

THE ARTS SOCIETY EGERTON

NEWSLETTER NO. 4

MARCH/APRIL 2021

Please join us for our forthcoming online lectures

Paul will send an e-mail with relevant link a week ahead of the event. You will be able to log in earlier to chat with fellow Society members. See also Digital and IT news below.

Please don't forget to leave a review on our website after each lecture

THE SILK ROAD - A Journey of Wool, Cotton & Silk

CHRIS ALEXANDER

WEDNESDAY 10TH MARCH at 2.30pm.



Wool, cotton and silk have each played a crucial role in the fortunes of Central Asia. Wool created the clothing and housing needed by the great nomadic cultures that were to dominate Middle Asia. Silk was more valuable than gold and used as currency, creating a network of trading routes that led to the first outbreak of globalisation. Cotton was the cause of Russian and then Soviet Colonisation and continues to cause controversy today as well as human misery and environmental catastrophe.

Chris was born in Turkey and spent his childhood there and in war-torn Beirut. After university, Chris moved to Khiva, a desert oasis in Uzbekistan, establishing a UNESCO workshop reviving fifteenth century carpet designs and embroideries. After a year in the UK writing A Carpet Ride to Khiva, he moved to the Pamirs in Tajikistan, training yak herders to comb their yaks for their cashmere-like down, spending three years there. Next came two years in Kyrgyzstan living in the world's largest natural walnut forest and establishing a wood-carving workshop. Chris has recently finished rowing and studying at Oxford and survived his curacy at St. Barnabas in North Finchley, but is now taking two years out to focus on writing fiction.

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STAMFORD RAFFLES

Art Collector and Discoverer of Singapore

DENISE HEYWOOD

WEDNESDAY 14TH APRIL at 2.30 p.m.



This lecture tells the story of Raffles, a scholar and polymath, looks at the art objects he collected, reveals the mystical temple in Java and its radiant carvings, and shows the architectural heritage of Singapore, inspired by his vision, and its revival today as innovative art galleries and museums.

Art historian, author, lecturer, photographer and journalist, Denise Heywood worked in Cambodia in the 1990s and has been a scholar of Southeast Asian art ever since. Her books include one on the Buddhist temples of Laos, Ancient Luang Prabang and Laos, also in French, and Cambodian Dance Celebration of the Gods, with a foreword by the daughter of King Sihanouk. She writes for many art, literary and travel publications and has appeared on television and radio. She has led cultural tours to Southeast Asia and France for the Royal Academy, the Art Fund, Asia House and many more and lectures on cruise ships. A member of the Association of Southeast Asian Studies in the UK, Asia House and the Royal Geographical Society

2020-21 PROGRAMME

Please put these dates in your diary. All on Wednesdays at 2.30 Paul will e-mail the links to you before each lecture

See our website for full details ahead of each lecture at

<https://www.theartssocietyegerton.org.uk/Lectures/FutureLectures.aspx>

MAY 12th Helen Ritchie MAKING VISIONS: The Jewellery of Artist Charles Rickett

JUNE 9th Giles Ramsay SHAKESPEARE AND THE BIRTH OF MODERN SHOW BUSINESS

We will take a break in July and August but will send out a Newsletter containing the 2021-22 Programme. We are keeping everything crossed that we will be able to meet in the Millennium Hall but, as a precaution, have booked lecturers who can present via Zoom if necessary.

I believe a house is more than a home by being a work of art – Frank Lloyd Wright

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

It is good to see the days beginning to lengthen and the weather gradually beginning to ease.

I hope that you are enjoying our Newsletters and Zoom meetings. It is good to see the attendances growing each month, and certainly I was very pleased not to be opening up the Millennium Hall for our last meeting! Normally, I arrive over an hour before each meeting, put on the heating and open up the kitchen. We then have to get the chairs set out and with Alex Norris and his team get the audio-visual equipment set up for the speaker. Talking of the sound system, we attempted to improve the sound quality last year, but with limited success. When the hall re-opens, we shall look again at what we can do.

