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**TASO Newsletter December 2020**

Dear Members and those on the Waiting List,

For the first time in some months the news feels a little more positive at the time of writing. Although we none of us relish the prospect of being in Tier 2 for at least the near future, the arrival on the scene of vaccines, including that from our celebrated Oxford team, points to an improving picture in 2021.

There is however, an ‘However’ – the Trustees have decided we should continue all activities online, at least until the end of March. Magdalen continue to support this decision, and in the interim we will review the position on returning to safe use of the Grove auditorium through to the end of our Society year.

Before I come to highlight Society events to look forward to, a brief look back.

November was a busy month. We were joined in all this month’s activities by members from Abingdon, and their Chair has passed on to us their sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm in being able to take part. Our first online Study Day was well received, with over 110 participants, and a positive rating for new lecturer Tessa Boase. We all felt that Webinar worked as probably the best alternative to us all being in a shared venue. Our new venture, a virtual tour of the East End proved to be a great success, though following Google Maps proved to be an acquired skill! We had well over 200 people take part and it appeared to be thoroughly enjoyed by all. Pepe our guide can offer us a follow-up, looking at the East End from the beginning of the twentieth century, and we have taken on board the numerous requests to book this. See below.

The system of not having to book worked well – one of the advantages of an online activity with greater capacity. Thank you to all those taking part who followed our request for payment very promptly after each event. We plan to operate the same system in the New Year.

1. December lecture

The lecture next Wednesday December 9th at 11.00 am will be by Paula Nuttall on The Christmas Story in Renaissance Art. Further information on the content can be found on the website. The lecture will be streamed on both Zoom and YouTube; you will receive the email containing the links and more detailed information after the weekend. Please keep it safe as it will contain both the links. The lecture will continue to be available on YouTube after the lecture until 10 pm on Wednesday to allow those unavailable in the morning to watch the lecture at a later time.

2. Study Day Tuesday 19 January 2021

Diary Date. As mentioned in my introduction, we shall remain online for our next Study Day. Full details on the structure of the morning will be sent out to members and those on the waiting list in early January.

Justin Reay FSA FRHistS will join us for the morning to deliver: ‘A Brave New World : paintings of the Industrial and Technological age.’

After a short introduction he will discuss the British Enlightenment, Joseph Wright of Derby and his depictions of industry and science; and in a second talk - how artists from Turner to Van Gogh and Cezanne responded to the changing realities of everyday life engendered by urbanisation and industrialisation.

This Study Day will mark the handover point from our three very proactive SD team members to a new cohort. All our thanks go to Stephanie North, Helen Cadoux-Hudson and Felicity Wood who have provided us with such varied entertainment and culture over the past two years. They have also managed the transition from Rewley House to an online format; although we hope it will be temporary, congratulations for engineering this!

I shall introduce the incoming team in January, prior to the next Study Day flyer.

3. Visits

You will appreciate it is not straightforward to be planning visits for early in 2021. However Visits team members are in touch with our popular Oxford guides so that we can be ready to offer small group walks as soon as this becomes possible. In the meantime we hope to return to the East End of London at the end of January / beginning of February to follow its development into the twenty first century. The team are also researching other venues for a virtual tour.

Other destinations have been on hold since last year and will be investigated further as restrictions lessen. We shall keep you fully informed.

Visit to The Hague 30 September – 4 October 2021

The Visits team has now finalised a trip to The Hague in September 2021, with travel by coach and ferry, organised by Heritage Travel. This will obviously only be progressed if the overall Covid situation improves in Europe with the growing availability of vaccines. A brochure with full details and a booking form will be sent out to members in January 2021.

4. The Arts Society

Finally, do not forget the last monthly lecture of 2020 being offered online by The Arts Society in their Lectures at Home Series on Friday 18 December – ‘Great Exhibitions, Expos and Fairs from 1851’. Information can be found at https://theartssociety.org/lectures-at-home

I should like to extend my personal thanks to all members who have supported the Society so enthusiastically over the past nine months. I don’t think any of us could have foreseen we would end 2020 without having been able to meet in person. I and the trustees have appreciated the messages of support and encouragement we have received from you.

