



The Arts Society Oxford

TASO Newsletter June 2020

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List

As we enter the month of June, the gradual signs of an easing of lockdown are very welcome, if to be treated cautiously. I do hope you have all kept safe and well, and are able to meet up with family and friends over the coming weeks – suitably distanced of course!

Before concentrating on next year, a reminder we have hired a final Seventh Arts film for June, after very positive feedback for those already shown.

This will be for **members only, Degas: Passion for Perfection**. The link will be sent to members, beginning of week 8 June.

This Newsletter concentrates on the following important topics:

1. **What the TASO programme will look like for 2020/21**
2. **A reminder of Membership renewal**
3. **Community Art Projects in 2019/20**

1. TASO 2020/21 Programme

As explained in previous newsletters, we continue to have ongoing discussions with The Arts Society and fellow societies in our Wyvern Area on how to approach providing a programme for members next year. Magdalen College has also kept us up to date with how they might manage their lecture theatre as and when such venues can be open.

Lectures

I am delighted to confirm we shall be offering our monthly lectures throughout next year, albeit in a slightly different format.

We have confirmation that all our booked lecturers are able to deliver their lectures online. This will be the model at least until the end of 2020; details on which online platform best suits our needs are currently being explored. We hope to include viewing on YouTube, as many more people can then watch on a large screen.

ALERT If there is someone reading this who has expert knowledge on delivery of lectures on online platforms, we should be delighted to hear from you and have you join our discussions. tasoxford@gmail.com

This system will be reviewed for January 2021 onwards. It may be we can then offer a combination of live lecture at Magdalen, and online viewing for those at home. I appreciate we have a few members not on email, but we hope they can be paired with others to watch these lectures.

TASO AGM The trustees will be considering this month how we should proceed with our AGM. Whatever that decision is, we shall be providing the customary **extra lecture** for our members in September.

Study Days

We have made the decision to postpone our study days until 2021 (in effect, this cancels our September session). Study Day dates and lecturers are booked for January and May 2021, and we shall review the position in the autumn.

Visits

Our enthusiastic team have continued to meet (on Zoom of course!); a Society welcome to the new members who have joined them. They are building up ideas on small group local visits and activities so they are prepared as and when these become possible.

The Arts Society

Please do not forget that our central organisation (to which each member contributes an affiliation fee via their TASO subscription) also provides a range of interests:

- The quarterly AS magazine, in paper or online format
- Instant Expert mailings on a fortnightly basis until December 2020
- The Arts Society Connected website, which was introduced a few months ago, with content exclusive to AS members
- Members only online live lectures on a monthly basis (Those posted thus far have been very informative, and just right for the attention span at 30 minutes!)

As you can see there will be plenty on offer over the autumn months, if not quite in the sociable form we are used to, and hope to return to.

2. Membership Renewal

Many thanks to those of you who have renewed already. I hope others feel encouraged by our programme to renew before the end of this month. Please remember we are a charity, and part of your subscription goes towards supporting local organisations in their arts-related projects. See below for those we have supported in the past year.

Our Membership Secretary Diana Gordon will be sending out a final reminder to those who have either not renewed, or told us they have decided not to.

We start to fill our vacancies by offering places to those on our Waiting List in July.

3. Community Arts Projects

Here are the projects you have helped support through your membership over the past year. More details are provided on those marked **

- **A Nice Cup of Tea** held at the Ashmolean Museum
- **Sites of Curiosity at Modern Art Oxford**
- ****Soundabout** Inclusive Choir at North Oxford Community Centre
- **FUNomusica Family Concert** with Oxford Philharmonic
- ****Photography Project, Restore Mental Health Charity**, Cowley Road
- **Digital Portraits** led by the Ashmolean Museum with Rose Hill Primary School pupils

More information about these projects can be found on the newly re-vamped TASO website:

https://theartssocietyoxford.org.uk/?page_id=4459



Soundabout

A local inclusive choir led by music practitioners for people of all ages and disabilities that TASO has funded this year. Usually it meets to sing in Summertown but Covid-19 quickly led to twice weekly online group singing sessions. The choir have sung in Christ Church Cathedral and were recently featured on BBC1 (with Fergal Keane).

On YouTube, Soundabout singing Fix You has been viewed 1.5 million times and it is both moving and enjoyable to watch. There is no doubt that the Soundabout choir has given families and carers a lifeline by helping them to cope especially in its recent isolation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MCYXzaxzWk>

Restore Mental Health Charity, Cowley Road

A grant given for a photography project. Participants with the help of a tutor photographed portraits of people and animals and views of Oxford, the results of which were shown at an exhibition on 22nd October 2019. Cards of the photographs were sold in the Restore café. The photographs were all of a very high standard and most participants were at the exhibition grand opening.

Helen White (Photography Tutor) and Lesley Dewhurst (Chief Executive of Restore) cut the cake at the opening ceremony and the cake in the shape of a camera was made by one of the participants.

Link to a short video interview about the project by Charlotte Watmough. (Head of Regional Services) <https://www.restore.org.uk/2019/members-photography-project-grand-opening>

4. A final suggestion for online viewing...

Sights of Wonder: Photographs from the 1862 Royal Tour

One of our members who has prior notification of artworld events has provided the following information on an unusual exhibition about to 'open online' at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham, from 12th June.

Enjoy this exhibition, first planned as a traditional physical exhibition, now an interactive digital experience as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown.

In 1862, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) undertook a tour of the Middle East accompanied by one of Victorian Britain's pre-eminent photographers, Francis Bedford. Spanning 5 months, the entire trip was something of an early PR exercise, after 'Bertie' had been embroiled in a scandal involving a young Irish woman.



The first royal tour to be documented through photography, as well as ancient sites that still, to this day, convey a sense of awe and wonder.

Each of these carefully framed views was painstakingly composed, and, in our own era of Instagram, online visitors will be able to draw immediate parallels and contrasts.

The Prince of Wales and party among the ruins in the Hypostyle Hall, Temple of Amun, Karnak © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2020 Francis Bedford (1815-94) Royal Collection Trust / Windsor Castle

A list of other events and exhibitions in the artworld can be found via a link on our website.

It is surprising how much there is to say each month in a Newsletter!

The trustees join me in sending best wishes to you all, along with health and enjoyment in a slightly freer world. We are increasingly enthusiastic about being able to offer you a package of continuing interest for the coming year.