Andrew and Julia Smith, who have been with the Society from the beginning, putting out the chairs and tables and making the teas and coffees, have decided to take retirement, and so we shall be looking to replace them once we are back in the hall. I should be happy to have any recommendations of people who might be suitable.

I thought that Andrew Prince was quite exceptional at our last meeting. His delivery was very engaging and he had a terrific sense of humour. His photographs were wonderful. As someone said in our survey – which Gill reports on later – “It is often the quality of the lecturer rather than just the subject matter, which has made a really interesting lecture. Members who don’t come because they have no interest in a subject, lose out.”

I don’t think anyone could not have enjoyed Andrew’s lecture and we shall endeavour always to find the best lecturers that we can.

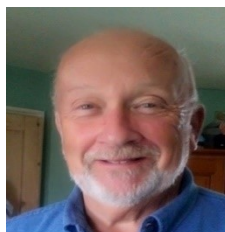
I mentioned that Lynne and I will remain on the Committee for another year, subject of course to the approval of the membership. Please do think whether you are able to help us. It is good for the Society to have fresh ideas and impetus, and the arrival of Gill Bromley on the Committee is testament to that.

Financially, the Society is in a satisfactory position, but we are somewhat down on our target membership, and so elsewhere you will see that we are continually trying to attract new members. Please help if you can.

I look forward to seeing you at the March meeting.

With best wishes

Allan Mowatt



As an architect you design for the present, with an awareness of the past, for a future which is essentially unknown.” – Norman Foster

THE SCREAM OF NATURE

Many thanks to TASE member Peter Whitestone for this article



"He overreacts to everything!"

Having luckily won Newsletter No. 1's competition I was invited to give my thoughts arising from the picture.

This was "The Scream" by Edvard Munch which he created in oil, tempera, pastel and crayon on cardboard in 1893, now in the National Gallery and Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway. I used Wikipedia and other sources for the following information.

Munch created 4 versions, two of which have been stolen and recovered, and one of which sold for \$120 million at Sotheby's in 2012. It has been copied, made into an emoji ("face screaming in fear") and used in cartoons such as this and a famous one by Peter Brookes of 21st January 2017 which we cannot reproduce but which showed someone being sworn into office at the West Front of the United States Capitol with a large crowd turning away and all holding their faces as in the original!

However I was more interested in the fact that Munch's original German title was *Der Schrei der Natur* (The Scream of Nature), and Munch described his inspiration for the image this: *"I was walking along the road (near Oslo) - the sun was setting – suddenly the sky turned blood red – there was blood and tongues of fire above the fjord and the city – I stood there trembling with anxiety – and I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature"*.

Several explanations have been put forward for Munch's experience, such as the eruption of Krakatoa which led to spectacular sunsets, nacreous clouds which occur near Oslo, and the proximity of a slaughterhouse and a mental asylum (in which Munch's sister was a patient). It has been widely interpreted as representing the universal anxiety of modern humanity, and therefore is not only a depiction in art of a reaction to nature but accords well with the current environmental crisis in which people may be said to be screaming for more attention to be paid to nature.

As the original title referred to nature I was moved to consider Nature itself to be an artist with a constant succession of pictures due to daily and seasonal changes and human and geological activity, and that it behoved us to immerse ourselves in it (and support environmental activities and charities) both to enjoy the artistry and to benefit from the exercise!

The book token? I immediately used it to buy "Entangled Life" by Merlin Sheldrake which is an eye-opener to the worldwide importance of fungi, indispensable to humans and much else of life, including the phenomenon of the "World Wide Web". Intrigued? It screams to be read!

If anyone would like to contribute to this feature for future newsletters please send a few paragraphs to Gill Bromley (contact details at the end of this newsletter)

SURVEY 2021 RESULTS



A huge thank you to everyone who returned their survey. The results will be extremely useful to help us to plan ahead.

CONGRATULATIONS to Pam Wait on being the first survey drawn to win a £25 Book Token.