All the trustees have been brilliant in giving their time, considerable in some cases in learning all the new skills involved, in getting these activities to you. My sincere thanks to them.

I and the trustees send our very best wishes to you for Christmas, with the hope that you can spend

Let’s remain positive for significant progress in early 2021.

Sarah Whiteley

Chair TASO

**TASO Newsletter November 2020**

Dear Members and those on the Waiting List,

It does not feel the most positive time of writing, as the country goes into a period of lockdown, but I hope we can offer you some additional cheer in November to keep your spirits up. This Newsletter has ended up much longer than planned, largely because we have new events to share with you. See below!

The feedback for the first lecture on Stanley Spencer’s wives was very positive, and you will find details of the November lecture below. The trustees will be discussing in the coming week whether we should definitively opt for online lectures for the first 3 months of 2021, and this looks very likely.

The Trustees were delighted to meet a group of our new members over virtual coffee in October. It is frustrating not to be able to arrange face to face activities for you to meet other members, but you are all very welcome to the Society.

We have decided to share the online activities below with Abingdon Society, as they made a decision to suspend their programme at least until the end of this year. Their Society is making an additional contribution to go to each lecturer, and their members will be able to join the extra activities on the same financial basis as you, our members.

1. November Lecture

The lecture on November 11th at 11.00 am will be by Geri Parlby on Fiction, Fallacy and Fake News - spin and propaganda in art throughout the ages. Further information on the content can be found on the website. The lecture will be 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 continue to be available on YouTube after the lecture to allow those unavailable in the morning to watch the lecture later in the day.

Ann Mcilhinney, one of our programme organisers, has pointed out our 11 am start is the annual two minute Remembrance time. We should like to observe this, therefore the lecture will start at 11.02 am. We shall remind you of this in the email you receive with the links.

2. Study Day: Tuesday 17 November at 10 am

​The Housekeeper’s Tale – the Women who really ran the English Country House

We have, of course, held very popular study days over the past few years. The Study Day team has put together an online shortened morning session. This will consist of two 45-minute lectures, each followed by time for questions, with a 15-minute coffee break between the two lectures. The flyer will appear in your inbox in the next couple of days.

3. Virtual Tour: Wednesday 25 November at 11 am

​A tour of the East End with Blue Badge Guide Pepe Martinez

A new venture, taking us out of Oxford for the morning. We have received very positive feedback form a couple of societies who have gone on this tour with Pepe – born and always lived in the East End despite his name! Be sure you put these dates in your diary!

Please note: How the Study Day and Virtual Tour will be run​

An important change in the way we organise the above events. We rely on you to make it work!

There will be no need to book. Both events will be run on Webinar, therefore there is no restriction on numbers (up to 500!)

An email will be sent out with the links to join before each of the events.

We shall make a small charge for each event to cover the lecturer / guide fee:

Study Day £8 per person. Virtual Tour £5 per person

We shall ask for an ‘Honesty Payment’ to TASO after the event, via online bank transfer. Details will be in the email with the joining link.

These events will be open to our Waiting List.

We very much hope you will join in. We shall ask for your feedback, and will repeat both type of event in early 2021 if they prove popular.

4. Visits

The local Oxford walks were greatly enjoyed by all who took part. The future of small group activities is unclear at present. We reluctantly had to cancel the North Wall Engravers Exhibition visits. However you can visit as an individual in pre-booked slots this week, advertised until 7th November, but do now check the last day of opening on the North Wall website.

The Visits team has many ideas to explore on outings in small groups, as and when this becomes possible again. Do let us know by emailing tasoxford@gmail.com if you have suggestions to include. We are always keen to have members’ ideas.

The team is also looking at a possible trip to The Hague in September 2021, which would obviously only be considered if the overall Covid situation improved in Europe with the availability of a vaccine. More information will be available in due course.

5. Charitable giving

The Community Arts Projects team is actively considering applications for funding. If you know of any small Oxford organisations with imaginative arts projects in mind for any age group, do get in touch via tasoxford@gmail.com Signing up for Gift Aid adds considerably to our charitable funds; please do consider this if you have not already done so.

