



## **The Arts Society Leatherhead May 2019 newsletter**

Dear Members

Last month we had a commanding performance by Douglas Skeggs on pre1914 Vienna.

We have had two popular visits to Mansion House and West Horsley Place in recent weeks; see below. Also have a look at the noticeboard for some excellent publicity for our March Shard walk.

On Wednesday we welcome back Dr Susan Kay-Williams who successfully led a group around an exhibition on embroidery at Hampton Court two years ago. This time she is talking on the history of tapestries, which commanded very high prices.

27 people have already booked a visit to Christ Hospital School in Horsham on 20 June, which another local arts society thought was a very interesting day. We have 3 places left.

We have now provisionally booked a bigger coach for a Grim's Dyke tour, G&S operettas and cream tea on Sunday 18 August; see below. You need to book now as only a maximum of a few places are left.

In May and June we will take bookings for Chevening House, the country home of the Foreign Secretary, and Ightham Mote on 1 October. We are unlikely to be able to repeat this special visit for many years (see also below).

Over twenty members have shown an interest or booked on the April 2020 overseas holiday to Lisbon and the Silver coast in late April (see below). Gilly Coombes will be available to discuss this on Wednesday.

I would like to wish all those on the North Wales holiday with Sarah Sheridan later this month a great time.

Can I thank Sheena Turner for all her help in producing the newsletter.

All my best wishes  
Huw Jenkins, Chairman  
01372 278738

### **This month's talk on Wednesday 8 May at 7.30pm Tapestry - the Ultimate Wall Decoration: Dr Susan Kay-Williams**

Tapestries were the ultimate artistic expense in the medieval period. This lecture will look at some of the key sets of tapestries in Europe including the Lady and the Unicorn (16<sup>th</sup> century), those commissioned by the Dukes of Burgundy in the 15<sup>th</sup> century,

Rafael's designs for Pope Leo X, Henry VIII's Abraham tapestries and on to the 21<sup>st</sup> century set commissioned by the Queen of Denmark. We will explore the designs and the craft of tapestry and why it has been the most expensive form of artistic expression until recent times. Dr Kay-Williams is the Chief Executive of the Royal School of Needlework, which was founded in 1872 and is based at Hampton Court Palace.

### **Christ's Hospital School, Horsham visit on Thursday 20 June**

Christ's Hospital is unique as it has a history from 1552 which we can see in the Museum, and has kept its Tudor school uniform. It also provides more fee assisted places than other school in the independent boarding sector. Our tour will conclude with a full afternoon tea in the Hall. We have three places still available. Irene Gawne will be taking bookings on Wednesday 8 May.

### **Great Dixter Garden and House, East Sussex, visit on Thursday 1 August**

We had an excellent 32 applications for the Great Dixter trip which is being led by Sue and Tony Glaysher. As the maximum number we can take is 25 we have adopted a random selection process. Everyone who applied should have been told if they are going to Great Dixter, or are on the reserve list.

### **Grim's Dyke: Gilbert and Sullivan tour, cream tea and concert, visit on Sunday 18 August**

We will have a tour of the former home of Sir W S Gilbert in Harrow (now a hotel), followed by homemade cream tea and operetta excerpts from Grim's Dyke Opera. Sarah Sheridan will be taking bookings on Wednesday 8 May.

### **Chevening House and Ightham Mote (NT) visit on Tuesday 1 October**

This month we are opening bookings for the chance to visit these two exceptional houses, near Sevenoaks in Kent, to illustrate the development of the English country house. In the morning we will visit the medieval 14th century moated manor house of Ightham Mote owned by the National Trust.

After lunch we are privileged to have a two-hour tour of Chevening House, a 17<sup>th</sup> century English Palladian mansion inspired by Inigo Jones. Previously the home of seven generations of the Stanhope family (1717 to 1967) the tour will include the splendid reception rooms and the Chatham and Pitt bedrooms. When the line ran out, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl made a gift of Chevening to the nation ensuring that the estate was preserved for future generations. It is now the country residence of the Foreign Secretary.

If you are interested you will need to book at the May or June meetings. There will be a maximum of 25 members so we may have to adopt a random selection process after the June meeting.



### **Lisbon and the Silver coast holiday 22 - 29 April 2020**

Over 20 of you have already signed up to this holiday. Come and join us on this exciting visit to Portugal staying in the VILA GALÉ, a pretty town situated on the rugged Atlantic coast and about an hour from Lisbon. We have reserved sea view bedrooms. We will visit Lisbon for a day, with an optional extra of a boat trip, and see a lot more. If you are interested please book or speak to Gilly Coombes at the meeting on Wednesday 8 May.



### **“Walk in the Shadow of the Shard leaves Arts Group Enlightened” (Leatherhead Advertiser headline)**

We had excellent press publicity with over a full-page article in the Leatherhead Advertiser on 11 April, thanks to Martin Scalway. A copy of the article which, is very similar to our press release, will be on the notice board on Wednesday.

### **City Visit to Mansion House on Monday 8 April**

Everyone seemed to enjoy the Mansion House, largely as we had three excellent guides. The house itself was very impressive, particularly the Egyptian Room. We then visited the gold vaults. I was impressed by the Pearl Sword (2,500 pearls were sewn in the scabbard) that Elizabeth 1 used in 1571, and the Fire Cup (1662) which was the only

plate to survive the Great Fire of 1666. We learnt a lot about Dutch and Flemish art from the priceless collection in the Mansion house. Interestingly 'The Oyster Meal' which showed the aphrodisiac effect of oysters made a big impression even though it was only a copy. The painting was looted by the Nazis and returned promptly to its rightful owners and sold at auction for £1.6m

### **Visit to West Horsley Place Friday 26 April**

Our visit was an experience! The Mary Roxburgh Trust was established to rescue, repair and conserve the building. We had two very interesting tours as central heating (it's not warm inside) was installed around us, and our excellent guide kept one room ahead of the repair team. We learnt some fascinating history, such the six day visit of Queen Elizabeth in 1559, and where Sir Walter Raleigh's wife may have kept his head after his execution in 1618. If anyone wants to see what the house looks like, have a look at a new Monday evening BBC serial called Ghosts, by the Horrible History comedy team which is set in the house ("I thought the blitz was bad but your builders made the Luftwaffe look like a youth group").

### **Review of April talk: Klimt and the Austrian Secession by Douglas Skeggs**

You gave excellent feedback on last month's talk.

### **Leatherhead Theatre**

Arts highlights in the coming month include:

**ROH: Faust**, a live screening of Gounod's opera on Sunday 5 May

**Leatherhead Drama Festival:** Monday 6 May to Saturday 18 May.

**ROH: The Royal Ballet** perform three modern works, on Sunday 19 May

**The Australian Ballet** perform Spartacus, on Monday 20 May

**Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake** (the one with male swans), on Friday 24 May

**Opera Brava, La Traviata**, Verdi's opera on Saturday 1 June

**EOS: Van Gogh and Japan** on Tuesday 4 June

**RSC: The Taming of the Shrew** on Wednesday 5 June.

Tickets from the box office 01372 365141

### **Next month: Wednesday 12 June at 7.30pm**

### **Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the Artists: Karin Fernald**

**A bicentenary talk: Queen Victoria was born in late May 1919 and Prince Albert in August 1919.** The June talk will discuss themes from the worlds of art, society and the English Court in the 1840's and 50's, as seen through the eyes of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert; Lady Lyttelton, the Royal governess; and some favourite Royal artists.

The Queen and Prince Albert were keen to promote artists such as the English Edwin Landseer, who charmed them with portraits of royal children and dogs, and the German Franz Xavier Winterhalter, who painted the Queen without sentimentality, to her satisfaction. This lecture also touches on the builder Thomas Cubitt and Osborne House; and on the national craze for everything medieval, in which the royal couple shared.

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