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**Newsletter October 2023**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List

**Welcome** to the new society year! A particularly warm welcome is extended to our new members. In early November we will be holding a **New Members’ Coffee Morning**. This provides an opportunity for members who have just joined us to meet the trustees and to learn more about our society. An email giving details of the event will be sent out to new members during October.

It was good to see so many members at the AGM on 13th September and to have the opportunity to socialise afterwards. I hope you all enjoyed as much as I did Louise Schofield’s lecture on the race to rescue some of the world’s most stunning Roman mosaics. For those of you who were unable to attend the AGM, or who would like to re-read the papers, 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 2022-23: Stephanie North (Community Arts Projects) and Alison Madden (Visits).

For those who did not collect their **membership programme card** at the AGM, these will be available for collection at the next few lectures.

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

**The Valois Dukes of Burgundy: dazzling and dastardly**

Few dynastic families in western Europe wielded such power or wealth in the late Middle Ages as the Dukes of Burgundy. With territories stretching as far as the Low Countries, theirs was a sumptuous court to rival all others. But they would prove dastardly as well as dazzling, and nothing would stop them from their ultimate goal. This lecture will follow their rise to glory and creation of their own superpower and consider the associated trappings of such a flamboyant lifestyle such as art, fashion and gastronomy.

**Lecturer: Carole Petipher is an experienced guide and lecturer on combined history and art tours in France. She has lived and worked on a number of bespoke river vessels and converted barges there and used them as a platform from which to research her lectures. She uses art in all its guises to explore the characters who shaped France and likes to delve behind the scenes to discover hidden truths.**

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

At the start of this new lecture year, 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 William Hogarth: Materials and Morals by Lars Tharp enjoyed his combination of two of his most popular subjects: ceramics and Hogarth.

The next study day will be on **Tuesday 9 January 2024**at Rewley House on **Sicilian Splendours**by Paul Roberts.More information will be provided nearer the time.

**3. Visits**

The Visits Team are busy organising more guided walks over the next few months and details will be emailed to you as they become available. They are also planning a **four-day residential coach trip to the north east of England** beginning on **Monday 13 May 2024**. Put the date in your diary and look out for more details soon.

**4. The newsletter can now be viewed on the TASO website**

From this month onwards, in addition to being sent to you by email, the monthly newsletter will be posted on the TASO website (<https://theartssocietyoxford.org.uk/>). If you click on ‘About us’ you will be able to access the current newsletter as well as an archive of newsletters going back to January 2020. These make interesting reading, with near-realtime reporting of the impact of the arrival and duration of COVID!

I hope that during 2023-24 we will deliver a varied programme we can all enjoy, and I look forward to meeting you at some of the events throughout the year.

Very best wishes from the trustees and from me

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**The current Trustees are:**

Ann McIlhinney (Chair)

Ray Wright (Vice-chair; Membership Secretary)

David Barron (Treasurer)

Ruth Burdett (Secretary)

Sue Hine (Study Days)

David Stern (Programme Secretary)

Carol Brownson (Communications)

Steve Rogers (Visits)

Liz West (Community Arts Projects)

**Click on the following link to visit our website**  [**https://theartssocietyoxford.org.uk/**](https://theartssocietyoxford.org.uk/)

**Members are reminded to add****tasoxford@gmail.com****to their Contacts or Address book**to ensure TASO emails do not go into your spam or junk folder.

**TASO Newsletter September 2023**

Dear Members

The main event that launches our Society year is the **AGM, lecture and drinks reception**, which will take place on:

**Wednesday 13th September** at the**Andrew Wiles Building, Mathematical Institute, Woodstock Road, Oxford**.

The morning begins with **coffee or tea and registration from 10.00 am**. Your membership card with details of the lecture programme for 2023-24 will be available for you to collect and you will be asked whether you would be willing to help occasionally with registration and/or serving coffee and tea before lectures at our usual venue of Magdalen College’s Grove Auditorium.

The **AGM will begin at 10.30 am**, followed by what promises to be a fascinating lecture about an archaeological race against time (more details below) and then a drinks receptionfinishing at about 12.45 pm. This event provides an opportunity for all members of The Arts Society Oxford to come together to socialise and the Trustees hope that as many of you as possible will come to join us. If you wish to stay on for lunch, the Mathematical Institute Café is open to the public and serves a range of hot and cold dishes.