6. The Arts Society

Finally, do not forget the monthly lecture being offered online by The Arts Society in their Lectures at Home Series. Information can be found at

http://theartssociety.org/lectures-at-home'

TAS has recently emailed members with a questionnaire asking for your views on developing their online activities. Please do find a few minutes to complete it.

Best wishes to all our members from the trustees and myself. As ever the important message is to stay safe and well.

Sarah Whiteley

Chair, TASO

**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://theartssocietyoxford.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://theartssocietyoxford.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://theartssociety.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 (Chair)

Hilary Reid-Evans (Vice Chair)

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)

**TASO Newsletter July 2020**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List

This will be the last Newsletter of the current TASO year. It feels very strange to be writing about the end of the year when we have not had the opportunity to meet together for four months. Social contact is such an important part of the Arts Society’s life, and we must feel positive about being able to gradually reintroduce that element in the autumn. Therefore the emphasis in this Newsletter is upon the new year, 2020 / 21, and how we intend to make it as enjoyable and participative for our members as we can.

Three areas of importance for you to read about below:

* Membership for 2020 / 21
* Our Programme for next year
* TASO AGM

1. Membership 2020/21

Thank you to all those who have renewed their membership over the past few weeks. The next step is for Diana Gordon, Membership Secretary, to approach those on our Waiting List. I very much look forward to welcoming New Members.

Confirmation of membership will be sent out in the course of this month, July, and will be accompanied by our next year’s Lecture Programme. We shall not be printing Membership cards this year, as there will be no opportunity to hand them out to members. So please keep the emailed Programme as your monthly reminder. All the information will also be available on the TASO website, along with any updates should they be required.

2. Our Programme for next year

2.1. The lecture programme is fully booked for the year. While trying to be flexible in our approach in these uncertain times, trustees made the decision to deliver all lectures online up to and including December. We fully appreciate many of our members will be extremely cautious as the government progresses its lifting of restrictions. Magdalen College has been very helpful; we have cancelled the lecture theatre without cost up to the end of the year. It is obviously our hope we shall be able to move back into the auditorium from January, perhaps with a combination of live and online lecture delivery. Our usual monthly slot is being kept for us.

The central body of the Arts Society has issued helpful planning guidelines, and this has enabled us to purchase our own TASO Zoom licence and receive training on how to implement this for the benefit of members. Several of the trustees are now proficient at hosting and running Zoom lecture sessions but we are still looking for a couple of enthusiastic members who are tech-savvy and willing to learn more about Zoom to join us on our team. Do please contact me if you could help.

Each lecture will be delivered live via Zoom and our own dedicated TASO YouTube channel. Members will access this via an encrypted secure link. More information will be circulated and we shall also run drop-in practice sessions for members before we go live in the autumn.

2.2 Other activities within the Society for the autumn. We held very productive TASO Coffee Morning sessions in June – very many thanks to those members who joined trustees to put forward and discuss possible ideas to increase social interaction for our members.

We feel the most constructive way forward to gauge the views and interests of the wider membership is to send out a short questionnaire, based largely on the above discussions. This will be sent out at the end of July. Please do respond as feedback from you will be very important in establishing a viable programme of activities (including online participation).

3. TASO AGM

Trustees have decided to hold our AGM largely by email. As well as overcoming the impossibility of meeting at the Maths Institute in September, it will give all our members the opportunity to take part in the election of trustees and to confirm receipt of the Chair’s report and the accounts.

The initial AGM notification with the request for Resolutions and Nominations will be sent out mid July. This will be followed mid August by the Reports and Accounts, together with a voting link for the elections and the opportunity to submit any questions.

On Thursday 17 September we shall hold a live online session, starting with myself as Chair summarising main points for the year and answering any questions that have been sent in. This will be followed by a lecture from Alexandra Epps – she was booked for our April Celebration lecture and has kindly agreed to deliver this as our now traditional extra lecture for members. More details will come out with the AGM papers, and are also contained in the Lecture Programme.

