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**TASO Newsletter December 2022**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List,

As we approach the **December lecture**, we need to give you some **important information** about your route of entry into the auditorium for this month.

Magdalen College will be having the foyer painted in December, which will require the use of scaffolding, so we will not be able to enter through the main door as usual. Instead, please turn left when you have gone through the outer gateway and **use the door near the bicycle racks that will take you to the front of the auditorium**. We will not be able to serve coffee and tea before the lecture but members will still be able to access the toilets.

**Please ensure that you arrive early**. **Late arrivals entering at the front of the lecture theatre would be distracting for the lecturer and the audience.**Things should be back to normal for the lecture in January.

The lecture will be on **Wednesday 14 December at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm**and will be for**members only**:

**Nothing says Christmas like an axe fight: courtly spectacles of the Renaissance**

In the Renaissance, Christmas was a popular time to hold jousts, tournaments and courtly spectacles. In the dark dead of winter, a colourful, glamorous celebration of chivalry very much took on the role of a kind of sixteenth-century ‘festival of light’. In England, Christmas jousts became especially popular under that famous lover of armour and fighting, King Henry VIII. Such events were a kind of performance art, which fused real armoured combat with fantastical, mythological and allegorical themes. This lecture explores this rich history through the personal experiences of the lecturer, an academic specialist but also one of the world’s foremost jousters and medieval martial artists.

**Lecturer: Tobias Capwell**is Curator of Arms and Armour at the Wallace Collection in London and an internationally-acknowledged authority on Medieval and Renaissance weapons. He is the author of numerous books on the subject of arms and armour and appears regularly on television. In 2015 Toby had the unusual honour of serving as one of the two fully armoured horsemen escorting the remains of King Richard III, from the battlefield at Bosworth to their final resting place in Leicester Cathedral.

**Visits**

There will be a virtual tour on **Tuesday 6 December at 10.30 am** (lasting about 75 minutes) for **members and waiting list**:

**Along the River Tiber – 28 centuries of history told through the bridges and riverside monuments of Rome**

Join professional Rome tourist guide Stuart Harvey for a journey upstream along the Tiber as it winds through Rome from the Tiber Island to Ponte Milvio just north of the city centre.

Look out for an email on Sunday 4 December giving you the Zoom link.

**Save the Date**for the next virtual tour on **Wednesday 25 January 2023** at 11.00 am on **Mayfair: simply the best address in London…** This tour, led by Simon Whitehouse, will take us through a village within a village and along gorgeous Georgian streets to discover how one family, the Grosvenors ‘spun gold from their acres’ to make Mayfair the champagne and caviar of London’s addresses.

For further detail on both these virtual tours, see the email sent to you by the Visits Team on 23 November.

**Study Days**

The next study day will be on**Tuesday, 17 January 2023**on **The Home Beautiful: Pre-Raphaelite Interiors**by Joanna Banham. Detailed information about the day’s content and the booking link will be sent out soon.

Also **Save the Date**for the study day on **Monday May 22** with Mary Alexander on **New York! New York!** This study day was originally booked for May 2020 and had to be cancelled because of the pandemic.

On behalf of all the Trustees I would like to send you our very best wishes for Christmas.

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**Newsletter November 2022**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List

I hope that those of you who attended the October lecture on Winslow Homer enjoyed it as much as I did. I am sure that it has prompted many of us to plan a visit to the exhibition of his work at the National Gallery, which runs until 8 January 2023.

Many of you also appeared to enjoy the opportunity to socialise in the entrance foyer before the lecture. However, while we have many members who are willing to help at the registration desk, **we are still short of** **volunteers to serve coffee and tea**. We will be providing coffee and tea free of charge before the November lecture but, without further assistance, we regret that this service may have to be discontinued for subsequent lectures.

To cover the 9 lectures in the year, we need an absolute minimum of 18 coffee/tea volunteers for the morning session and the same for the afternoon. However, we really need to have many more names on the list, as some will not be available when contacted. At present, we have just over half the minimum number needed. If you have not already volunteered (and a big thank you to those who have) **would you be willing to add your name to the list?** If so, please complete the form through the link below, or send an email to tasoxford@gmail.com with ‘Lecture volunteer’ as the subject header.

[*https://forms.gle/XeG9DP8eYyvesrou5*](https://forms.gle/XeG9DP8eYyvesrou5)

[*https://forms.gle/pcFb1G5qPLYUF8yt*](https://forms.gle/pcFb1G5qPLYUF8yt8)

**1. Lecture Programme**

The next lecture will be on **Wednesday 9 November at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm**and will be for**members only:**

**A truly cultured woman is as rare as the phoenix: The life and work of Isabella d’Este**

In an age where women had little public power, Isabella d’Este (1474-1539) stands out as a formidable figure. She was one of the first and greatest female patrons and art collectors of the Renaissance and her court in Mantua was filled with writers and poets of distinction. Her clever, educated and entitled voice sings out from thousands of letters that she composed in her meticulously designed study, and images – from Da Vinci to Titian – bring alive a woman whose eye for fashion was every bit as keen as her eye for art.

**Lecturer: Sarah Dunant**is a novelist, broadcaster and critic. She read history at Cambridge, then worked for many years as a cultural journalist in radio and television on such programmes as Kaleidoscope (BBC Radio 4), The Late Show (BBC 2), and Night Waves (BBC Radio 3). She has published thirteen novels, taught renaissance studies at Washington University, St Louis, is a visiting tutor on the MA in creative writing at Oxford Brookes and has lectured around the world at festivals and conferences. Her last five novels have been set within the Italian Renaissance. *I*n the Name of the Family (2017) completes the story of the Borgia family and the remarkable period of Italian history in which they lived. Her recent series on history for BBC Radio 4, called When Greeks Flew Kites, is available on BBC Sounds.