**The AGM lecture: Recovering Zeugma from the Floodwaters of the Euphrates**

In Spring 2000 an archaeological drama began to unfold on the banks of the Euphrates in Turkey, close to the border with Syria. A small team of archaeologists found a Roman city with mosaics and wall paintings finer than those in Pompeii. Just behind them was the almost completed Birecik Dam and the Turks had begun to flood the great reservoir behind it. This lecture tells the story of the extraordinary archaeological rescue excavation that took place against waters rising at two feet a day. Fabulous treasures were recovered, including mosaic floors depicting colourful scenes from myths and legends.

The lecturer **Louise Schofield** is an archaeologist who was Curator of Greek Bronze Age and Geometric Antiquities at the British Museum from 1987-2000. Her book *The Myceneans* was co-published by the Getty and British Museums in 2007. She now writes, lectures and runs international archaeological projects - previously in south-eastern Turkey, Greece and Albania and currently in Ethiopia. She is Visiting Professor of Archaeology at the American University of Rome.

**The Visits team would like to hear your views**

The Visits team would like to thank the 115 members (about a quarter of the membership) who have so far responded to the members’ survey they sent out at the beginning of August. If you have not already completed the questionnaire, the team would really appreciate if you would do so. Your responses will help them in developing plans for visits during the coming year. As you can appreciate, there are a variety of different interests, and the team will make every effort to reflect these.

Please click on the following link to open the survey:

<https://forms.gle/EkAeo9mTpKQHhcRs7>

The guided walks have proved very popular but, based on the replies so far, fewer members have expressed an interest in residential trips. This is perhaps not surprising as the latter require a totally different commitment in terms of time and finance. As far as day trips are concerned, the team is trying to be imaginative, and the feedback received regarding car sharing was encouraging. It is apparent that a substantial number of members would prefer to travel by coach, and this would be an appropriate choice for many visits. However, coach hire is expensive and car-sharing may be an easy cost-reducing option for visits that are closer to Oxford or can only accept small groups.

The team received some very interesting ideas for visits, especially from members who view these as social events. It was suggested, for example, that members might wish to go to a café together after a guided walk. This will be optional, but from now on our tour guides will be asked to announce this possibility to the group after every walk.

Finally, please note that the Visits team now has its own email address (tasovisits@gmail.com), which should make it easier for you to communicate with them. Please use this email address for any queries or issues relating to visits.

**Save the dates!**

The next Study Day on Wednesday 27th September ***William Hogarth:***Materials***and Morals***is fully booked. If you were unsuccessful in getting a place and would like your name to be added to a waiting list for any ticket that becomes available, do let the Study Team know via tasoxford@gmail.com. Usually there are one or two people who have to drop out before the event because of a change in their plans.

The next two Study Days for 2024 have now been booked:

**Tuesday 9th January 2024**: Paul Roberts on ***Sicilian Splendours***

**Friday 3rd May 2024:** Mark Cottle on ***Tragedy and Triumph: The Story of Polar Exploration***

Do **save the dates** in your diaries. More details and information on how to book will be sent out nearer the time.

I look forward to meeting many of you at the AGM and at lectures and other events as we go into the new society year.

With best wishes from me and the other TASO Trustees.

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**July newsletter - New TASO membership year**

Dear Members and those on the Waiting List,

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 have received 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 2023-24. We look forward to welcoming some new members.

Our Membership Secretary Ray Wright informs me that there are likely to be a few places that remain unfilled. **If you have a friend who is interested in joining TASO**, please encourage them to contact Ray at tasoxford@gmail.com and to specify if they would like to attend the same session as you (AM or PM). Assuming there are spaces available, he will do his very best to accommodate their requests.

**TASO AGM**

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 13th September at the Mathematical Institute. The notification process will start shortly with an email from our Secretary requesting nominations for Trustees and any resolutions. Final papers will be sent out at the end of August, at which stage we will confirm all details of the meeting.

**Save the date!**

The next Study Day will take place on Wednesday 27th September at Rewley House. It will be a three-part presentation by Lars Tharp (of BBC Antiques Roadshow fame) on ***William Hogarth: Materials and Morals****.*

Lars has put together a tailor-made programme for TASO. He will begin with an ‘accidental introduction’ to Hogarth and to the ceramics in his works. He will then describe the insatiable demand for porcelain in Europe until the end of the 1700s, focussing on tea and punch and on examples of Hogarth’s own work copied into clay. Finally, Lars will examine Hogarth’s moral positions and the attitudes he reveals in his art.

