



The Arts Society Oxford

TASO Newsletter October 2020

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List,

Welcome to the new Society year. Not as we would wish it to be, but perhaps we are getting used to the new way of operating – an interim measure we all hope.

This is a slightly longer Newsletter than usual. There is now no doubt that the majority of our programme will continue to be delivered online for the remainder of 2020, and quite likely beyond. Our priority as trustees is to keep our members safe at all times, at the same time as wanting to deliver as varied a programme as possible.

A particularly warm welcome to our new members. TASO's normal practice in the autumn is to hold a **New Members Coffee Morning**, when trustees very much enjoy meeting members who have just joined us and explaining more about our society. We plan to replicate this in virtual terms, giving you the opportunity to meet others and trustees through Zoom and the use of Break Out rooms! These allow small groups to chat together. An email with details on this will come out to new members in the near future.

This Newsletter covers the following:

- **Important information on Lectures**
- **A new style Study Day**
- **Visits, real and virtual**
- **Members' help with TASO's Charitable Giving**
- **Other information**

Firstly a recap on the TASO AGM held on 17 September 2020.

For those of you unable to attend or who would like to re-read, you will find the Chair and Trustees Report, the Financial Statements and the Draft Minutes on our website <https://theartsocietyoxford.org.uk/>

Particular thanks during the AGM online went to Liz Rhodes who is now retiring. She has been a member since TASO began, and recently has been a leading specialist for Oxford and Wyvern on Church Recording.

Also to Colin Redman, who has led the Visits Team for the past 2 years, building an enthusiastic team and a varied and interesting programme, enjoyed by many of our members.

A full list of elected trustees can be found at the end of this Newsletter. We are delighted to welcome Carol Brownson as a new trustee.

1. Lecture Programme

Firstly a reminder that our monthly TASO lecture is streamed on both Zoom and YouTube with an email sent a couple of days in advance. **Please keep it safe as it will contain both the links.** The lecture will

usually be available on YouTube after the lecture, as agreed with the lecturer, but please read the email carefully for the **time** at which it will be removed. This allows those unavailable in the morning to view.

We are extending an invitation to other local societies to join us as we have the capacity, and so far Abingdon AS has accepted this offer as their society is not operating this year. They will make an additional contribution to the lecturer.

Slight alterations have been made to the schedule of lectures this year (2020) because of practical presentation issues. **Information on all lectures can be found on the website.**

- 14 October. Alan Read **Love and Delusion: the artist wives of Stanley Spencer**
- 11 November. Geri Parlby **Fiction, Fallacy and Fake News - spin and propaganda in art throughout the ages**
- 9 December. Paula Nuttall **The Christmas Story in Renaissance Art**

2. Study Day

Our Study Days are so popular that the team has looked carefully at an alternative format to meet current circumstances. It will be limited to a morning, with 2 shorter lecture sessions, and time for questions and coffee (your own I'm afraid!) after each one. There will be a nominal fee to cover lecturer costs. More information soon, but here is a taster for the upcoming **Study Day on Tuesday 17 November** which is **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 Boase tells the extraordinary stories behind some of Britain's most prominent households. **Tessa Boase** is a freelance lecturer for The Arts Society and the V&A, English Heritage and the National Trust. Her interest lies in uncovering stories of invisible women of the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

3. Visits

Firstly, I am delighted to welcome Alison Madden who is taking over the role of Visits Team Leader. She will also be co-opted onto the Board of Trustees as a very welcome addition. You will be hearing more from Alison and the team, as they look at ideas and possibilities for early 2021, always following government guidance.

I am sure those of you who have signed up for the current Oxford short walking tours will greatly enjoy the outing. It seems so novel to be out with a small group of fellow members, and I very much enjoyed my first walk - on this occasion with Lizzy Rowe.

Coming up:

The North Wall Arts Centre in Summertown is hosting a series of small private views of the Society of Wood Engravers Centenary Exhibition from 3rd-5th November to which you will be invited. It promises to be an excellent exhibition, attracting exhibitors and collectors from around the world. You can learn about the art of wood engraving and its history from Peter Lawrence, who has won a number of prizes for his engravings and has works in the collections of both the Ashmolean and the V&A. The event will be informal - you can admire the exhibition and meet and talk to the artist (appropriately distanced) too. These events are free. You must book in advance as the gallery is small and can only admit eight members of the public at one time. The Centenary Show at the North Wall runs in parallel with a landmark exhibition, *Scene through Wood: A Century of Wood Engraving* at the Ashmolean Museum, open until 15th November 2020. **We shall send you a Booking Form on 12th October.**

Virtual tour

We are looking at trialling new ways of visiting. Other societies have experimented with virtual Zoom-type tours, and the following comes with a high recommendation. We thought you might all enjoy being out of Oxford for a change!

The East End is one of London's most fascinating and dynamic districts. It is essentially the story of immigration with wave after wave of people coming to London to seek refuge, looking for a better life. The Virtual Tour of the Old East End tells their story using powerful images, video and google street view. **Pepe Martinez** is an award-winning London Blue Badge Tourist Guide. He was born in the East End and has lived there all his life. The tour will take place on Wednesday 25 November, with a small charge to cover the lecturer costs, and booking details will be issued in early November. We shall ask for feedback from those of you who take part. If we cannot arrange actual group visits in the early part of 2021, this is an area of possibility to explore further, both within Oxford and without.

4. Members' help with TASO's Charitable Giving

The Community Arts Projects committee is to meet again soon after a long pause and would very much welcome applications from local Oxford charities which TASO members might know of or wish to recommend for their community involvement. The committee will be considering new applications and hope to help charities who would benefit from small grants for arts related projects. The contact email is: tasoxford@gmail.com and the website https://theartsocietyoxford.org.uk/?page_id=4329 has all the information for applicants to read and apply to us for funding.

5. Other information

The Arts Society monthly Lectures

TAS House (not TASO) has arranged a series of lectures for all society members, to be streamed on the last Friday of the month, and **only available to watch at 1300 that day**. Information on dates and subject matter is now available on: <https://theartsociety.org/lectures-home-series>

Sky Arts

If you have exhausted all the culture offerings online, **Sky Arts is now available on Freeview Channel 11**.

I hope you have digested this wide range of information, and that it comes some way to delivering the variety of programme we can all enjoy.

Very best wishes from the trustees and myself

Sarah Whiteley
Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

The current Trustees are:

Sarah Whiteley (Chairman)
Hilary Reid-Evans (Vice Chairman)
Allan Taylor (Treasurer)
Pam Eyton (Secretary)
Diana Gordon (Membership Secretary)
Ann McIlhinney (Lecture Programme)
Celia Robinson (Community Arts)
Stephanie North (Study Days)
Carol Brownson
Alison Madden (Visits, Co-opted)