**A couple of practical issues**

Guests or Waiting List visitors to lectures

Before the October lecture, there were a few rather late requests from members who wished to book a place for a visitor. The Membership Secretary cannot guarantee that he can always check the TASO Gmail account on the afternoon or evening before the lecture. He does have a life outside TASO!

To reduce the possibility of your email being missed, we would ask that any request to bring a guest (or to change your lecture session as a ‘one-off’) should be sent to the Membership Secretary (Ray Wright; tasoxford@gmail.com)**by the Friday before the lecture day, at the latest**, which will allow time for him to reply to you. Please can you also **provide the name of your guest** so that this can be added to the list at the registration desk.

Signing in at the registration desk

When you arrive at the lecture, we would be grateful if you (and any guests) would ensure that you sign in at the registration desk.

**2. Visit to Sambourne House and Leighton House**

There are still some places available for these guided visits on Monday 21 November. Both museums have very recently reopened following a ‘From Hidden Gem to National Treasure’ redevelopment project at Leighton House and conservation works at Sambourne House.

The cost for the two guided tours is £25 per person (members to make their own travel arrangements). For further details about the visits, please see the email that was sent out to you on Friday 21 October.

Tickets are available from Ticketsource on the following link:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/The-Arts-Society-Oxford>

**3. The Study Day team has a vacancy…**

Our Study Day organisers Sue Hine and Nicola Park are looking for a third person to join the team to assist with organising these events, which take place three times each year. If you are interested in knowing more about this role and what is involved, please email Sue Hine at tasoxford@gmail.com.

**…and so does the Visits team**

Our Visits team would welcome other members to join their group. No experience necessary, ideas welcome! Please make contact with Alison Madden via tasoxford@gmail.com

I look forward to seeing you at lectures and hope that you will continue to enjoy all that The Arts Society Oxford has to offer.

Very best wishes

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**Newsletter October 2022**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List

**Welcome** to the new Society year!

We do hope that this year most of our events will be held live, with only a few virtual tours taking place online. However, we cannot predict the future and will be keeping a close track of what is happening with Covid-19 infection rates as the months go by.

A particularly warm welcome is extended to our new members. Later in October we will be holding a **New Members’ Coffee Morning**, when Trustees very much enjoy meeting members who have just joined us and explaining more about our society. An email giving details of the event will be sent out soon to new members.

**Firstly, a recap on the TASO AGM**held on 14 September 2022.

For those of you who were unable to attend the AGM or who would like to re-read, the Chair and Trustees Report, Financial Statements and Draft Minutes will be posted on our website (<https://theartssocietyoxford.org.uk/>) in the next few days.

Thanks were given to Trustees who retired during 2021-22 or at the AGM: Julia Reece (Study Days), Mark Gardiner (Study Days), and Hilary Reid Evans. A full list of elected Trustees can be found at the end of this newsletter. We are delighted to welcome Sue Hine (Study Days) as a new Trustee.

**1. Lecture Programme**

For those making their first visit to the Magdalen College auditorium to attend the October lecture, it is accessed through the entrance on Longwall Street and not through the main college entrance on Magdalen Bridge.

You are either a morning or an afternoon member of the society, so please come to the correct session! This is important for controlling numbers in the auditorium, which has a limited seating capacity. If you cannot remember which group you are in, check the header on this email to find out whether you are AM or PM.

**Wednesday 12 October at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm, members only.**

**Winslow Homer and the Art of New England**

Winslow Homer trained originally as a newspaper illustrator, imbuing his style with a distinctive, graphic clarity designed to make an immediate impact. His approach to watercolour, distinguished by its glowing colours and faultless technique, combined with his interest in both natural and social subject matter, make his work especially attractive. Best known for his dramatic and moody seascapes, through his careful and moving studies of individuals such as farmworkers and teachers in his homelands of New England he also presents us with a fascinating and at times nostalgic portrait of the heart of America at a time of rapid expansion and change.

**Lecturer: Brian Healey**was asenior modern languages teacher in an independent grammar school for many years but has also enjoyed a successful parallel career since the 1980s as a professional artist and interior designer. Since 2006 he has been regularly appointed to a number of prestigious ocean and river cruise lines, either as resident artist, guest lecturer on art history or as destination speaker for more than forty countries. Most recently this work has successfully extended to art guiding through important towns and museums in France, Belgium, Holland and Spain.

**Rules for bringing a guest to a lecture**

I should like to clarify the ‘house rules’ on guests attending lectures.

We are limited as to the number of guests / visitors we can accommodate because of the lecture hall capacity. **Any request to bring a guest**(or to change your lecture session as a ‘one-off’)**must be booked through the Membership Secretary (Ray Wright;****tasoxford@gmail.com****) in advance of lecture day.**

1. Those on the waiting list may attend one lecture during the Society year.

2. Any member may bring one guest to a lecture no more than twice during the year.

3. Any individual guest / visitor is restricted to one booking per year.

I hope you will appreciate why we have to apply restrictions. We do ask for a donation of £7 for a guest.

**2. Study Days**

We do hope that those who attended the recent Study Day on Graphic Ikons of the Twentieth Century by Brian Healey enjoyed this look back at the fairly recent past.

**Save the date** for the next study day, which will be on **Tuesday 17 January 2023**at Rewley House on **The Home Beautiful – Pre-Raphaelite Interiors**byJoanna Banham.More information will be provided nearer the time.

**3. Visits**

The Visits Team are busy planning a mixed programme for 2022-23, with local walking tours and trips further afield, as well as some of the online visits that have been so popular in the past two years.