Save the date for what promises to be a somewhat different view of Hogarth’s work. Information on how to book will be 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

**TASO Newsletter June 2023**

Dear Members and those on the Waiting List

We are coming to the end of this Society year – a year that has returned closer to ‘normality’. All our lectures and study days have been given live for the first time since 2018-19 and there has been a range of visits, including the small group walking tours that have been particularly popular. Applications for support for Community Arts Projects have bounced back to pre-Covid levels or above. We would like to thank all the teams involved for their enthusiasm in ‘keeping the show on the road’.

I would also like to thank you all for your attendance at TASO activities over the past 10 months and do hope you have enjoyed what has been on offer. Meanwhile, our lecture programme for 2023-24 is complete, the first two study days for the year are organised and the visits team is well advanced in its planning.

**1.** **Membership renewal**

You should now have received an email from the Membership Secretary Ray Wright, inviting you to renew your membership of TASO for the 2023/24 year. **The subscription remains at £45 and the deadline for payment is 30 June.**

We would be grateful if you could renew your membership promptly. Ray will send out individual reminders later in June to those we have yet to hear from. **After 30 June any unfilled places will be offered to people on our waiting list.**The TASO membership year begins on 1 July.

**Please note that confirmation of 2023-24 membership will be sent out at the beginning of July to all those who have renewed**. Unless specifically requested, Ray will not be sending out individual confirmations during June as this would require more than 550 separate emails! If you have paid by bank transfer, you can check on your bank statement that the payment has gone through. Receipt of cheques will be confirmed directly by the Treasurer.

**2. The June lecture – for members only**

**Wednesday 8 June**at **11.00 am**and**2.00 pm**

**Crowns and Chalices: The Art of the Mediaeval Goldsmith**

Mediaeval goldsmiths worked with precious metals, particularly gold and silver. They were skilled at casting and forging, enamelling and setting precious stones and they produced some of the most intrinsically valuable and visually stunning small-scale objects that survive from the Middle Ages. The lecture will focus on ecclesiastical commissions as well as considering the lavish patronage of the nobility and royalty, including their devotional aids, plate and jewellery.

**Our lecturer Sally Dormer**is a lecturer and tutor for the Early Mediaeval Year Course at the V&A. She is Dean of ‘European Studies’ for two US universities, freelance lecturer for The Art Fund, as well as conducting study tours, cruises and tour groups. Sally has a BA in History from the University of Durham, and a PhD in Mediaeval Manuscript Illumination and MA in Mediaeval History of Art from the Courtauld Institute.

**3. How many volunteers does it take to run TASO for a year?**

The answer is about 90!

During June, we are holding a coffee morning to which we have invited all those who have given up their time to help keep TASO alive during the year from September 2022 to June 2023.This will give the Trustees the opportunity to thank those who have undertaken tasks in so many areas.

Putting together the list of invitees was certainly an eye-opener for me. The total came to around 90 names, including the Visits, Programme and Study Day organisers, Community Arts Projects team, Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary as well as those involved in Communications, IT and maintaining the TASO web site and all the pre-lecture volunteers and their organisers who have helped with registration and serving drinks. We are immensely grateful to them all.

I am concerned that we may have missed one or two names from the list, as there were a few last-minute changes of pre-lecture volunteers. If you think you should have been included and have not received an invitation, please contact me (Ann McIlhinney) via tasoxford@gmail.com.

We are always looking for new volunteers. It is great fun being part of one of the TASO teams – everyone has a new angle or an interesting idea to bring. If you would like to get involved and would like to know more, please email me.

**4. Finally…**

I know that some of our members managed to obtain tickets for the Vermeer exhibition at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. For those who have not been able to see this exhibition live, a documentary film was made to give others the opportunity to experience this once-in-a-lifetime exhibition on the big screen. There have been several screenings of this film at the Ultimate Picture Palace in Oxford and it will be shown there again on 18, 21 and 22 June.

The Arts Society Abingdon have asked us to let TASO members know that, at their request, the Abbey Cinema in Abingdon (where they hold their lectures) is to put on seven screenings of the film between Thursday 22 June and Thursday 29 June at various times of day. You can find full details on the Abbey Cinema website:

<https://theabbey.ac/web?film=64689b3625978a68b8114c49>

The Trustees join me in sending best wishes to you all. We are benefitting from a spell of better weather at present and I hope that you enjoying the sunshine and abundance of greenery and flowers.

