

THE ARTS SOCIETY LEICESTER

Chairman's Report to 41st Annual General Meeting

I am pleased to report on a successful year but one which has not been without its difficulties. The society has come through this last year and is ready to start the new year.

As usual we have had an excellent and varied series of lectures arranged by Will Gilding. After each lecture the committee members review the lecture assessing it against criteria determined by the national Arts Society. Almost without exception we have given the lecturers top marks. On your behalf I thank Will for his efforts in arranging such a successful programme.

The autumn visit in September 2023 was to Compton Verney to an exhibition of work by Quentin Blake: Birds Beasts and Explorers. In June we had a return visit to the Higgins Gallery in Bedford which we last visited some 10 years ago. The Higgins holds a large number of works bequeathed by Edward Bawden and the exhibition was of works by artists who had been influenced by Bawden, their works being hung alongside the work that had inspired them. At both visits we had first class guides who enabled us to get so much more out of the exhibitions

In April we had a very successful study day. More than 60 members and guests came to hear Dr. Jonathan Foyle who gave three lectures on a Tudor theme: Art and Architecture following Bosworth, the building of Hampton Court and the true meaning of the Tudor Rose. Jonathan is a very engaging person who made sure that he spoke to many of those at the study day as we collected cups of tea and coffee during the day.

Our Social evening in August was a buffet meal followed by a very interesting talk by Will Gilding on the subject of Pricing and Provenance in the Art World. The duty of a selling auctioneer is to maximise the sale proceeds for his client, and this can involve detailed and extensive research to establish provenance, or sometimes not.

Catherine Watt continues to lead the team working at the County Record Office on the digitisation of planning applications. On one memorable day earlier this year one of the planning applications examined was for extensions in the late 1930s for her own house.

At the end of this year, we have some changes in your committee. A couple of years ago the national society withdrew its support from church recording, and as a result the church recorders around the country, including our team, disbanded. Diane Hall and Ann Lewis, who had led a very dedicated team, have now retired from the committee. On your behalf I thank them for their years of dedicated work. Will Gilding, who has been programme secretary for a number of years is also stepping down from the committee.

In his place we have a team of three, Tim Hogarth Jones, Ann Allsop and Chris Mason. I thank Will for his work as a successful programme secretary. Nicky Drucquer who has been publicity officer for many years is stepping down from the committee but will continue to help with the programme card. Thanks go to Nicky for her work for the society.

The other members of the committee, Philip Burrell, Pam Spokes, Maggie Dufour, Lois Pearson and Catherine Watt continue, and thanks are due to them all for the support they give to the society.

As usual our lectures for the forthcoming year will begin at 7.30 pm. I shall be at the door of the auditorium to welcome you.

Martin Wragg

Chairman

19 August 2024