There are a few places still available for **members and those on the waiting list** for the first visit of the year. This is an exclusive audience with the internationally renowned artist Anna Dumitriu and viewing of the **Collateral Effects** exhibition at the North Wall Gallery on 6 October at 3 pm. If you are quick, you can book a place by clicking on the link below:

<https://forms.gle/77qjEgdDJrPP7TJu8>

**Save the dates** for visits during November:

**Wednesday 2 November and Tuesday 8 November:** walks around Eynsham during the morning and afternoon with Steve Parrinder, local historian.

**Monday 21 November:** guided visits to Leighton House and Sambourne House in London (members to make their own travel arrangements).

Further information and booking details will be sent out about 4 weeks prior to each event.

**4. Volunteering with TASO**

**Study Day team member:** Our Study Day organisers Sue Hine and Nicola Park are looking for a third person to join the team to assist with the practicalities of organising these events. If you are interested in knowing more about this role and what is involved, please email tasoxford@gmail.com and we will get in contact with you.

**Help before lectures:**Before each lecture (morning and afternoon), we need two volunteers to sit at the registration desk checking off names of members as they arrive and two more to help in the kitchen serving coffee and clearing up afterwards. If you are able to help, please click on the link below. This will take you to a form where you can specify whether you are prepared to assist in either or both of these activities.

<https://forms.gle/e3RuM6wGgCuLQymH8>

We would like to thank the members who responded to the email with this form that was sent out on Thursday 22 September – and would ask them not to complete the form again. However, it would be great to have more volunteers and the Trustees would like to encourage many others to reply so that each person only gets called on to help once during the year. It is a great way to get to know other TASO members!

I hope that during 2022-23 we will deliver the variety of programme we can all enjoy, and I look forward to meeting you at some of the above events.

Very best wishes from the Trustees and myself

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**The current Trustees are:**

Ann McIlhinney (Chair)

David Barron (Treasurer)

Ruth Burdett (Secretary)

Sue Hine (Study Days)

David Stern (Programme Secretary)

Carol Brownson (Communications)

Alison Madden (Visits)

Stephanie North (Community Arts Projects)

Ray Wright (Membership Secretary)

**TASO Newsletter July 2022**

Dear Members and those on the Waiting List

**New TASO membership year**

A warm welcome back to those who have renewed their membership for the coming Society year. The renewal process is almost complete and you should soon receive a confirmation of your membership along with details of next year’s lecture programme, which promises to be as varied and interesting as ever. Similarly, those on the Waiting List should have heard or will soon hear whether they are being offered a place for 2022-23. We look forward to welcoming some new members.

**TASO AGM**

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 14 September at the Maths Institute. The notification process will start later this week with an email from our Secretary requesting nominations for Trustees and any resolutions. Final papers will be sent out in August, at which stage we will confirm all details on holding the meeting.

**Save the date!**

The next Study Day will take place on Wednesday 28th September at Rewley House. It will be a three-part presentation by Howard Smith on *Graphic Icons of the Twentieth Century: Capturing Real People doing Real Things.*Howard uses film clips, photojournalism and advertising to explore a range of topics, including the GPO film unit and the birth of documentary films, Hitler’s film maker Leni Riefensahl and the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, and Britain in 1950 through the eyes of *Picture Post.*

Save the date for a fascinating multimedia look back at artistic creativity for a purpose in the 1930s-1950s. Information on how to book will be provided nearer the time.

I hope you all spend an enjoyable summer and look forward to meeting you in person as we go into the new Society year.

With best wishes from the current TASO Trustees.

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**Newsletter June 2022**

Dear Members and those on the Waiting List

We are coming to the end of this Society year – another year that did not go the way we had hoped as, once again, many of our events had to take place on Zoom. I would like to thank you all for your virtual attendance at the TASO activities over the past 10 months and do hope you have enjoyed what has been on offer. However, I hope you will also understand the desire of the Trustees, many of our members and the lecturers to conduct the final few events of this year live. We do convey our apologies to all those who would have preferred to watch at home.

Who knows what the next TASO year will bring? We are cautiously optimistic, whilst trying to cover all options. Our Zoom licence has been renewed for another 12 months, we will include some online visits in our programme, and our technical team will continue to investigate the issues associated with combining a live lecture with online transmission. Depending on what happens with Covid-19 over the summer we will make decisions on how to proceed in the autumn.

Meanwhile, our lecture programme for 2022-23 is complete and ready for distribution, the study days for the year are organised and the visits team is well advanced in its planning. We would like to thank all the teams involved for their enthusiasm in ‘keeping the show on the road’.

**1.** **Remember to renew your membership**

The Membership Secretary, Ray Wright, sent out emails to all TASO members on 12 May, inviting renewal of membership for the 2022/23 year. **The subscription remains at £45 and the deadline for payment is 30 June.**

Many thanks to those who have already renewed their membership. Ray will send out individual reminders later in June to those we have yet to hear from. **After 30 June spare places will be offered to people on our long waiting list.**The TASO membership year begins on 1 July.

**2. Don’t miss the Celebration Garden Party!**

**Thursday 7 July 2.00-5.00 pm**

**Liddon Quad, Keble College, Oxford**

Come and join fellow TASO members and help make this a very enjoyable social event in the open air at Liddon Quad. We hope for sunshine but if the weather is poor we will move the event into the spacious college dining room. Please note: there is a lift for those unable to manage the stairs.

The cost is **£10** per person, to include a glass of Prosecco and a traditional afternoon tea (finger sandwiches, strawberries and cream, a selection of cakes, tea or coffee, water and orange juice).

If you have not already done so, you can purchase your ticket now by clicking on the link below, which will take you through to our TicketSource page.