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Thank you to all our members for your patience in these uncertain times, and for your support, both in terms of emails and in your confidence that our society will return to its informative, active and sociable state. I certainly have missed seeing everyone – members, volunteers and trustees (though we have held virtual meetings regularly on Zoom).

For those members who purchased tickets for the celebration lecture please be assured we still have your £5 saved. We intend to hold a "Back to Normal" event when possible, but we are happy to refund your money if requested.

I should like to extend particular thanks to all members of the Trustee Board, and the organisers of Visits and Get to know, who have all given an amazing amount of time and thought to the society over the past months. It is very encouraging to hear this week that the government has at last come up with a support package for the arts; for many organisations the future was looking precarious at best. Please do not forget over the summer the multitude of online offerings from museums and galleries, theatres and concert halls. Our own Ashmolean provides some fascinating virtual tours as do most major museums. The National Theatre productions continue with Les Blancs (2nd July), The Deep Blue Sea (9th July), Amadeus (16th July). The Met opera New York (www.metopera.org) continues to stream a different production daily at 7:30 p.m. EDT and remains accessible for on-demand viewing until 6:30 p.m. the following day.

Lastly, don’t forget the new Arts Society Connected platform, with a series of short Arts lectures already available, and more to come this month, and an online forum for exchange of ideas. https://www.connected.theartssociety.org/

Very best wishes to all

Sarah Whiteley, Chair, 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:

* What the TASO programme will look like for 2020/21
* A reminder of Membership renewal
* 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.

Sarah Whiteley

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter May 2020**

Dear Members

It is not quite May, however the majority of topics I should like to cover in this email relate mainly to May.

Firstly I do hope you and your families and friends are keeping well as we move into a new and unfamiliar lifestyle.

A Future Programme

We cannot predict with certainty what the next stage might be, but it seems increasingly unlikely we shall be meeting up for lectures in our familiar Magdalen venue perhaps for the rest of this calendar year. Being optimistic, it may be that small gatherings of friends will be able to view together online in a more sociable way!

The trustees have been giving considerable thought as to how we might continue to deliver an interesting and stimulating arts programmes into your own homes. We are also liaising closely with TAS House, supporting them in looking at new methods of delivery, and we are undertaking independent research on alternatives with some of our lecturers. Wyvern Area Chairs have also ‘met’ via Zoom to adopt a collective approach.

Should the extraordinary happen and we return to meetings as usual in the near future, TASO has its lecture programme in place for the whole of next year, starting with our AGM in September!

TASO Membership Renewal

Trustees have also given considerable thought to the timetable for membership renewal. We have decided to keep to our annual cycle which is as follows:

The invitation to renew will come out from our Membership Secretary on Friday 1 May.

We ask those who wish to renew to complete this by 1 July. This can be done by bank transfer or cheque to the Membership Secretary.

From July onwards places will be offered to those on our waiting list.

The membership subscription remains at £45.

TASO is a charity, and as with many charities at present, we rely totally on the support of our members. We shall endeavour to bring you value for money by continuing with arts lectures in some format, and introducing other familiar activities, such as local small group visits, as restrictions become relaxed. We are also committed to continuing our financial support for local organisations, many of whom are being very inventive and creative in their work with vulnerable people in this situation.

We do hope you are all considering renewal, and very much appreciate your support. One final point, we will be asking those who have not already done so to complete a Gift Aid form as part of the renewal process.

Online screenings in the coming month

TASO film of the month

We are continuing our arrangement with Seventh Art Productions, as many of you enjoyed the film on Young Picasso. In May (from ‘lecture day’ on Wednesday 13 May) we shall be streaming free of charge to members only The Artist’s Garden: American Impressionism.

Taking its lead from French artists like Renoir and Monet, the American impressionist movement followed its own path, which over a forty-year period reveals as much about America as a nation as it does about its art as a creative power-house. It’s a story closely tied to a love of gardens and a desire to preserve nature in a rapidly urbanizing nation. Travelling to studios, gardens and iconic locations throughout the United States, the film features the sell-out exhibition The Artist’s Garden: American Impressionism and the Garden Movement, 1887–1920.

