

# THE ARTS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 2017 BLACKHEATH

## CHAIR'S REPORT.

This year has been something of a game changer for all societies as we no longer call ourselves NADFAS but The Arts Society. Abbreviations are still under discussion but for the time being we as The Arts Society Blackheath will use ASB to keep it short. Next year marks the Jubilee and many interesting and exciting events have been planned. Please look at the Visitor's desk to view the upcoming programme or go to the website [theartssociety.org](http://theartssociety.org) to discover the appropriate booking methods.

Mary Gregory was to have been our new Chair but unfortunately could not take up the post due to unforeseen family reasons. Mary brought a breath of fresh air to the Society and we are very sorry she has to

step down. She will, however, still remain a member and we thank her for all her past help. This has meant the Dame Helen Reeves and Janet Fisher agreed to be nominated and were appointed at the AGM to share The Chair until such times as a replacement is found. If you, or you know of anybody, who would like to join the Committee please do come forward.

WE take this opportunity to wish you a Happy Christmas and look forward to a New Year when members make a huge effort to increase our numbers by spreading the word and bringing friends to our meetings. Your Societies future rests with you.

Janet Fisher Helen Reeves

**The Arts Society 2018 Jubilee events and volunteers information can be found on the Visits Table and the website [www.theartssociety.org](http://www.theartssociety.org)**

## VISITS



On a fascinating and enjoyable tour, the society learned about how the Victorian Engineer Sir Joseph Bazalgette took London's sewage and its overpowering smell away downriver from the city centre. And in what style did he do it! The Pumping House, with its beam engines, fish-scale floors and elaborate staircases is a marvel of decorative iron-work. It's not often that hard hats are de rigueur on a society visit but the restoration of Grade 1 listed Crossness Pumping Station, rightly described as a cathedral in the marsh, is still very much work in progress and was recently re-opened to visitors after a £2.7m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is now well-set up to receive visitors, either on public steaming days when the Prince Consort engine is put through its paces, or on private group visits. Crossness is close to Thamesmead in South East London.

**Visits continued**

Our enjoyable Summer Outing on 24th August began at **WALMER CASTLE**. The gardens and views were excellent and the interior offered a fascinating glimpse into British political history,



focussing especially on the Duke of Wellington. His massive military contribution was rightly given full justice, but I was glad to see that his imperfections and limitations as a politician were not glossed over.

**CANTERBURY ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY:** Fascinating is the word to sum this experience best. The archives in particular were excellent; the visit was well timed with plenty of time to look at the documents and to ask questions. And we still had space for tea and to re-acquaint

ourselves with the Cathedral itself.  
 Mary Gregory

**THE DESIGN MUSEUM, Kensington**

This Museum, originally in Bermondsey, celebrated its move to the revamped former Commonwealth Institute in November 2016. By the time of our visit in February 2017 it was already clear that they have a big success on their hands. With a state of the art building and a succession of overlapping special exhibitions, visitor numbers have skyrocketed and we certainly found it fascinating to witness how clever design can make a huge contribution to improving lives. We have several suggestions on how the group visitor experience could be enhanced which we have passed on, but it was an enjoyable and stimulating experience. For those who might like to visit on their own, entry to the (small) permanent collection is free, there is a very good restaurant overlooking Holland Park, and Leighton House Museum is just around the corner.

**Programme Pauline Brierley**

What constitutes the perfect, the ideal Arts Society lecture? We all have our own opinion about that. It's safe to say that all 143 members of our society know for a fact that our own taste should be paramount. You may find this difficult to believe but programme secretaries rarely indulge in their own private tastes when booking speakers. The quest is to find as many varied subjects as possible so there is at least a chance of pleasing some of the members some of the time. So this year we have zig-zagged from the state of the antiques market to John Singer Sargent; from Islamic art to the start of the movie industry. We were particularly privileged to have a lecture by our own

distinguished member, John Brooke, on Darwin and design in Nature. Womens' role models are usually popular and we had two particularly indomitable examples in Marie de Medici and the intrepid botanist Marianne North. There was rapt attention for Christopher Garibaldi's well researched story of horse racing, it's history and its' art treasures. Now we are looking forward to a scholarly look at children's book illustrations to be followed by what promises to be a very surprising round up of major and minor art crimes.

The constant impetus is to find the holy grail of arts society lectures - the one subject that every single member is convinced was booked entirely for them.