37 of you completed the survey and here is a synopsis of the results (numbers in brackets indicate number of members):

Over half of you have been members for 10-20 years. 23 of you heard about TASE from a friend proving that word of mouth is the best form of promotion. We rely on all of you to help us to encourage others to give TASE a try. Please share this newsletter and tell friends about our programme. You cited many reasons why you enjoy TASE; this probably sums up what most of you said: *"the opportunity to see and hear lecturers who are experts in their field. Socialising with friends and neighbours over coffee afterwards"*.

You suggested over 40 different topics for future lectures; too many to list here they will be enormously helpful when planning the programme later this month. They included Architecture hence the quotes in this newsletter.

In relation to improvements you cited the sound system (6) and ventilation (3) and others made suggestions for making new members welcome etc. Your committee will look into all these things including the cost of any improvements.

The majority of you said that TASE membership was excellent (22) or good value (9). Those who felt it was poor value were unable to use the internet or Zoom to access lectures. 36 of you said you had sufficient information about our funds

Thanks to your offers will now promote TASE in 10 villages and towns (via parish magazines, Nextdoor and social media). If anyone is willing to assist with this in Bethersden, Boughton Malherbe, Lenham, Little Chart, or Pluckley, please contact Gill Bromley (details below)

We received one offer to assist with the stalls including the raffle but no offers of help in other ways including charring meetings, secretarial, finance, IT etc. Please be aware that we will need new committee members by 2022, including Chairman and Secretary, plus other support if TASE is to continue. We appreciate that many of you have served on the committee in the past or are involved on other committees etc. Please help us to encourage others to come forward to help us. This is vital if TASE is to continue beyond the year ahead.

Our ages range from 60-70 (8) and 70-80 (15) to over 80 (11) with 3 who chose not to answer. It is vital that we continue to promote TASE to newly retired people. We now have opportunities to reach people who will continue to work flexibly from home beyond the current pandemic. We also hope that we will be able to screen lectures to members who are unable to get out due to illness, disability or bad weather.

As well as the survey I analysed our membership records. The majority of us live in Egerton (34), Charing (19), Pluckley (17), and Smarden (14) but there is scope to increase membership even in these communities. We also have members who live in 31 other towns and villages including Ashford, Maidstone, Tenterden, Bethersden, Shadoxhurst, Hawkhurst, Marden, Woodchurch and

even one in Heathfield. The opportunity to increase membership, given people are willing to travel these distances, is significant.

Thank you again; we will repeat the survey in 2022 and hope even more of you will take part.

TASE MEMBERSHIP: WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP

A warm welcome to guests and those who have recently joined TASE. While frustrating that we cannot meet in the Millennium Hall (yet) we are delighted that we have attracted a few new members and guests who have enjoyed our Zoom lectures during lockdown. They include some who are currently working from home and find the lectures provide a welcome break during a busy schedule. If you know anyone who would enjoy our current programme please share this newsletter with them. To watch a lecture they just need to contact our Membership Secretary Christine Willis via bocmwillis@gmail.com or 01233 756377. Zoom lectures are charged at £4 per month.

Our survey has shown that the vast majority of you heard about TASE from a friend, neighbour or relative and that you think it good or excellent value. While we have gained some new members we have also lost a few and we are keen to boost numbers. We rely on each of you to help spread the word about this amazing organisation.

TASE members live across a very wide area and thanks to offers from members we are now promoting TASE in the following parish magazines and newsletters: Egerton, Bethersden, Biddenden, Challock and Molash, Charing, High Halden, Shadoxhurst, Smarden, Westwell, Woodchurch as well as on Nextdoor and Facebook. If you can help with publicity in your community please contact Gill gillbrom57@btinternet.com or 01622 890214

Christine Willis Membership Secretary

ART ON OUR DOORSTEP: A STROLL AROUND HEADCORN



Given we live across a wide area it would be great to share some images from your community. Go for a short walk and see what you can spot. Just send 4-6 photographs to Gill Bromley (contact details at the end of this newsletter)

DIGITAL & IT



For those of you that attended the virtual lecture on Wednesday 10th February, you will know how absolutely riveting these sessions can be despite no-one being there in person. We had in excess of 50 members in the Zoom meeting and another 20+ watching later, on YouTube. Only a few watched the stream live instead of joining the Zoom meeting. So over 70 members in all having a “normal” contact with the society.