More information on the film and the link for viewing will be sent out just prior to 13 May. I am very much looking forward to this as it is an area I know nothing about!

The Arts Society

TAS have launched a series of short films (15 mins) on their website: https://www.connected.theartssociety.org/talks-lectures which can also be watched on YouTube. The current film by historian Sarah Dunant is on Venice. A new film is posted every 2 weeks.

Other screenings

The BBC has set up a website ‘Culture in Quarantine’ highlighting a range of arts topics including theatre, reading material, exhibitions.

Specifically on BBC4 this coming week, there are visits to current exhibitions we all wish we could visit! On Tuesday (28 April) it will feature Young Rembrandt at the Ashmolean with Simon Schama.

Two Arts Society lecturers have offerings to access.

Sian Walters posts a weekly lecture on Facebook: Art History in Focus, Picture of the week. These then continue to be available, and you do not need a Facebook account.

Mary Alexander (was due to deliver our ‘New York New York! Study Day at the end of May, now re-booked for January 2021) presents a written lecture on her societies’ website each week under Our Society/Documents.http://www.theartssocietyglavenvalley.org.uk/AboutUs/Documents.aspx

A TASO member has kindly forwarded details of a Christies conversation on ‘Interior spaces and Impressionism’. https://www.instagram.com/tv/B-9Qr\_xnydm/

Click on the link at the bottom of the picture – you don’t have to have an Instagram account.

Finally the listings of online cultural activities in last month’s Newsletter are still posted on the front page of our website.

I wish you all continuing good health and enjoyment of this cornucopia of entertainment in isolation.

Best wishes from all the trustees

Sarah Whiteley

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter April 2020**

Dear Members

I hope you are acclimatising to this new way of living, and most importantly keeping safe and well. We are all discovering and developing new skills, including making maximum use of YouTube for access to free arts features and Zoom meetings – a great way to meet friends for coffee, discuss a book or follow a pilates class!

Below are three ways in which we plan to stay in touch with members whilst we are all socially isolating.

1. The Arts Society is launching its new website this week, aimed at

keeping members in touch with the arts and each other: <https://www.connected.theartssociety.org/>

2. TASO: Film available from 8 April for members only

We have been looking at ways to replicate our TASO monthly lectures for members, and are trialling an art film to coincide with our April lecture day.

The Society is able to hire online access to films, via an arrangement between The Arts Society and Seventh Art Productions, which we can then stream, free of charge, to our members.

Entitled Young Picasso, it looks at the reasons behind Picasso’s rise to artistic greatness. Three cities played a key role: Malaga, Barcelona and Paris. Young Picasso visits each and explores their influence on him, focusing on artworks from these early years. Looking carefully at two key early periods – the so-called Blue Period and Pink Period – the film takes us all the way to 1907 and the creation of a critical painting in the history of art: Les Demoiselles d’Avignon.

Filmmaker Phil Grabsky enjoyed privileged access to the Picasso Museums in Malaga, Barcelona and Paris for the making of this film.

Click on the following link to access the film, which will be available from now until 22 April.

**https://vimeo.com/403606709/89e5486fd0**

More material is available on the Seventh Art Production websites:

https://www.seventh-art.com/ and https://exhibitiononscreen.com/

Survey

We very much need your views both on the film and whether you wish us to repeat this exercise with two different films in May and June.

Please complete the very short survey by clicking on the Feedback Button below (3 one-answer questions only) . We require enough positive responses to justify spending the Society’s funds on hiring further films. Thank you.

Please click on the Feedback button below.

3. Free online screenings

Many arts organisations from around the world, art galleries, concert halls, opera houses and theatres, are making available a range of artistic events and activities online.

We are now posting a schedule of a selection of such events on our website which will be updated on a regular basis.

Our website is https://theartssocietyoxford.org.uk and you can click on the TASO's website button below.

If you have suggestions on items to add in the future please send them to tasoxford@gmail.com and they will be added to the listing.

Locally:

The Oxford Playhouse will shortly be posting online their programme of activities, ranging from playwriting to online classes and workshops.