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter May 2023**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List,

Welcome to the penultimate newsletter of our Society year. I would like to begin with some important information.

**Membership Renewal**

In 2022/23 we have had our first relatively ‘normal’ year since before the pandemic, with lectures and study days given live and a range of different walking tours and visits. However, we have not abandoned Zoom completely but continued with online virtual tours during the winter as these have proved so popular. We do hope that you have enjoyed this varied programme of events.

The Membership Secretary, Ray Wright, will be sending out renewal notices in early June for TASO membership 2023/24. The membership subscription remains at **£45**, unchanged for 10 years, and is, we believe, excellent value for money! You are encouraged to renew your membership as soon as you receive the renewal reminder and certainly before 30 June. From 1 July onwards, any non-renewed membership spaces will be offered to our Waiting List.

During the year, our brilliant Lecture, Study Day and Visits Teams have been working hard in the background to plan an interesting schedule of events for next year, including a return to residential visits, so we have plenty to look forward during 2023/24.

Now to news of upcoming events.

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

**Wednesday 10 May**at**11.00 am**and**2.00 pm.**

**Donatello: Renaissance Genius**

Donatello is an artistic giant of the Renaissance and has been called the greatest sculptor of all time. Outstandingly original and inventive across a range of media, he pioneered a new style that emerged in Florence around 1400, transforming its visual language (and visual landscape) through public and private sculptures – including for the Medici. This lecture highlights Donatello’s versatility and innovation in works for patrons in Florence, Siena and Padua.

Our lecturer **Paula Nuttall**is Director of the V&A Medieval and Renaissance Year Course. She is a specialist in Renaissance art, both Italian and Northern European, on which she has published widely, notably *From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting 1400-1500*(Yale, 2004). She has collaborated on major exhibitions including *Jan van Eyck: An Optical Revolution*(Ghent, 2020) and was formerly a lecturer at the Courtauld Institute and the British Institute of Florence.

**2. Study Days – Save the Date for September!**

The study day on Monday 22 May on **New York, New York** is now fully booked. If you would like your name to be added to the waiting list for any tickets that are returned, please send an email to tasoxford@gmail.com expressing your interest, with ‘Study Day Waiting List’ as the subject heading.

You may like to make a note in your diary that the next study day at Rewley House will be on **Wednesday 27 September**. It will be led by **Lars Thorp** (of Antiques Roadshow fame) and will be on **William Hogarth: Materials and Morals**. Further information and a booking link will be sent out during the summer.

**3. Visits**

A small group walking tour of **Ewelme and Dorchester-on-Thames** is planned for 24 May, with a further trip later in June/early July at a date to be confirmed. Look out for an email in the next few days, giving details of the tour and how to book a place.

**4. Other matters**

I am delighted to welcome Liz West, who has taken over leadership of the Community Arts Project Team, and Steve Rogers, who now heads the Visits Team. They have both been co-opted to the Board of Trustees. The Society operates a 3-year cycle of trusteeship and it is good to welcome new members and to hear any new ideas they may bring to the Society.

Finally, do remember that it is **Oxfordshire Artweeks from 6-29 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 2023**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List,

Now the clocks have changed I feel as though I am waking from a winter hibernation. It is lovely to have the lighter evenings but it would be good if we could have more breaks from the torrential rainstorms so I could do some work in the garden.

It will be a short newsletter this month. However, there is one key piece of information, which relates to the May lecture. Jacky Klein, who was to be our lecturer in May, is moving abroad and is unable to give the planned lecture ‘From Giorgioni to Gaga: The Nude in Art’. As soon as they were informed of this, our Programme team set about finding a replacement and have booked **Paula Nuttall** to talk on **Donatello: Renaissance genius** on**Wednesday 10 May**. Further information can be found on the TASO website. There is an exhibition on ‘Donatello: Sculpting the Renaissance’ at the V&A until 11 June that might be good to visit after the lecture, if you have not already been.