However, as the lecture for January testifies, we cannot always offer a YouTube option, this depends on the good grace of the lecturer. For this reason, I would urge as many members as possible to download the Zoom app whether this be on a handheld device or on a PC.

On a PC go to <https://zoom.us/download> and download the Zoom client for meetings. Registering free with Zoom is best and put in the name you wish to show when you are in a meeting.

Similarly, with Android or Apple you need to download the Zoom App from the respective App Store.

If everyone does this, it will future-proof our lecture provision as it is possible that when we do get back to live lectures in the hall, we can still put them out over a Zoom Webinar to members who cannot come. This may be because there will be a requirement for fewer numbers in the hall. It will also allow us to retain members who might rarely be able to attend but would like to keep on with virtual lectures.

As you can imagine the utilization of digital processes of necessity during the pandemic has increased markedly. One thing that has been ongoing has been the website and I have maintained this for well over 10 years now. The latest incarnation has meant that this is an easier job now and requires fewer IT skills. However, for the future I feel that there needs to be someone to take over the mantel at some stage. So, if there is any member who would like to understudy for this role maybe for the next lecture season, I think this would serve the society well.

Paul Tubby

ARCHITECTURE: SOME QUOTATIONS

“Whatever good things we build end up building us” – Milina Pai

“Architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness” – Frank Gehry

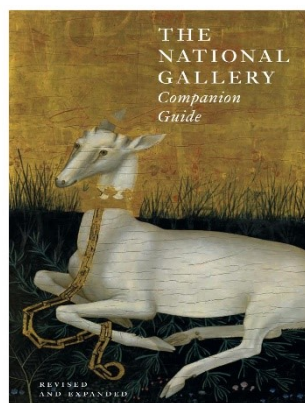
“The job of the architect today is to create beautiful buildings. That’s all” - Philip Johnson

“Architecture is the learned game, correct and magnificent, of forms assembled in the light”
- Le Corbusier

“There are no straight lines or sharp corners in nature. Therefore, buildings must have no straight lines or sharp corners” - Antonio Gaudi

RECOMMENDED READ: THE NATIONAL GALLERY COMPANION GUIDE

By Erika Longmuir



My first acquaintance with the National Gallery was on school trips to London. It was a free place to hang out and, if I'm honest, to watch out for schoolboys, especially in inclement weather, while waiting for the coach. However I soon became fascinated with the artworks and began to explore.

Some years later, on secondment for 6 months to the Department for Media, Culture and Sport in Cockspur Street, just off Trafalgar Square, I decided to do something worthwhile during my lunch breaks. I purchased the National Gallery Companion Guide by Erika Longmuir (1994 edition) and set about discovering every artwork in every room.

The Guide focuses on 200 of the Gallery's finest artworks. Beautifully illustrated the book comprehensively describes each artwork and tells us something of the artist as well. The latest edition was published in 2016. As the blurb says the book *'introduces art lovers to one of the richest and most representative collections of Western European paintings in the world, including famous works by the greatest painters – Piero della Francesca, Titian, Rembrandt, Velazquez, Ingres, Degas and many others – and masterpieces by less familiar artists'*.

Nothing beats a visit to an exhibition of course but during lockdown I've revisited my Companion Guide and can't wait to get back to the Gallery. Meanwhile the Gallery continues to provide an amazing online programme of talks, events and tours for members and non-members. See https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/?gclid=CjwKCAiA9vOABhBfEiwATCi7GLVbA84-biqDRtnrhb2WHn4h6jEkLoqnauzGjFnQa7_cWgb7IRRoURoCxrwQAvD_BwE

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