The North Wall currently has a virtual tour of its Society of Wood Engravers Centenary Exhibition, which many of you had planned to visit as a Get to Know. You can see all the works that would have been in the exhibition and learn a brief history of wood engraving.

Do visit these local websites.

I hope we have provided enough material to keep you entertained.

Please stay safe and healthy

With best wishes to all from the Trustees

Sarah Whiteley

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter March 2020**

Dear Members and those on the Waitlist

I trust you are keeping safe and well in these extraordinary times. I hope this lovely spell of sunshine has meant that many of you can spend time in your gardens, or benefit from walking.

**Cancellation**

Firstly I have to confirm that the **lecture scheduled for June has been cancelled**. I am sure this will come as no surprise to you, and effectively means our Society year has ended.

Trustees are working on the assumption that we shall resume in September with our AGM, and we have a full lecture programme already booked, as are the dates with Magdalen. The Visits team will shortly hold a meeting via Zoom ( one of the technological wonders we are discovering!) to re schedule cancelled visits and begin to plan for 2020/21.

**Membership renewal notification 2020/21**

You will be aware that the above process usually starts at the beginning of May. The Trustees are meeting (in a virtual context!) after Easter to review the situation, and I shall keep you updated. Given the present uncertainties we shall in all probability delay requests for renewal. The life of the Society is very important to all of us, with its educational and social benefits, as well as our charitable projects, and your continued support as a member remains of utmost importance.

**Cultural entertainment**

On a lighter note, many institutions are delivering their services **free via Youtube and Facebook!**

You can access recorded activities at the following, without being a member, via their websites:

**Wigmore Hall**

**National Theatre**

**Royal Opera House** Their first production is **tonight, 27 March**, the ballet Peter and the Wolf, music by Prokofiev

**The Royal Academy** offers virtual tours for members.

**The South Bank** offers its members a weekly email plus podcasts of literature and music.

I am sure you will know of others, and are sharing with friends and acquaintances in the Society.

**The Arts Society**

The central organisation are looking at ways to deliver support to societies and their members. Soon there will be a **new Arts Society Community website.** They are also working with their **lecturers to deliver content directly,** either to individuals or via their society. We will keep you informed, or visit the centralised website theartssociety.org

**Trustees Booklist**

Finally, the Trustees have brainstormed a few books that might interest you, both fiction and non fiction. I hope you find something to your taste!

Best wishes to all from the Trustees

Sarah Whiteley

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**Booklist**

1. **Non Fiction**

**Meeting with Remarkable Manuscripts by Christopher de Hamel** (I believe he is on our wish list of speakers);

**The Face of Britain - a Nation through its Portraits by Simon Schama**

**The English Face by David Pipe**r.

**Picasso, three/four volumes by John Richardson**, the great Picasso biographer.

**Life with Picasso by Francoise Gilot**, Picasso's muse.

**Keeping an Eye Open by Julian Barnes**, wonderful collection of essays on artists, mainly 19th century French.

**Brunelleschi’s Dome by Ross King** (who lives in Woodstock)

**William Morris by Fiona McCarthy** (died recently)

**The Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood by Jan Marsh** (who has written widely on the P-Rs).

**Eric Ravilious by James Russell**

**Unbuilt Oxford by Howard Colvin** - unusual architectural study of our home city.

**Romantic Moderns - English Writers; Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper by Alexandra Harris**.  (Reviews include the TLS – Remarkable, Harris's insights are based on a close, imaginative reading of collaborations and connections mapped through friendships and unlikely encounters.

**Just My Type** **by Simon Garfield**.  It’s all about fonts.   It describes itself as a book of stories, and it’s both informative and entertaining.  For anyone interested in printing, typography (or indeed marketing and image-management), it’s a real treat.

