



THE ARTS SOCIETY GORING REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2019-2020

PROGRAMME – Secretary Jenny Plumb

We started our new year visiting the Elizabeth Tower, “Big Ben,” adroitly guided by Tim Redmond. Tim is a retired Scotland Yard detective who now conducts tours around the Houses of Parliament.

In October we welcomed Dr James Grant MBE who travelled from Auchterarder to enlighten us on the use of gold from the Ancient Egyptians to the time of the introduction of the Nobel Prize.



Russian music and racing through the snow on a troika opened November’s lecture as we learned about Russian Winter Festivals presented by Dr Rosamund Bartlett. In January Sally Kevill-Davies drew our attention to the decoration of Chelsea Porcelain using as inspiration the exotic plants that had recently arrived from the New World and were being cultivated at The Chelsea Physic Garden.



A clip from “Only Fools and Horses” concluded Bertie Pearce's spellbinding lecture in February about a garden sculpture being used for target practice and a bicycle stand. The Dancing Faun had languished in his grandparents’ garden for 40 years. After much research it was discovered that it had its origins in the 16th Century and is now in The Getty Museum.

With apologies to Harold MacMillan who was reported to have said at one time “events dear members, events” disrupted the rest of our programme from March and we were obliged to cancel all meetings for the remainder of the year. The speakers have all agreed to return to Goring in the future and we look forward to welcoming them.

VISITS – Secretary Elspeth Lockwood

We began our 2019 season with a visit to Chartwell, the much-loved family home of Sir Winston Churchill. In glorious sunshine, we had a fascinating insight into the personal life of a great statesman and writer; and his wonderful paintings in the studio where he relaxed in his lovely hillside gardens.



Waddesdon at Christmas

Our Christmas visit to Waddesdon was enjoyed enormously by all and we began with our group Christmas lunch at the Five Arrows Hotel on the Waddesdon Estate. Our tour of the Bachelors’ Wing beautifully decorated with dazzling decorations and trees sparkling with lights was a delight and the Christmas stalls and the Manor’s façade bathed in light completed a memorable day.

Sadly, for logistical reasons, our visit to Tate Britain and the Baroque Exhibition had to be cancelled, a disappointment to many.

The planned visits for this year to Knole, Berkeley Castle and Madresfield Court and The Firs (Elgar’s birthplace) will sadly not now take place in our current season. However, I plan to resurrect them for our

next season together with Althorp, the home of the Spencer family. A London walk with Andrew Davies is arranged and hopefully the much-awaited Raphael Exhibition at the National Gallery to mark 500 years since his death. I look forward to seeing you in our new season when our lives return to normality and we can enjoy our lovely day visits and being with friends again.

SPECIAL INTEREST DAYS – Secretary Jenny Boler

November 2019 – Everything Stops for Tea

What a lot of history can be found in a cup of tea! It's amazing what an influence the taking of tea has had on power, politics, art, culture and design since Catherine of Braganza first introduced it to Europe in 1660s. At our November Special Interest Day Dr Anne Anderson gave us a comprehensive insight into the ritual of taking tea and the paraphernalia developed as a result, not least a vast, worldwide ceramics industry. When you next leave a tip, be aware that in early coffee houses a tip was presented in advance "to ensure promptness". After a buffet lunch and tea-tasting Anne discussed a wide range of tea artefacts brought in by participants. It was a very informative and enjoyable day.



Teapots –Dr. Anne Anderson

March 2020 – The Extraordinary Life of John Singer Sargent

Wonderful slides accompanied Mary Alexander's tour through the life and times of John Singer Sargent. She took opportunities to show us details of Sargent's work and his technical brilliance particularly in the use of light on surfaces. Initially a celebrity portrait artist for the rich, Sargent went on to develop more personal themes, including landscapes and seascapes, and later, at age 62, to work as a war artist at the front. A lifelong friend of Monet, Sargent left us a substantial and varied body of work which was largely ignored by art historians until more recent times. It can now be seen in galleries around the world.