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/The-Arts-Society-Oxford/t-nokzdkq>

**If you have already purchased your ticket and have a dietary requirement**please send an email to tasoxford@gmail.com to let us know about this. A question about this has now been added to the TicketSource page but was omitted from the early bookings. We can then pass the information to the caterers who will, we assume, make every effort to meet particular dietary requirements, although we cannot make any guarantees.

We hope that as many members as possible will come and be part of this one-off event!

**3. The June lecture**

The final lecture of this year will be given live in Magdalen Grove Auditorium and, thanks to those who volunteered to help, we will be serving drinks (free of charge). Tea and coffee will be available between 10.20 and 10.50 am before the morning lecture and between 1.20 and 1.50 pm before the afternoon lecture.

**Wednesday 8 June at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm – Contrapuntal forms: Barbara Hepworth and Terry Frost**

In 1950 Barbara Hepworth asked Terry Frost to be her studio assistant in carving the monumental stone sculpture, Contrapuntal Forms, the work she was sending to the 1951 Festival of Britain. She was already widely known for her abstract sculpture; he had recently graduated from Camberwell School of Art, a mature student returning to painting after spending much of the War in a Bavarian prison camp.

Neighbours on the Cornish coast at St Ives, the two also shared a passionate belief in art as the expression of emotion and experience, and in the power of abstraction to convey this most clearly. Contrapuntal Forms was one of the sculptural high points of the Festival, and in the years that followed, both Frost in painting and Hepworth in sculpture continued their explorations of form, space, shape and colour in the changing Cornish light, creating works which brought them international reputation and national honours.

This lecture considers the achievement of these two remarkable artists, who brought to the cold geometries of abstraction an extra dimension of human warmth and vitality.

**Our lecturer Justine Hopkins**studied History of Art at the Courtauld Institute. She has lectured regularly for Tate Britain, Tate Modern, the V&A, National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery, as well as to Oxbridge and Bristol Universities, Christie’s Fine Art, the Art Fund, and groups such as the Bradford on Avon Arts Association, Friends of Covent Garden and U3A. Her publications include The Art of John Martin (2001), Michael Ayrton: A Biography (1994) and articles for Apollo Magazine and Modern Painters.

**Finally:**

We would like to remind you that you should **not** attend a ticketed TASO event without having booked a place. If you cannot remember whether you have booked, please email tasoxford@gmail.com and a member of the team will check and get back to you. If the event was booked through our TicketSource page, you should have received an immediate confirmation to your email address. It is worth checking in your 'spam' folder, in case the email has been put in there.

The Trustees and I hope to see many of you at the Celebration Garden Party but if you cannot join us we would like to send best wishes to you for an enjoyable summer.

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter May 2022**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List

May is the penultimate month of our Society year. I would therefore like to start the Newsletter with an important item:

**Membership Renewal**

The Membership Secretary, Ray Wright, will be sending out renewal notices at the beginning of May for TASO membership 2022/23.

We hope that you have enjoyed the varied programme of lectures, study days, virtual tours and Oxford walking tours during 2021/22. Although most of these events again had to be held online, we are cautiously optimistic about a move to live events from now onwards, and our Lecture, Visits and Study Day teams have been working hard to plan an interesting schedule of events for next year.

You are encouraged to renew your membership as soon as possible and certainly before the end of June. From 1 July onwards, any remaining spaces will be offered to our Waiting List. The membership subscription remains at **£45**, unchanged for 9 years, and excellent value for money!

Now to news of upcoming events.

**1. Study Day**

**Raphael – Genius of the Renaissance**withJo Walton at Rewley House on**Monday 23 May, 10.00 am – 3.00 pm**

The study day consists of three lectures and the cost is £42, including tea/coffee and biscuits, and a three-course buffet lunch (vegetarian option available). There are still some places available. To book a place, please click on the application link below which will take you through to the TicketSource booking page. Applications will close on 6 May, so do not delay!

**Application Link:** <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/The-Arts-Society-Oxford/taso-study-day-raphael-genius-of-the-renaissance/e-rxxkap>

**2. Lecture Programme – for members only**

We are hopeful that the May lectures can be given live in the Magdalen Grove Auditorium however, because of some uncertainty about technical support, we are not planning to do a simultaneous stream to Zoom. We would like to convey our apologies to all those members who would have preferred to watch at home.

The Programme Secretaries will send out an email before the lecture day to confirm that the lectures will be given live.

**Wednesday 11 May at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm: A Child of Six Could Do It! Cartoonists’ Views of Modern Art**

Modern art is often considered ‘difficult’, but it is much less so when seen through the eyes of some of the greatest cartoonists of the last 150 years, from Courbet to the Britart of the 1990s. This is a chance to enjoy the insights and cartoons of (among others) Daumier, Larry, Thelwell, Matt, the wise guys at the New Yorker magazine and, of course, the immortal Giles. Collectively, they provide a revealing and sidelong view of 150 years of modern art, which is absorbing, illuminating and, above all, funny.

**Our lecturer Barry Venning is a**historian of British art with a particular focus on the work of JMW Turner, on whom he has published widely, although his interests and teaching extend from medieval architecture to contemporary British art. He is currently Associate Lecturer with the Open University, and lectures on a freelance basis for The Arts Society, Christie’s Education and other organisations.

Volunteers needed to help before lectures

We will not be serving tea and coffee before the May lectures as we need to compile a new list of volunteers willing to help both with this and with the registration desk. Our previous list is now more than two years out of date!

If you are able to help with either of these tasks before the June lecture and at future lectures during the 2022/23 year, please give your name, email address and telephone number on the list provided at the May lectures, and we will be in contact with you. Many of you have helped in previous years and know that these can be enjoyable and sociable tasks.

**3. Visits**

There will be a coach trip to **Elton Hall and Gardens** on **Monday 13 June**. Full details will be sent out in an email; you may already have received this by the time this newsletter arrives. Tickets are **£50** each and will be for **members only**. Any places that remain unfilled near the closing date will be offered to those on the waiting list.

**‘Treasures of the Kingdom of Mercia’**, our first residential excursion for members since the start of the pandemic, will be from **11-14 October 2022**. This will be a 4-day, 3-night trip based in Birmingham, and amongst other delights includes tours of Winterbourne House and Gardens, Ragley Hall and Gardens, the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham’s Jewellery Quarter and a canal boat trip on Birmingham’s waterways. The likely cost is **around £790** per person sharing a double/twin room. If you would be interested in going, and would like to know more, please email the Visits Team at tasoxford@gmail.com.

**4. Celebration Garden Party**

Please **save the date**for our **Celebration Garden Party** on the afternoon of **Thursday 7 July**in the **Liddon Quad, Keble College** (**members only**).

Tickets will cost **£10** to include a glass of Prosecco, and a traditional afternoon tea: finger sandwiches, strawberries and cream, a selection of cakes, tea or coffee, water and orange juice. We hope it will be a lovely sunny afternoon but if the weather is bad the event will move into the college dining room.

You will receive your invitation email later in May with information on how to book your tickets. We hope you will join us!

**5.**   **Do you have good layout and design skills?**

We are planning to put together some large display panels to show those attending the garden party some of the exciting Community Arts Projects (CAP) that TASO has supported in recent years. We would like to find a volunteer (or a couple of volunteers) with a good eye for design who could help the CAP team with the layout of these panels. If you have the necessary skills and would be willing to help, please email me at tasoxford@gmail.com or come and talk to me before or after the May lectures.

**6. Are you interested in Heritage Volunteering?**

TASO members have been involved in a number of different heritage conservation projects over the years, as outlined on the TASO website, and during the summer of 2019 there was an enthusiastic meeting of volunteers who were interested in this aspect of TASO. Unfortunately, at that point there were no projects for them to work on, although approaches were made to one or two potential sources of heritage work. Then Covid-19 came along and there were no further developments in this area.

There is now the possibility of a book conservation project in one of the Oxford colleges, although discussions are at a very early stage. If any **members or those on the waiting list** would be interested in knowing more about Heritage Volunteering and the possibility of getting involved, please email me at tasoxford@gmail.com. Also, if any member feels they have an interesting contact or idea, do get in touch with me – either at a lecture or via email.

An immediate volunteering opportunity

The Heritage Volunteer Coordinator of The Arts Society Abingdon, Angela Thomas, has contacted us to ask whether any TASO member would be interested in joining the group doing book conservation at The Angus Library at Regent’s Park College, Oxford.

This project was put on hold for two years due to Covid, and over that period the team lost three members. They are now planning to re-start work, and the team has recruited two new members from TASO, who are already trained, but they have a vacancy for another volunteer. The team normally consists of nine people, in three groups of three, so that each group gives one Friday in three to work in the archive library.

If you are interested and would like more information, please give Angela a call on 07810 808795. There will be a refresher day for the team on 10 May, which would be an ideal opportunity for a new member to find out more.

**7. Church Recording**

After the April newsletter, a few people got in touch with me to express their interest in Church Recording. If any other **members or those on the waiting list** would be interested in being involved in Church Recording in the future, please email me at tasoxford@gmail.com. For more information, see the Church Recording Society website at [www.churchrecordingsociety.org.uk](http://www.churchrecordingsociety.org.uk/).

Finally, do remember that it is **Oxfordshire Artweeks from 7-29 May**. To find out what is on across the county and online see <https://www.artweeks.org/>

With best wishes from the Trustees and myself

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter April 2022**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List,

I am afraid that this is going to be another long newsletter but there is a lot of information so please read it through to the end.

An important piece of news is that the **April lecture will be given online**. The Trustees had hoped that we would be back in the Magdalen Grove Auditorium in April and that the lecture would be live (perhaps with a simultaneous Zoom transmission). Unfortunately, because of technical issues related to the lecture theatre, we will be delaying our return there until May.

**1. Lecture Programme – for members only**

**Wednesday 13 April at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm: The Empty Chair from Van Gogh to Ai Weiwei**

We all use chairs! But over the past 150 years, artists across the world have been using the humble chair as a conduit for profound ideas on themes from protest, absence or memory to domestic or everyday life. In Europe, Egon Schiele, René Magritte, Gerhard Richter, Joseph Beuys used empty chairs for personal expression, while in America, Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, Joseph Kosuth and Bruce Nauman used chairs to develop the exciting new artistic movements arising in the sixties. The Palestinian artist, Mona Hatoum, adapted chairs to explore female identity and the Columbian artist, Doris Salcedo, stacked 1,550 between two buildings to remember anonymous victims of war. These are just some of the many diverse artists and uses of chairs we will be looking at in this talk.

**Our lecturer is Angela Findlay, who**is a professional artist, writer and freelance lecturer with a long career of teaching art in prisons in Germany and England. Her time ‘behind bars’ and later as Arts Coordinator of the London-based Koestler Arts, gave her many insights into the huge impact the arts can have in terms of rehabilitation. She is currently advising the Ministry of Justice and presenting the case for the arts to be included in their new rehabilitation and education policies.

**PLEASE NOTE: This lecture will be delivered on Zoom Webinar at 11 am and 2 pm. You will receive an email with full information and the links nearer the time.**

**2. Visits**

The Liz Woolley walks on ‘Leisure and Entertainment in Victorian and Edwardian Oxford’ are fully booked.

**Save the date**for the next visit on **Monday 13 June** to**Elton Hall**(for **members only**)**.**Further details and booking information will be sent out nearer the time.

**3. Study Days – for members only**

Many of you will be looking forward to our first live study day at Rewley House for over 2 years. **Save the date** in your diary:

**Monday 23 May. Raphael – Genius of the Renaissance**with**Jo Walton.**

Jo Walton will look at the painter Raphael’s short but highly successful life, beginning with his origins in Urbino (where he was born in 1483) and subsequent moves to Florence and then to Rome, where he died in 1520. Despite the brevity of his career, his legacy would reverberate down the centuries, making his work a benchmark for later artists.

Further details and booking information will be sent out later in April.

If you would like to plan further ahead, we have also booked Rewley House for **Wednesday 28 September** for a study day on **Graphic Icons of the Twentieth Century**with**Howard Smith.**

**4.**Please**save the date**for a:

**Celebration Garden Party**

**Thursday 7 July in Keble College Gardens**

We would like to invite you to this special event, which will be a rather belated celebration of TASO’s 10th Anniversary as well as a celebration of being able to get together in this way. Our original planned 10th anniversary event in 2020 was cancelled because of Covid-19 and, due to the pandemic, it could not be held in 2021 either – so here we are, celebrating our 12th anniversary!

We would also like to celebrate the Community Arts Projects that TASO has supported in recent years and of which we should all feel proud. Summaries of these projects used to be shared in slides before each lecture but when these were moved online this communication was stopped. Consequently, many members now know little about TASO’s charitable giving. We hope you will welcome the opportunity to find out more.

Most of all, it will be a joy to meet and socialize in Keble College’s Liddon Quad and enjoy afternoon tea and a glass of prosecco together.

**The garden party will be a ticketed event, with a charge towards the cost**. Information on how to book your tickets will be available in early May. We hope you will join us!

**5. Get to Know**

As Oxford is so rich in wonderful buildings and museums, the Get to Know… sessions were set up to explore a small number of paintings or objects in a particular gallery of a museum or a specific aspect of a building, for example, the Old Schools Quadrangle or stained glass in a college. Each session is led by one of our members who does not pretend to be an expert but has researched the subject and is willing to share the knowledge he or she has gained. These events were very popular, for their informality and opportunity to meet other members in a small group. The ideas for these sessions come from the members and we have enjoyed a tremendous range of subjects.

The Get to Know sessions have, for many years, been organized by Alison Porter but she would now like to step down and we should like to thank her for her part in making these sessions so successful. We are looking for a volunteer who would be willing to take over the organization from Alison, who is happy to help someone new to ‘learn the ropes’. If you would like to know more, please email me at tasoxford@gmail.com.

6. **Church Recording**

Church recording promotes the recognition of the rich artistic and historical heritage of places of worship by recording their contents. Church recorders work as a team (typically of about 10 people) at a single place of worship. They research and document the memorials, internal stonework, woodwork, textiles, windows, pictures, books and papers, musical instruments and tiles. A group of TASO members and Group Leader Liz Rhodes were working on a Church Record for the Parish Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Beckley when Covid-19 delayed completion, however the document is now almost ready for binding. A tremendous amount of work went into producing this Record and it is exciting that it is nearing completion!

The Arts Society withdrew from church recording at a national level in 2020. As a result, church recorders themselves formed the Church Recording Society in 2021 as the national society for the church recording project. Local Arts Societies can therefore continue to volunteer for this activity, for the benefit of their local churches. Would you be interested in getting involved in church recording in the future? If so, please send an email to tasoxford@gmail.com expressing your interest. For more information on church recording see the Church Recording Society website at [www.churchrecodingsociety.org.uk](http://www.churchrecodingsociety.org.uk/).

**7. Trialling an event booking system**

Finally, the Trustees are exploring the use of use of a booking system for TASO events. We are accustomed to using these when making online bookings of tickets for the theatre, an art exhibition or, during the past couple of years, entry into many stately home and National Trust properties, for example.

Look out for our first trial event that will be booked in this way, and don’t worry if you do not have a printer or a smartphone to show your ticket at the event, as we will be able to check your name against a list of ticketholders. We will be asking for your feedback afterwards!

With best wishes from the Trustees and myself

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter March 2022**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List,

Meteorological spring is here, although the weather is still variable and unpredictable. Nevertheless, my walks now take me past swathes of daffodils and crocuses, which lifts the spirits. There is also hope of a return to some type of ‘normality’ in future months, as Covid case numbers are beginning to fall and the Government has recently removed all the remaining Covid restrictions. The Trustees have decided that the March lecture will be delivered online but we plan to return to live lectures in the Magdalen Grove Auditorium from April onwards. More of this in the next newsletter.

February was a busy month. The lecture by Rosamund Bartlett on Fabergé and the Firebird was very well received, with almost 50% of those who returned the feedback form rating it as outstanding. The walks with Lizzie Rowe on Oxford Statues and Carvings were heavily over-subscribed. The very interesting online tour of St Edmund Hall and its art collection were watched live on Zoom Webinar by more than 140 people , with others viewing the recording later in the day.

In March, in addition to the lecture, there are opportunities to go on the first TASO visit by coach since 2019, to take part in a competition to find an image that says ‘TASO’, and to get involved in a new project with the Mausolea and Monuments Trust.

**1. Lecture Programme – for members only**

**Wednesday 9 March at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm: ‘Singing in Secret: William Byrd, Queen Elizabeth and Worship under Wraps’**

Four hundred years ago saw the death of the outstanding English composer William Byrd; prolific and successful, he was a favourite at the court of Queen Elizabeth. But Byrd led a complicated existence as a devout Catholic in troubled Tudor times, when to infringe strict religious rules ran the risk of imprisonment or even death. Forced underground, he created some of his most expressive music for fellow Catholics to use in secret worship. This talk celebrates the best of Byrd’s awe-inspiring work and reflects on what it means to create superb art in circumstances of great danger.

Our lecturer is **Sandy Burnett**, who is one of the UK’s most versatile music commentators, enjoying a career that combines broadcasting, performing and lecturing. After working as music director for the RSC, National Theatre and in London’s West End, Sandy Burnett spent a decade as one of the core team of presenters on BBC Radio 3. He devises and leads cultural holidays all over the world, is the author of the Idler Guide to Classical Music, runs an online classical music appreciation Listening Club and is a highly sought-after double bassist on the London jazz scene

**PLEASE NOTE: this lecture will be delivered twice on Zoom Webinar only, at 11 am and 2 pm. You will receive an email with full information and the links nearer the time.**

**2. Visits**

**On Wednesday 23 March there will be a coach trip and guided tour of Hampton Court Palace – for members only.**

Details of this trip and information on how to book have recently been sent out. Booking will open at 12 noon on Friday 4 March and places will be allocated on a ‘first come, first served’ basis.

The visits team are excited at the prospect of being able to plan visits further afield but will continue arranging local tours as well. **Save the dates** for the following events during the next few months:

**Tuesday 5 April and Wednesday 4 May**: Small group walking tours (for members only) with Liz Woolley on **‘Leisure and Entertainment in Victorian and Edwardian Oxford’**

**Monday 13 June. Visit to Elton Hall –members only:**Elton Hall is an historic house standing in landscaped parkland on the Cambridgeshire/ Northamptonshire border. The manor of Elton was given to Katharine Parr by Henry VIII after their marriage. Since 1660 the property has been and still is run by the Proby family who have added many Old Masters and English portraiture to the house and its collections over the centuries.

**3. Calling all photographers and artists!**

The Arts Society Wyvern Area, which consists of 11 societies covering parts of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, is planning to produce a 2023 wall calendar that will be available for members to purchase. Each society within the area is being asked to supply an image for a page in the calendar. They have requested that the images should be of people, places or objects that represent your Arts Society.

Our plan in TASO is to have a competition to select the image that will appear on our calendar month. This could be a photograph of something that says 'TASO' to you (not just 'Oxford') or it could be a sculpture, painting, etching or drawing, although these would have to be submitted as photographs rather than the originals.

So, photographers and artists out there, put your thinking caps on to come up with some ideas. This is going to be quite a challenge, but you have the spring and summer to think about it! For now, just start taking pictures on your digital camera or phone on a high resolution (300 dpi+) setting if possible (but not essential) or begin to think about an artwork. Full details of where and when to send your photographs will follow in a future newsletter. You will be asked to say why the image you have sent in represents TASO for you.

**4. Heritage Volunteering: Mausolea Project**

Would you like to do some Heritage Volunteering? The Arts Society has a new national project with the **Mausolea and Monuments Trust**, which is a charity founded in 1997 to preserve mausolea in Great Britain. The Trust keeps a geographical list of all mausolea in the country and is looking for volunteers to help to update this list and include notes on the condition of the mausolea.

This is a fascinating project, especially for those interested in history and historical buildings and will help to conserve an often unsung part of our heritage. The work can be done alone, in pairs or in small groups. If you would like to get involved, please send an email to tasoxford@gmail.com with ‘Mausolea and Monuments’ as the subject heading and we will send you more details about the project and who to contact.

I do hope you will find something of interest to look forward to with TASO over the coming months.

With best wishes from the Trustees and myself.

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter February 2022**

Dear Members,

As we head into the second month of 2022, we are seeing the first signs of spring, with the days getting visibly longer, the first bulbs peeping out of the ground and the sun, when it comes out from behind the clouds, conveying some warmth. This is cheering after what seemed a very grey January.

The situation with Covid is less cheering. Although the Omicron variant appears to cause milder symptoms, particularly among those who have been fully vaccinated, the infection rate remains very high. The Trustees have therefore decided that the February lecture will be delivered online and we will continue to monitor the situation on a regular basis.

**1. Lecture Programme – for members only**

**Wednesday 9 February at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm: ‘Fabergé and the Firebird: Russian Art under the Last Czar’**

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Russian culture had come of age. The reign of Nicholas II saw a creative explosion during which Russian creativity flourished as it never had before and was for the first time recognised abroad. Carl Fabergé opened a branch of his Petersburg jewellery business in London, Rachmaninoff performed in New York, Chagall exhibited in Berlin, and Diaghilev’s long crusade to win recognition for Russian culture abroad culminated in the creation of the Ballets Russes in Paris.

Our lecturer is Dr Rosalind Bartlett, whose work as a cultural historian ranges across the arts. She is the author of several books, including biographies of Chekhov and Tolstoy, and a study of Wagner’s influence in Russia. Her new translation of Anna Karenina for Oxford World’s Classics was published to acclaim in 2014, and she is currently writing a history of the Russian avant-garde. She has written on art, music and literature for a broad range of publications and lectured widely in the UK and overseas.

**PLEASE NOTE: this lecture will be delivered twice on Zoom Webinar only, at 11 am and 2 pm. You will receive an email with full information and the links nearer the time.**

**2. Visits**

The Visits Team have been busy planning an interesting programme for spring. The list below gives an overview and full details will be emailed to you.

**Online virtual tour for members and waiting list: St Edmund’s Hall and its Art Collection on Wednesday 23 February at 11.00 am.**Led by Professor Jonathan Yates. Further information and a Zoom Webinar link will be sent out nearer the time.

**Small group walking tours for members and waiting list, with members having priority: Statues and Carvings of Oxford 2**led by Lizzie Rowe. These will be held on several dates in late February and early March. You should already have received an email about these walks and booking will close on Friday 11 February at 5 pm.

**Save the date: On Wednesday 23 March there will be a coach trip and guided tour of Hampton Court Palace – for members only.** This will be led by Sue Doran, who gave the excellent lecture in July 2021 on the Portraits of Elizabeth I. Put the date in your diaries for now. Further details will follow.

With best wishes from the Trustees and myself.

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter January 2022**

Dear Members and those on the Waiting List

**Happy New Year to you all!**

We begin another year with an unprecedented increase in Covid cases, this time largely due to the Omicron variant. As a result, our plans for TASO events for the start of 2022 have been reappraised, and the January and February lectures and the January Study Day will be given online. We will continue to monitor the situation as we move into spring. Meanwhile, there is plenty on offer for you to enjoy in the next few months!

**1. January lecture: Wednesday 12 January, members only.**

**Packing Up the Nation: Saving London’s Museums and Galleries in the Second World War**is the gripping and sometimes hilarious story of how a band of heroic curators and eccentric custodians saved Britain’s national heritage during our Darkest Hour. As Hitler’s forces gathered on the other side of the Channel to threaten these islands, men and women from London’s national museums, galleries and archives forged extraordinary plans to evacuate their collections to safety, dispatching them throughout the country on a series of secret wartime adventures, retold in this talk.

Our lecturer **Caroline Shenton** is an archivist and historian. She was formerly Director of the Parliamentary Archives in London, and before that was a senior archivist at the National Archives.

**PLEASE NOTE: this lecture will be delivered twice on Zoom Webinar, at 11 am and 2 pm. You will receive an email with full information and the links a couple of days before the lecture.**

**2. Changes to the lecture programme**

Please note that alterations have had to be made to the lecture programme because of practical presentation issues and ill-health. The February and March lectures will now be:

**·**9 February. Rosamund Bartlett - **Fabergé and the Firebird: Russian art under the last Tsar**

**·**9 March. Sandy Burnett - **Singing in Secret: William Byrd, Queen Elizabeth, and worship under wraps**

Information on all lectures can be found on the TASO website.

**3. January Study Day, open to members and those on the waiting list**

The study day on Tuesday 18 January on **The Age of Augustus John: Inspiration and Revolution in British Art** will be given online, starting at 10.00 am.

The students who studied at the Slade School of Art in London in the 1890s would go on to become some of the most significant names in early twentieth-century British art. They lived at a point of change, between the traditional orthodoxies of Victorian art in England, and the transformation that would be wrought in the new century by dynamic developments in France. When the traditional canons established during the Renaissance were blown apart by waves of Modernism: Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism and the First World War, their reputations would be shattered, and the legacy of many of them forgotten.

The study day explores how, in the space of just a few decades, the art world changed forever and looks at some of the leading British artists who were swept up in that revolution. It will consist of two 45-minute lectures, each followed by time for questions, with a 15-minute coffee break between them. **Look out for the email with the link (and payment details for those on the waiting list), which will be sent out nearer the date. The study day is free for members.**

Our lecturer is **David Boyd Haycock**, who is a freelance writer and curator based in Oxford. He is the author of several books, including Paul Nash (2002) and A Crisis of Brilliance: Five Young British Artists and the Great War (2009), which he turned into a major exhibition at Dulwich Picture Gallery in the summer of 2013. He is currently writing a new biography of the young Augustus John.

**4. Visits**

We do hope that you enjoyed the virtual tour of the Monumental Squares and Fountains of Rome in December 2021, which provided a broad overview of 28 centuries of Roman history through the monuments we can see today. I am sure it left many of us wanting to be in Rome – or anywhere in Italy – rather than in grey, drizzly England!

The aim of the Visits Team is to give TASO members opportunities to take part in a wider range of arts-related events than can be provided by lectures. In the past, they have arranged visits to a range of places of interest each year, as well as residential trips within the UK and overseas. Since the start of the pandemic, they have had to narrow their horizons to the provision of virtual tours and smaller Oxford walking tours and visits but have lots of ideas for the future, when we are all able to travel more freely. Meanwhile, they have plans for a **Virtual Tour of St Edmund’s Hall, Oxford** in February and for more of our very popular **Oxford walking tours** with Lizzy Rowe, provided no new Covid restrictions are imposed in the interim. More about these in an email later in January and in the February Newsletter.

**5. The Community Arts Projects Team would like your help**

Since TASO became a charity, members’ subscriptions have helped many local organisations with small grants for arts-related projects. It is notable that during the pandemic there has been a decrease in the number of organisations submitting requests for funding and the Community Arts Projects Team would like your help in remedying this.

**WHO DO YOU KNOW?**

Your Arts Society is keen to give grants of up to £2,000 to fund Community Arts Projects in Oxford. For example, these projects may include:

·       Promoting artistic experiences in schools, either by providing equipment or supporting schools to work in partnership with a facilitator;

·       Enabling community artistic groups to expand their experience or to hold exhibitions;

·       Supporting musical experiences, including dance, for all ages and abilities in schools, choirs and orchestras, and in care homes by providing professional expertise and instruments.

We know that a modest amount of money can help launch or support initiatives that give people enormous pleasure and lasting memories to enrich their lives.

Please refer anyone you think might benefit from a grant to our website [www.theartssocietyoxford.org.uk](http://www.theartssocietyoxford.org.uk/) or write to Stephanie North, on tasoxford@gmail.com

Best Wishes

Ann McIlhinney,

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

Together with TASO trustees