need a mention, and this June, afternoon tea and a talk on Trees, again at the Abbey organised by **Margaret Popovic** and a chance to see the acclaimed Yew tree.



The lectures are professionally presented, the lecturers are so appreciative of our technical team, **Martin Gerhold** the most expert problem solver, even when I phoned him on holiday! **Clive Vinall** and **Tim Baty**, sound and lighting always perfect, they quietly attach the microphones to the lecturer and myself always with discretion even if the sound box in a pocket has occasionally been sat on.

The important welcoming volunteers, who scan your membership cards which tell us how many are in the hall during lectures affectionately called the clickers. The lecture recorders their synopsis which goes on our website and also forwarded to the Farnham Herald.



Our Secretary **Helen White**, keeping us all in check, coming with me to meetings in the Maltings, and all the contracts filed and renewed, helping when we need to change dates at short notice, is always so helpful.

I would like to say we have had the most wonderful support and help from our **President**

Rt. Rev. Chris Herbert, calm practical help with a good sense of humour makes an easy day.

Our volunteer groups, the Young Arts, carry on with their important work with the schools, a disappointment when the train station at Farnham was taken over by the Guildford station and they employed a new manager who closed our waiting room for decoration, therefore our paintings could not be exhibited as planned but **Celia Andrew** has worked relentlessly and finally in early June the paintings went up on display. As you know Farnham was the first Arts Society in the country to use railway waiting rooms working with local schools to exhibit paintings, after which many other Art Societies all over the country have followed suit.

The Church recorders whose work previously on St Mark's, has been given a Grade II listed status by English Heritage. They are almost finished with their work at St John's, Hale uncovering stories behind items in the church. Our Heritage group are working on a new project at the Prince Consort Library in Aldershot.

As you see we have so many volunteers, working hard, I would very much like to thank also all our members for their loyalty and interest.

Shi Hutchinson



From our President – The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Herbert

After a recent lecture at our Arts Society meeting, I spoke to the presenter. I had thoroughly enjoyed the lecture and simply wanted to offer him my thanks. I did not know him. He was a complete stranger to me. But in our brief conversation it turned out that we had been to the same school, albeit I had been there thirty years earlier than him. Then we discovered that we had several arts-related friends in common. It even transpired that the churchwarden of his village church was someone whose baby daughters I had baptised fifty years ago.

But that is one of the hidden treasures of being a member of our Arts Society. It provides an opportunity to make new friends and to meet old acquaintances, to share conversations and, of course, to praise or (dare I say it?) express opinions about the lectures...

Of course, friendships old and new are one of the by-products of our Society. At the heart of the annual programme, the visits, the tours, Young Arts, and the heritage and recording groups, is the desire to develop our understanding of art in all its myriad varieties. The Society provides a place where eyes are opened, horizons extended, and enjoyment experienced.

None of this would happen, of course, were it not for the members of the Committee led with such delightful enthusiasm, wit, and grace by our Chairman, Shi Hutchinson. She and her team work hard behind the scenes to ensure that our Society flourishes. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

Lectures - Valerie Nourse



This year's lectures have varied in content and approach. Several focussed on the visual arts and illustrated how style is a reflection of its time. Julia Musgrave showcased the American James Whistler (1834-1903), who lived in Europe most of his life and believed in simply art for art's sake, including

etching, painting and even interior design.

In the 16th century Renaissance Low Countries, Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted scenes of seasonal rural life. His message, explained Gavin Plumley was that man is oblivious to the world around him and seemingly unable to change the ultimate outcome.



In further interest, Julian Halsby spoke about the revolutionary way the Impressionist painters depicted snow, with colour

and tonal variations for depth, light and shadow. Diverse content came in the shape of Sarah Lenton's talk on the unique historical evolution of the thriving opera traditions in England. Meanwhile Islamic art, described as calligraphic, geometric, vegetal and figurative, was discussed by Eamonn Gearon with a beautifully illustrated timeline.

Several lectures this year illustrated our perennial love of story-telling, both direct and metaphorical. Ian Swankie talked about the busy world of Grayson Perry, and his alter ego Claire. In ceramics, complex tapestries, woodcuts, rugs and interior design, his work always has a story to tell and is a social commentary of our times.

The Bayeux Tapestry illustrated the narrative of the Norman Conquest and was also a not-so-subtle propaganda piece. Timothy Wilcox suggested that the Tapestry was made in Canterbury as it contains images strikingly similar to those in one of the oldest books to survive in Britain - *An Illustrated Gospel* - brought to Canterbury in 597 by St. Augustine. This very book was taken to Westminster Abbey for the coronation of King Charles III.

Mary Branson created New Dawn, A Memorial for Women's Suffrage in the Houses of Parliament. Her brief was to create a public work in St Stephen's Hall to last 400 years. The eventual



installation comprise 168 hand blown glass disks mounted on a portcullis structure, over 6 meters high and lit from behind in a 12½ hour cycle linked to the tide of the Thames. When Queen Elizabeth II lay in state in Westminster Hall, only one disk at low tide was illuminated and this will now be the custom in future.

The written word was explored by Richard Burnip who spoke about the end of the 19th century, when stories were serialised in magazines, such as *The Strand*. Doyle's Sherlock Holmes was incredibly popular, but there were

many other authors striving to gain a significant readership. One final story, about the extremely affluent and obsessive collector William Randolph Hearst was presented by Mark Meredith. Hearst revolutionised the face of journalism, but died in debt, with Orson Welles satirizing him as Citizen Kane.

Tours – Joanne Watson



This season members visited both Northern France and Southern Spain. French chateaux were complemented by a day in Paris and a visit to the studio of Rosa Bonheur. Our Spanish tour based in Malaga featured its expanding museum collection and included a trip to Cordoba and its amazing Mosque/Cathedral.