Gassed - John Singer Sargent

TOURS – Secretary Rosie Mortimer

In May 2019 a group of 38 of us boarded a very comfortable coach in Goring or Pangbourne and set off for Delft. With a comfort stop in Folkestone, we plunged under the Channel to Calais and on to beautiful Bruges for a brief walking tour, thence to the charming city of Delft. We all appreciated the ease of loading our suitcases in Goring then finding them next in our rooms in Delft. Our excellent coach driver and tour guide Alvi steered us through Amsterdam, Harlem, The Hague and home again via Ghent.

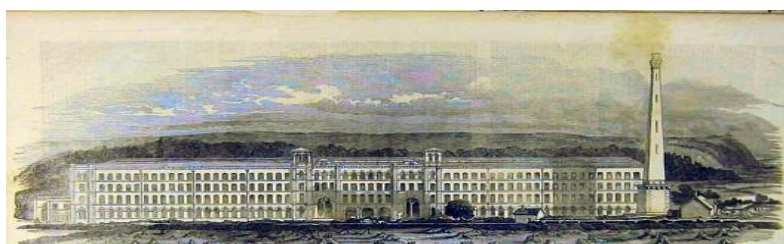


The Milk Maid –Johannes Vermeer

We richly experienced some of the finest Art and Heritage of the Netherlands! Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Vermeer, Rubens, Van Dyck, Frans Hals, Jan van Eyck, wonderful palaces and museums and canal houses – and some very good food as well! Even a large tin of chocolate biscuits and tea-making facilities on the coach! We managed to return with the same 38, and some wonderful photographs and memories.

October 2019 saw a much smaller group depart by train for Manchester to experience its wonderful Victorian heritage of art and industry. We stayed in central Manchester, opposite the amazing Art

Gallery and with easy walking to the many interesting features (as well as restaurants!) so we could enjoy the Royal Exchange Theatre and Bridgewater Concert Hall performances.



Saltaire Mill in 1800s

Nirvana Romell was a great guide as ever and took us to Quarry Bank Mill and Saltaire, Tatton Park and Salford Quays as well as expertly guiding us round the art galleries.

2020 was going to be an even busier year, with a tour to Oporto and some of the lesser-known but enchanting cities of Northern Portugal in May, and a tour to Oberammergau and the Passion Play plus a few days in the Black Forest, visiting many beautiful Castles and museums and renowned art galleries, booked for September. We were going to round off the season with a tour to Scotland, based in Glasgow, with a visit to Dumfries House as the highlight of an interest-packed five days. However, the best laid plans and all that!

We will try to pick up the pieces in 2021 and may revisit those plans but already have in mind a tour to Vienna and perhaps one to Georgia.

COMMUNITY AND YOUNG ARTS – Secretary Irene Matthews

During 2019 our funding to support community and young arts has been directed towards creativity across a wide range of activities. We have taken a positive approach to widen the creative arts section by a move from a focus on 'paint and paper' applications to include the 'physical' arts of music, dance and drama.

Three senior schools have been supported by funding that made it possible for them to bring in specialist teachers to augment the schools' internal teaching staff. **LANGTREE Senior School** chose to use the funding to have workshops on musical composition and to have an introduction to learning to play on new instruments. A 'gamelan drumming' session was a great success. A group of the students came to our June AGM and performed music composed by the students for voice and instruments.



WALLINGFORD Senior School and **BROOKFIELDS Special Needs School** both chose to have workshops provided by specialist dance companies. In both cases some of the students who took part were aiming for future careers in Drama and Theatre.

BISHOPSLAND Educational Trust which provides post graduate workshops for young silversmith were given a contribution to enable the students to take a display stand at the Henley on Thames Summer Festival. This

allows them to show their work to the public which is an important aspect of them becoming commercially aware and able to follow a career as professional silversmiths.

Dance Class - Wallingford School

Very sadly after March 2020 we will not be able to continue our support for the Didcot Art Room. 'The Art Room' will no longer be operating independently as they have been taken over by a bigger charity, called 'Place2Be,' which operates within the schools arena.

The Arts Society will continue to support creative projects, across community and young people activities, which we can only do by the generous support of our members. Thank you all.