**1.**  **April lecture – for members only**

**Wednesday 12 April**at **11.00 am**and**2.00 pm**

**The architecture of the British Raj: colonial architecture in India; the buildings, their history and future**

This talk’s narrative revolves around the lecturer’s experience of masterminding a project backed by the British Government to restore the magnificent university buildings in Mumbai that were designed by George Gilbert Scott. This building’s story provides useful starting points from which to consider the broader historical, cultural and architectural context. It provides an opportunity to touch on philosophical approaches to conservation as well as traditional repair techniques. An account is also given of the work undertaken by people who took time away from their cathedral workshops in the UK to transfer knowledge and skills to their Indian counterparts. Venturing beyond Mumbai to consider key colonial buildings in Delhi, Kolkata and Yangon, the scope of the lecture broadens to examine evolving attitudes, in India, the UK and beyond, towards the British Empire and the buildings that survive as testament to its achievements.

The lecturer **Anthony Peers** is a freelance historic buildings consultant, educated as an Architectural Historian at Manchester University and trained in building conservation at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, York. After two years with SAVE Britain’s Heritage, he worked with English Heritage Listing Division on the review of military buildings. He was then employed by the DTI in Bombay, India, setting up and running an innovative project to repair George Gilbert Scott’s university buildings, training local architects and craftsmen in conservation techniques and philosophy. He has subsequently been involved with research, analysis, assessment, and conservation planning at sites such as The Workhouse, Southwell; Aston Hall, Birmingham; The Royal Institution, London; and Cliveden. Anthony is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and Deputy Chair of the Ancient Monuments Society.

**2.**  **May Study Day – save the date!**

The next study day will be on **Monday 22 May** at Rewley House (for members only). It will be a three-part presentation by Mary Alexander on **New York, New York** during which she is promising us a ‘time-travel’ tour to cherry pick the art and design highlights of the city. Look out for an email with further information and the booking details, which will be sent out after Easter.

Best wishes

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter March 2023**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List,

Although it is still quite cold, I hope you are all enjoying the arrival of the spring flowers, which certainly adds cheer when out and about, and the promise of warmer weather to come.

**1.**  **Visits**

Tickets for the walks exploring Oxford’s Jewish Heritage on Tuesday 14 and Thursday 23 March were rapidly sold out. There are still some places for the visit and guided tour of**Chavenage House near Tetbury on Tuesday 21 March 2023**, which is now open to **members and those on the waiting list**.

This visit is a coach trip for 34 people and costs £48, including return travel, coffee/tea and biscuits on arrival and a sandwich lunch with scones and cakes.

The closing date for booking is **10 March** so do hurry to ensure your place. The Ticketsource booking link for the visit is provided below.

**2.**  **March lecture**

This lecture on **Wednesday 8 March**at **11.00 am**and**2.00 pm** is for**members only**and will be entitled:

**Taken by surprise: A revolution in the art of the poster**

The year is 1901. Toulouse-Lautrec has just died. An orange zebra sips Campari, a tiger tears at a tyre, a clown leaps out of a lemon, and a woman on horseback heralds a new era of chocolate. Advertising posters have never been the same. Wit-lashed with their imagery, tongue-foo-ed by their visions, we ask. “Who were the first Mad Men?”. The word ‘nice’ was not in their vocabulary. That just meant ‘mediocrity’. This talk is entertaining, lavishly illustrated with vintage posters and delivered by a lecturer who successfully made this his own profession. In this lecture, **Charles Harris** will focus on the role of posters and poster artists in the history of advertising. He is a global award-winning Creative Director of international advertising agencies and has lectured extensively on design, illustration and photographic styles and how they have influenced the building of brands. He has himself created posters for major brands, including British Airways, Nestlé, Sony, General Motors and Shell. His travel writing and photography have appeared in various airline magazines as well as in Time. He has also written and produced several hundred TV and radio commercials and corporate video programmes.

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

Best wishes

Ann McIlhinney, Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter February 2023**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List,

I would like to apologise once again to those who had booked to attend the Study Day on 17 January only to arrive and discover that the lecturer Joanna Banham had not turned up. This was very disappointing both for you and for the Study Day team, who had put their time and effort into its organisation. The lecturer has accepted full responsibility for her confusion over the date and has offered to reimburse the expenses incurred by TASO for the cancelled event. She has also offered to come on another occasion, without charging a fee.

We are very grateful for the understanding you all demonstrated, despite your wasted journeys. We are also pleased that many of you came back to Rewley House for lunch, which would otherwise have been thrown away. Refunds of the ticket cost (minus the charge for lunch if you chose to return for this) have been made by TicketSource direct to the debit/credit card that you used for payment.

**1.**  **Volunteering opportunities in TASO**

Maintaining a healthy and active Society with new people participating and fresh ideas emerging depends on you offering your time and experience – and of course your willingness to help!