1. **Fiction**

**The Fatal Englishman by Sebastian Faulks** - **Three Short Lives** (of potential genii who died tragically young, including Christopher Wood)

**An Equal Music by Vikram Seth -** novel, but wonderful study of a quartet

**Sudden Death by Alvaro Enrique** - an odd one this, it is superficially about a (fictional) real tennis match between Caravaggio and the Spanish poet Quevedo, but is much more than that - lots about Caravaggio’s life and about the conquistadors in Mexico and more besides

**The Unfinished Palazzo by Judith Mackrell** - the story of what is now the Guggenheim Museum in Venice and the women who owned it. Fascinating, and of course lots about Peggy Guggenheim and her relationships with various artists

**The man in the Red Coat by Julian Barnes** - takes the Sargent portrait of Samuel Pozzi as a starting point for an exploration of the Belle Epoque.

**Three on the Dutch Golden Age:**

**Vermeer’s Hat by Timothy Brook** - he takes objects from Vermeer’s paintings and uses them as a ‘portal’ to the history and society of the time

**The Miniaturist by Jessie Burto**n

**Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier** – a favourite for many

**TASO Newsletter January 2020**

A brief reminder of what is planned for the next few months!

Dear Member and those on the Waiting List

A very happy new year to all those who were not at our first lecture of the year on Hogarth. Something of an eye opener from an excellent lecturer!

Hopefully you have the next date, 12 February, in your diaries for Jane Gardiner on a Study of Glass through the eyes of an Artist.

A couple of practical issues

Guests or Waiting list visitors to lectures. Please could you ensure you have contacted Diana Gordon, Membership Secretary, to book your place at a lecture (including members who wish to attend at a different time from their usual am/pm lecture). Spaces are limited in the lecture theatre!

End of lectures. We realise some people have to leave at the end of the lecture. We do allow 15 minutes for questions ( finish times 1215 morning, 1515 afternoon).

A very short break is made before questions, to allow people to leave as unobtrusively as possible, but it would be very helpful if you could sit at the end of a row to minimise disruption to other members and our speaker. Thank you for your understanding.

Tenth Anniversary Celebration Lecture

Wednesday 29 April at the Maths Institute

Art of the River Thames through Artists’ Eyes with Alexandra Epps

This is an additional lecture to the annual programme, and is being held at the Maths Institute (where we hold our AGM) so that we can accommodate as many of our members as possible. This will be a ticketed event with a small charge, to contribute towards the cost of ‘finger food’ and drinks after the lecture, and to give us the best idea of how many members to expect. Information on booking your tickets will be available in February. We hope you will join us!

Study Days

Many of you will be looking forward to the first of the 2020 Study Days on 21 January.

Here is the next date for your diary:

Friday 29 May, ‘New York New York’ with Mary Alexander

She will be looking at the explosion of art and culture and the ever changing, vibrant, energetic city from the Gilded Age of the 1890s to the present day.

If you would like to plan further ahead, we have now booked Rewley House for Wednesday 23 September, topic and lecturer to be announced soon.

Wyvern Study Days

Wyvern Area has organised a series of 3 Study Days between January and March, on ‘What is Truth and Beauty in Art’. Click on the button at this end of this email to go to our website and click on the link under Study Days.

Visits

The trip to Tutankhamen on 29 January is fully subscribed. The next event of the year will be one of the ever-popular walking tours with Alastair Lack in March. Information on available dates and booking will be with you by the end of January.

We are pleased to be offering members a short UK tour with Heritage in the spring, entitled ‘The Art and Architecture of Yorkshire’, based in Harrogate. The dates will be 19-22 May, and information on booking will be coming out with a flyer at the end of this week. A lovely time of year to visit both the countryside and the architectural highlights.

Get to Know

Many of you will have enjoyed last week’s Get to Know on Dutch Flower paintings. These are very popular events, for their informality and opportunity to meet other members in a small group – but also they reveal the wide variety of interests and knowledge shared by a particular member on each occasion.

This is another area where we rely on members for ideas. If you have an interest or knowledge in a particular artistic topic you would be willing to share with other members, do contact Alison Porter via tasoxford@gmail.com

I look forward to meeting you at many of the above events. We are fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers who work in a variety of capacities within the Society – an enormous thank you to all of you.

Please let me know if you would like to join in and help, we are always looking for extra pairs of hands!

Best wishes

Sarah Whiteley

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford