

# The Arts Society Farnham Newsletter 2023-2024

## From our Chair - Shi Hutchinson



Another year of the Arts Society in Farnham, a positive year, many thanks to you for your support and loyalty. So many societies have had to close, we are building up the membership numbers again, and more guests than we have ever had, many becoming members. The New Members welcome coffee morning is run by Sara Bennett, Social Secretary, who organises all our functions so successfully that she even has Christmas lunch 2024 sorted already.

Apart from our main committee, we have a number of other groups: Young Arts are running an exhibition from local schools at Farnham Station, and a photographic

competition was held in the library; the Heritage group are working in the Prince Consort Library; and Church Recorders are making excellent progress in St. John's, Churt.

Valerie Nourse, our Programme Secretary has researched many wonderfully varied lectures this year, and I have seen from your emails and talking to you how you have enjoyed them. A wee story: when Janet Gough gave her lecture on Cathedrals, she looked wonderful, wearing a slim black outfit with high-heel red shoes. I could see poor Tim Baty had no idea where the box for the microphone could be placed, so I quickly asked if any of the committee were wearing a belt? Valerie, slightly concerned, offered her belt, and after a warning not to stand up too quickly, she saved the day.

The photograph above by Susan Allison, our Marketing and Publicity Secretary, shows our Chief Executive Florian Schweizer. Valerie is on stage, talking to Irving Finkel the lecturer, and sitting at the tables you see Lesley Gerhold, our Visits Secretary and Jill Sturgess, our Study Secretary, both taking bookings for future events.

Tours, led by Joanne Watson, visited Hereford and the Cotswolds, and are travelling to Glasgow, Lisbon and Constable country next season. Always well researched, Joanne's tours are very popular.

Martin Gerhold, who organises the visual technical details, and Clive Vinall and Tim Baty (sound and lights) have always impressed me, being so calm when sorting out problems - certainly they have impressed the lecturers.

Glennis Turner has taken over as Treasurer, and has been carefully monitoring price increases. We shall not be putting up the fees for the 2024/2025 season, however as the Maltings have increased their fees, we shall have to increase ours for the 2025/2026 season.

Now that we have use of all the space as you come down the stairs, Susan's brochures and posters have space to be seen - next season's brochure is beautiful, with contributions from a local artist. I feel this space offers a friendlier welcome as Cathy (Membership) is there along with Helen White, our Secretary. As you walk into the great hall you are greeted by Lynda and Genny, who click you in so we know how many have attended.

I would like to say how very much I have enjoyed being part of this committee, first as Programme Secretary for some years, then for the last three years as Chair. The first lecture I introduced in September 2021 was our first live one since lock down. Everyone was a little nervous, but happy to be back again.

Joanne had been unable to do a usual hand over during the year, and she was so helpful. Another wonderful source of help was Chris Herbert our President, always encouraging and supportive. I really do thank the committee for their hard work and sense of humour, which is so often required. I am so very pleased that Cathy Tole, whom many of you know well, is taking over as Chair in September, after being voted in at the AGM, and Hazel Brand will take over as Membership Secretary.



### From our President – The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Herbert



I continue to consider it to be a great privilege to be the President of the Society and want to take this opportunity to thank the committee for all their hard and devoted work during the past year. There are others who also need to be thanked, not least the technicians, without whose self-effacing efficiency our Society could not function. But most of all, I want to thank Shi Hutchinson for all that she has done during her time as Chairman.

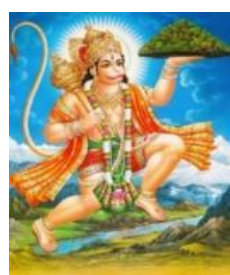
She has brought to the role her delightful sense of humour, a kind and shrewd thoughtfulness, and a subtly mischievous joy. In addition, her careful preparation before each meeting has been exemplary. Those of us who speak in public know how much time has to be spent in preparation, so that when the stage lights come on, the events we are introducing can move forward with smooth and unruffled purposefulness. Shi has spent ages preparing the introductions to our speakers but then has delivered her speeches with such disarming simplicity that they might give the impression of spontaneity. Not so: preparation has been all. So, from every one of us, Shi, thank you...thank you for your gentle and firm leadership; thank you and your committee for enabling such a varied range of speakers and activities to be brought before our eyes. The richness of the programme, the visits, and the extra-mural activities, have all flourished under your gaze...and we are all deeply indebted to you.

### Tours – Joanne Watson



This season's tour took us to the Cotswolds, with a trip to Blenheim Palace en route and a hidden gem of Chavenage on the way back. Based at a delightful country hotel, the weather if anything was too hot as we took in the sights of Hereford and the Mappa Mundi in the Cathedral, Cheltenham, Sudeley Castle and Worcester. The latter included a fascinating talk and tour of the Royal Worcester Porcelain museum followed by an impromptu visit to Elgar's birthplace at Broadheath. We're off to Glasgow in September, and next year have trips to Lisbon in April and

Constable country in September. Do join us. *Photos are Edward Elgar (and my handbag!) at Broadheath and the Mappa Mundi at Hereford*



### Lectures – Valerie Nourse

Sri Lanka means *resplendent island* and in **Georgina Bexon's** talk, Land of the Monkey God, she explained how the country's ancient cities, architecture, statues, art and religion are completely intertwined. The Muddy Archaeologist, **Gillian Hovell** discussed the ways that the Roman Saturnalia celebrations have influenced Christmas traditions to the present day.



**Grant Ford** spoke about the art market and some of the people he has represented. He gave an insight into the world of art, what is important in the market and how pictures change hands. **Patrick Craig**, vicar choral at St Paul's Cathedral, spoke with great clarity and passion about Bach and Handel, born just one month apart in 1685. He showcased their timeless music from many different arenas, including one piece which Patrick sang himself - a wonderful morning.