**Could you be our Membership Assistant?**

Our Membership Secretary Ray Wright is looking for someone to help with routine administrative work, consisting mainly of short tasks prior to each lecture along with a more-protracted (but not very time critical) session during the membership renewals period (May to June).

The role would suit someone who is well organised with some general IT knowledge and good communications skills. Training and support will be provided.

If you would like to know more, please do contact me at tasoxford@gmail.com and I will get back to you. For those on the Waiting List, please note that anyone with the necessary skills who volunteers will be provided with immediate membership!

**Or a Lecture Volunteer Co-ordinator?**

We are looking for two people (a morning member and an afternoon member) who would be willing to phone or email members who have volunteered to help out at lectures to arrange a rota for the registration desk and for serving coffee/tea. This is not a particularly time-consuming role. If you would be able to help, please email tasoxford@gmail.com or talk to one of the committee at the February lecture. It is a great way to get to know other TASO members!

**2.**  **February lecture – for members only**

This will be on **Wednesday 8 February**at **11.00 am**and**2.00 pm**and will be on:

**The arts of Japan: highlights of Japanese art and culture**

This lecture will provide an introduction to, and an overview of, the arts of Japan. It will chart the development of key aspects of the Japanese aesthetic in painting, sculpture and applied arts through different periods of history. Contact with China and the West, contrasting aristocratic and military tastes, and the growth of townsmen’s culture in the Edo period have all contributed to distinctive visual trends and techniques. An exploration of the impact of Zen Buddhism on Japanese culture, particularly in the areas of gardening and the tea ceremony, will convey further insights into the Japanese aesthetic as it has evolved through the ages. Following Japan’s reopening to trade with the West in the mid-19th century, modernisation and westernisation came to inform changes in the content, materials and stylistic vocabulary of the arts of Meiji Japan.

Our lecturer **Marie Conte-Helm** has a BA in History of Art, an MA in Asian Art and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. She was Director General of the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, held senior academic posts at various UK universities, served as Executive Director of the UK-Japan 21stCentury Group, and as a member of the Board of Governors of the University for the Creative Arts. She was awarded an OBE in 2011 for services to UK-Japan educational and cultural relations and the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette by the Government of Japan in 2019.

**3.**  **Visits**– **for members only** **but opened up to those on the Waiting List if there are places unfilled**

Firstly, a big thank you to Alison Madden, who is stepping down as Visits Team Leader after two and a half years and welcome to Steve Rogers, who is taking over this role. You will be hearing more from Steve and the team as they continue to plan visits for 2023.

The visit to the Ashmolean Museum on 13 February and the walking tours around Jericho on 21 and 22 February are booked up but do **save the dates** for the following visits during March:

**Visit and guided tour of Chavenage House near Tetbury on Monday 21 March 2023 – for members only**

Chavenage House has a fascinating history going back more than 400 years and has been in the ownership of the Lowsley-Williams family since the 1890s – see the[Chavenage House website](http://www.chavenage.com/history.html) for more information.

This visit will be a coach trip for 34 people (**not**self-drive, as was stated in an earlier email) and will cost **£48**, including return travel, afternoon tea with sandwiches and a guided tour of the house. Look out for the email in a week or so giving details and information on how to book.

**Walks – Oxford’s Jewish Heritage led by Victoria Bentata Azaz on Tuesday 14 March and Thursday 18 March – both morning and afternoon**

This tour encompasses the whole history of the Jews in Oxford: the Medieval Period from the arrival of the Jews with William the Conqueror until their expulsion by Edward I in 1290, the Readmission under Oliver Cromwell, and the Modern Period from the 19th to 21st centuries. It will start at the Castle and visit the Medieval Oxford Jewry. We will learn about the later history as we wind round the University. Victoria will consider the lives and experiences of the medieval Jewish community, discuss Cromwell’s attitude to Jews and its consequences, investigate the influx of Jews from Europe in the 19th century and look at the Refugee Scholars of the 1930s. She will then go on to consider today’s community and some of the University’s recent Jewish benefactors.

Victoria Bentata Azaz has been an Institute of Tourist Guiding Green Badge guide in Oxford since 2005 and is a member of the Oxford Guild of Tour Guides and of the Oxford Jewish Heritage Committee.

Places are limited to 12 people per tour, which will last about 2 hours. The cost will be **£10.00** per person. Look out for booking information!