Our next tour is in September to the Cotswolds and a year later to Glasgow.



*Cordoba
Mosque/
Cathedral*

Visits – Lesley Gerhold



In September we did our first visit for a long time to Lullingstone Castle and World Garden. It was a total delight, particularly as the owner Sara Hart Dyke chatted to us. The guided tour of the house was interesting and informative. We had a lovely lunch in the garden and then had a guided tour by Tom Hart Dyke of his World Garden. He was such an inspiring man who dreamt up the idea of the World Garden when he was kidnapped in Afghanistan.

In May 33 of us visited Japan House and The Design museum in London. Japanese tea and a private tour of the House learning about silk making and braiding followed by a visit to the Ai WeiWei exhibition Making Sense at The Design Museum. His extraordinary artwork always with a deep message concerning the world and making sense of humanity and its destruction. This Han Dynasty urn showing ancient craftsmanship and the other, a symbol of modern day global consumerism.

Two more visits are planned, 24th October, Ashmolean Exhibition and a River Cruise June 2024 date tbc.



Study Mornings - Rosie Rose

It was with great pleasure that some 56 members attended this year's Study Morning and welcomed our guest speaker, Andrew Davies. A renowned London Blue badge guide and accomplished speaker at many Arts Societies.



Andrew presented to us on a “1,000 years of the British Theatre – from Shakespeare to the Royal Shakespeare Company”. What a roller coaster of a journey we were taken on with him.

To share but a few highlights through the centuries, Andrew started with the sixth century when the Barbarians closed the Roman circuses and theatres. He moved on through the centuries to the birth of Shakespeare in 1564 and the Globe theatre in 1599.

As we moved along the timeline to nineteenth-century, London had quadrupled in size, and so more people meant more places of entertainment. Theatres, music halls and working-class playhouses (called ‘penny gaffs’) mushroomed. Shaftesbury Avenue, built in the late 19th century, generally considered part of London's West End theatre district, saw many theatres we know today being built.

The Royal Opera House however, constructed earlier in 1732, was known originally as the Theatre Royal. However, disastrous fires left only the façade, foyer and auditorium from 1868. Almost every other element now dates from the extensive reconstruction of the ROH in the 1990s.

This short snapshot of the morning does not even begin to convey the wide-ranging history, insight and detail of our amazing British Theatre.

Two more study mornings are planned for 23-24

Social Activities – Margaret Popovic

There was a very successful New Members meeting held in the Maltings coffee shop in October 2022.

Members again celebrated the Christmas season at Waverley Abbey and were greeted with



mulled wine followed by an illustrated talk on Empress Eugenie, by Jo Watson.

Christmas drinks in the Cellar bar of the Maltings followed the final lecture of the year.

In June of this year, we visited Waverley Abbey, this time for a lecture on the trees of Farnham, with reference to the ancient Waverley Yew, the UK tree of the year. Afterwards a cream tea was served, and members were able to walk in the grounds to see the now famous yew.



Church Recorders Margaret Popovic and Alison Boydell

During 2021-2022 the Church Recorders moved to St John the Evangelist, Hale, one of over 200 churches built in the Diocese of Winchester whilst Bishop Sumner was Bishop from 1827 – 1869.

This year we have continued with our recording and are approaching completion. Although we are still without a textiles expert we are making good progress, thanks to the sterling efforts of new members Chris Clisby and Corinna Ellis whom we welcomed to our group during the year. We are always looking to recruit new members.

As well as recording in the church we have been actively researching the items that we have found. Members of the group have visited the Farnham Local Studies Library, Surrey History Centre and London Metropolitan Archives, as well as corresponding with various expert organisations. Despite all our efforts and the help of the very knowledgeable and helpful churchwarden, there are still some unsolved mysteries – for example who is SF (or FS) to whom the stained glass window depicting St John was dedicated in 1979? If you happen to know, please tell us!

Many of the items in the church have symbolism relating to the patron saints of the two churches of the original parish of Hale: St John (the eagle) and St Mark (the lion), known to the parishioners as ‘the bird and the cat’.



*Stained glass window
by John Blyth 1979*

*Parish banner made by
Pamela Loweth to
commemorate the 150th
anniversary of St John's in
1994*



Arts Volunteering – Celia Andrew, Ann Foster and committee



We have had an anxious time this spring, finding the station waiting room under a complete refit so we couldn't hang our new art exhibition. As of June we finally have the exhibition up after a lot of pleading in letters and emails with the overall manager of South West Trains. Some of the artwork has had to be hung in the down side waiting room over the other side of the track.



Ann Foster instigated a very successful campaign with some of the younger school children in Farnham, encouraging us all to reduce the use of plastic. This took the form of posters which we displayed in shop windows and other venues around the town and was an amalgamation with Farnham Rotary Club. Ann Foster is leaving her role as Secretary to the Young Arts Committee and is now working as a Heritage volunteer. We would like to thank her very much for her contribution.

Heritage Volunteers

Ann Foster, Joanne Watson, Hazel Brand, Desmond Hutchinson

The heritage group embarked on a new project helping with book conservation at the Prince Consort Military Library in Aldershot. A team from Farnham and Camberley have been taught how to carry out minor repairs to some of 70000 books in their collection, many dating back to the early 19th century.



Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

The Maltings, Farnham have implemented a new Health and Safety Policy to ensure the safety of all people visiting The Maltings. If you have any type of disability that might require special assistance if you needed to evacuate the building urgently, such as a fire alarm, you must notify reception on arrival that you will need assistance if such an emergency exit was required.

Please let us know if you change your contact details, including email address. Email us at: memberstasfarnham@gmail.com

Our website:

www.theartsocietyfarnham.org.uk

**Edited by Sue Allison – Press and Publicity –
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