**Membership Report Pam Rosedon Membership Secretary**

Our membership numbers are still giving us cause for concern although we have recently had six new members join us and we hope that they are enjoying the lectures and outings. However, we will continue to encourage new members to join either through our website, leaflets or word of mouth. We currently have 143 members but an increase of 10 to 15 new members would help us considerably. It is that time of the year when we have to renew our membership for the following year

and I am glad to say that lots of envelopes are being delivered by the postman each day although, unfortunately, we lose a few members each year either through ill health and age related reasons. If any member has any ideas how we could improve our recruitment of new members please contact me or speak to any member of the committee. We are always open to new ideas

**PROGRAMME 2018**

Afternoon meetings will begin promptly at 2.30.Refreshments served from 2.0 pm

**Thursday 25th January**

Art and the F Word: Feminism

Marking 100 years since (some) women first got the vote, we discover what kind of impact feminism has had on Western Art.

Linda Smith



**Thursday 22nd February**

Income and Inspiration: Financial Secrets of The Masters.

Artists have always been as pre-occupied with cash as the rest of us. Our speaker offers "financial vignettes " - stories involving five centuries of artists grappling with their accounts.

David Phillips

**Thursday 22nd March**

Love and Loss: The Story of Orpheus and Euridice in Art and Music.

The legendary Orpheus failed to capture the woman he loved, a tragedy that has inspired a wealth of paintings and music from Monteverdi to, would you believe, the Can Can?

Dr Lois Oliver



**Thursday 26th April**

1932: Pablo Picasso's Year of Wonders - and Much More Besides.

Coinciding with a major exhibition at Tate Modern, this picture celebrates Picasso's best year when "he reached new heights of invention, sensuality and celebrity."

Raymond Warburton

**Thursday 24th May**

Parodies of Victorian Society in Gilbert and Sullivan.

The title says it all - a return visit from the superb storyteller, pianist and tenor.

Peter Medhurst



**Thursday 28th June**

The Holland Park Circle

Queen Victoria's reign saw a spectacular rise in the wealth and prestige of English artists. We follow one of the period's most exclusive cliques based on the then newly fashionable Holland Park area of London.

Unusually this

lecture will be linked to a special guided tour on July 10.

Jennifer Toynbee-Holmes

**Thursday 26th July**

Thomas Heatherwick

Thomas Heatherwick is the designer Sir Terence Conran describes as "the Leonardo di Vinci of our day"  
 Some of his famous work includes such contrasts as The British Pavilion in Shanghai, the 2012 Olympic Cauldron and the latest red London bus.

Anthea Streeter



**Thursday 27th September**

PLEASE NOTE; AGM STARTS AT 2.0PM. LECTURE AT 2.30 PM

The Honourable and Dishonourable Art of Acting.

Historically, actors were often regarded as rogues or vagabonds. The road to respectability from Oedipus Rex to Laurence Olivier has been long, and luckily for us, very lively.

Malcolm Jones

**Thursday 25th October**

The Scoliotic Knight: Reconstructing the real Richard the Third.

The mystery of the diminutive king with a significant spine condition is this: how could such a fragile man weighed down by heavy armour have been so skilled in the knightly fighting arts of his age?

Tobias Capwell



**Thursday 22nd November**

Giles: His life, Times and Cartoons.

For 50 years the famous cartoonist poked fun at all authority from traffic wardens to Hitler. He revelled most in his fictitious creation Grandma Giles who he described as "that fearsome, black clad, gambling, drinking battle-axe.". We have been warned....

Barry Vennings

**The Young Arts**

Our Y.A. partnership with Baring Primary School is flourishing. In the past we have funded Magic Lantern art lessons and held whole school art competitions. Children's work is regularly entered in the annual National Gallery's Take One Picture Competition. Last July their work was specially displayed at the gallery.

Staff want to develop children's self motivation and ambition, in a child friendly way. Kites soaring high were chosen as a symbol. John Fisher, member and local artist, has been working with them to develop the project. The finished kites will be suspended from the hall, as a daily reminder to reach for the sky and for the children to try to be the very best they can be.

We have applied for a small grant towards the project.

Jenny Shepherd.



The Society meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 2 o'clock for 2.30 except August and December at St Mary's Church Hall Creswell Park London SE15 (RD)