Through the striking original photographs from Shackleton's Endurance Expedition **Mark Cottle** gave a detailed and moving insight into the courage and fortitude of the men on the expedition. **Irving Finkel** described the Game of Ur played by Sumerian royalty in 2600BC in southern Iraq. He discovered a Mesopotamian cuneiform tablet in the British Museum that had been excavated at the site of the city of Ur in the 1920's. After following trails back into truly distant times, Irving deciphered the rules and found evidence of its widespread use for thousands of years.



**Michael Howard** talked about social commentary in the paintings of Walter Sickert and used wide ranging references to discuss Sickert in a broader context, including the unlikely theory that he was in fact Jack the Ripper. **Arantxa Sardina** spoke about Joaquin Sorolla, the master of light, who captured the sparkling beaches and energy of Spanish life so beautifully.



Fascinating treasures found in England's 42 Cathedrals were highlighted by **Janet Gough**, from the Lichfield Angel c800 to the Redemption windows 2016, Leicester Cathedral. The versatility of stained glass was showcased by **Susie Harries**, with an array of interesting and beautiful examples. To the right is Burne-Jones' scene of the death of Saint Frideswyde, in Oxford's Christ Church Cathedral, 1858.



## Visits – Lesley Gerhold

We visited Oxford and The Ashmolean Museum in October, with a guided tour which was very informative. We had tickets to Colour Revolution - Victorian Art, Fashion and Design, and then after lunch were free to explore Oxford.

Our second trip was to The Great Stink in May this year. I personally thought this was the best trip we have done. We had an excellent guide taking us to coffee and then to our boat. The boat trip up to Greenwich was also very interesting and we all ate our lunch whilst we travelled along the Thames. After the trip we picked up our coach and were taken to Crossness to visit Bazalgette's Cathedral of Sewage. This was truly a Cathedral and we were all very pleased that the volunteers are restoring it so beautifully. The painting of all the iron work was so bright - we don't think we shall be visiting any of our modern sewage works in 100 years' time.

## Church Recorders - Alison Boydell and Margaret Popovic

Farnham Church Recorders are very grateful for the continued support that we receive from TASF committee and are delighted to report that we are stronger and more successful this year.

We delivered the St John's Upper Hale Record in September and began recording St John's Church. We now meet fortnightly and are making excellent progress. There is much of interest in this small village church. For further details please see TASF Website. (details below)

## Arts Volunteering – Young Art - Celia Andrew and Committee

It's been another busy time for Arts Volunteering. Last October we ran a calligraphy workshop with students from Weydon School at the Mubarak Mosque in Tilford, under the auspices and generosity of Razwan Baig. This was hugely successful and we hope to do it again. We exhibited students' work at the Unseen Artists Exhibition in the Long Kiln Gallery of the Maltings in



March. In May we put up another Schools Art Exhibition in Farnham Station waiting rooms. Later in May our local schools photography exhibition opened in Farnham Library for two weeks. This was for Key Stage 2 and 3 students with the theme of spring. We had a great number of fantastic entries and two judges made the selection for prizes on 8<sup>th</sup> June.

### Study Mornings – Rosie Rose

I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as Study Morning Secretary (2021-2024). Thank you to all those members who have attended and for your generous support; I hope you have enjoyed these Study Mornings as much as I have in selecting and organising them.

**World Class Art at the Tate, by Ian Swankie** Over the course of two one-hour lectures we were taken on an armchair tour of the wonderful art collections at the Tate museums. As always Ian's delightful style, humour and anecdotal commentary made for an extremely interesting morning covering the art in Tate Britain, Tate Modern, and in St Ives and Liverpool.

An absorbing, fact-filled and entertaining morning, ensuring that a visit to any of the Tates should be on everyone's bucket list!

**King and Collector, by Siobhan Clarke** Siobhan, a well-known author, lecturer and historian, invited us into the worlds of Henry VIII (r.1509-1547) and Charles I (r.1625-1649), and the start of the Royal Collection. In full circle, it is now King Charles III who takes the reins as the current custodian of the Royal Collection, driven with an equal passion for art. A tour of the Banqueting House, Whitehall Palace, is yet another must!

### Social Events – Sara Bennett

The New Members coffee morning was, unfortunately, not very well attended, but Young Arts did manage to sign up a couple of those who were there to help with their activities.



Despite the pouring rain, a large group of members gathered to celebrate Christmas lunch at Waverley Abbey House again. With mulled wine or coffee to thaw them out beforehand, they then enjoyed an excellent and very interesting lecture by Anne Perret on The Hidden Treasures of Chawton House, which was well received.

Following the final lecture of the year the members were treated to wine and warm mince pies in the Maltings Cellar Bar. Numbers were, not surprisingly, slightly down on the previous year due to the torrential rain that day, but everyone seemed to have a good time.

Our Volunteers lunch was held in June to thank our volunteers for all the hard work that they do during the year.

### Heritage – Ann Foster, Jo Watson, Hazel Brand, Desmond Hutchinson

Our small heritage group continue their book conservation work at the Prince Consort Military Library in Aldershot. The process starts with basic but gentle dusting and assessing problems and then includes intricate repair of various sorts on maps and books of all ages!

#### **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 in the event of an emergency evacuation, you must notify reception on arrival.**

**Please let us know if you change your contact details, including email address.**

**Email us at: [memberstasfarnham@gmail.com](mailto:memberstasfarnham@gmail.com)**

**Our website: [www.theartsocietyfarnham.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietyfarnham.org.uk)**

***Edited by Sue Allison – Press and Publicity – July 2024***