**4.**  **Community Arts Projects and TASO Charitable Giving**

Since TASO became a charity, members’ subscriptions have helped many local organisations with small grants for arts-related projects. Applications for funding are dealt with by the Community Arts Projects (CAP) Committee who receive and discuss applications, decide whether they conform to the Society’s criteria and make recommendations to the Trustees. Stephanie North has been an enthusiastic and capable leader of the CAP team but is now stepping down. We would like to express our gratitude to her and to Liz West who is taking over this role.

The CAP team is actively considering applications for funding up to the next deadline of 31 March. If you know of any small Oxford organisations with imaginative arts projects that you think could benefit from TASO financial support, please do refer them to the TASO website ([https://theartssocietyoxford.org.uk](https://theartssocietyoxford.org.uk/)), where all the documents relating to this procedure can be found, along with the application form.

Best wishes to you all from me and from the Trustees

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

**TASO Newsletter January 2023**

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List,

**Happy New Year to you All!**

I hope that you enter 2023 with a feeling of optimism despite all the disruption that is currently going on around us. There will be plenty on offer from TASO for you to enjoy in the next few months beginning with this month’s lecture, a study day and a virtual tour. Further details of these are outlined below.

**1.**  **January lecture**

This will be on **Wednesday 11 January**at **11.00 am**and**2.00 pm** and is for**members only.**We assume that decoration of the foyer in the Magdalen Grove Auditorium will have been completed during December, so we should be able to enter through the main door as usual. Provided we can find sufficient volunteers, we will be serving free tea and coffee before the lecture.

The subject of the January lecture is:

**Music in the Great Art Collections of Europe**

Many of the great, but smaller, European art collections are tucked away in side streets, country houses and provincial towns, known often only to connoisseurs and local communities. With an eye to important paintings, musical instruments and pictures with musical content, the lecturer will explore some of these quality galleries, and examine the contents of the Mauritshuis in the Hague, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, Burghley House in Lincolnshire, the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, the Vleeshuis in Antwerp and the Ca’ Rezzonico in Venice. The lecture will be illustrated with live music sung and played at the piano.

Our lecturer **Peter Medhurst** appears in the UK and abroad as a musician and scholar, giving recitals and delivering illustrated lectures on music and the arts. He studied singing and early keyboard instruments at the Royal College of Music and at the Mozarteum in Salzburg.

**2.**  **January study day**

Booking is now closed for the study day on Tuesday 17 January on **The Home Beautiful: Pre-Raphaelite Interiors**. If you were successful in obtaining a ticket for this, we look forward to seeing you at Rewley House.

The next study day will be on **Monday May 22** with Mary Alexander on **New York! New York!** Full details and information on how to book will be sent out in the coming months. For now, just **save the date**!

**3.**  **January virtual tour**

On **Wednesday 25 January 2023** we will be taken on a virtual tour of **Mayfair: simply the best address in London…**

Since this event was booked, our guide **Simon Whitehouse** has been called for jury service so cannot give the tour in the daytime. It will therefore start at **7.30 pm**on 25 January. For those who are unable to watch at that time, the tour **will be recorded and available to be viewed later**.

During the tour, Simon 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.

From Oliver Cromwell to Oscar Wilde, dandies to debutantes, Handel to Hendrix, we meet some of Mayfair’s more memorable characters and ‘pop into’ some of the area’s most historic buildings, including a crime novelist’s favourite hotel, a spectacular church, and London’s oldest shopping arcade with some archaic and eccentric restrictions…

Look out for an email later in the month giving you the Zoom link to join this tour.

**4.**  **Help before lectures**

**Volunteers…**

Some of you have already said you will help with registration and serving coffee and tea before lectures. A big thank you to these members.

We would like to encourage more members to volunteer so that we can try to ensure each person only gets called on once to help during the year. If you are willing to have your name added to the list, please send an email to tasoxford@gmail.com with ‘Lecture volunteers’ as the subject or add your information to the list on the registration desk at the January lecture.

**…and co-ordinators**

We are also looking for a couple of people (one a morning member, the other an afternoon member) who would be willing to be responsible for contacting the lecture volunteers by phone or email to arrange a rota. If you would be interested in helping, please email us or talk to one of the committee at the January lecture. It is a great way to get to know other TASO members!

Best wishes to you all from me and from the Trustees

Ann McIlhinney

Chair, The Arts Society Oxford