

NEWSLETTER 2021/2022



What a year it's been. We've made huge progress towards pre pandemic normality with some big steps and some baby steps. We've been adaptable, and cautious always trying to think of our members safety while keeping the society dynamic and interesting. Our committee and members have worked hard, planning for and enjoying a wide variety of opportunities. We've enjoyed 10 lectures, 3 visits to Bath, Hereford and Broughton as well as a marvellous Summer Lunch and Plant Swap. 8 of our lectures were delivered as 'hybrid' lectures with increasing numbers of members in the village hall, while others watched via Zoom. Our last 2 lectures in June and July returned to being purely in the village hall and in June we celebrated our return with a Welcome Back/Jubilee Party.

Details of the lectures we have enjoyed are on our website (theartssocietymalmesbury.org.uk), but just to remind you, they included: **The Glasgow Boys** with Stella Lyons; **Eric Ravilious: Designer, Wood Engravings, Ceramics and Lithography** with James Russell; **The Art Turns Him from St Nicholas to Father Christmas** with Christopher Bradley; **An Easy Day for a Lady: The Dress of Early Women Mountaineers** with Kate Strasdin; **3 Andalusian Cities: Cordoba, Seville and Granada** with Gail Turner; **Debo: Mitford, Cavendish, Devonshire. Duchess and Housewife** with Simon Seligman; **Signs, Symbols and Iconography** with Leslie Primo; **Caravaggio: A Master of Light and Shadow** with Shirley Smith; **Islamic Art: Exploring the Decorative Arts of the Islamic World** with Christopher Bradley and **Women in Art: Gentileschi to Emin** with Lynne Gibson. Our lecturers have all risen brilliantly to the flexibility challenge during these Covid times. On one memorable occasion the lecturer got on and started giving the lecture while we resolved technical problems in the village hall! They have been excellent and indeed excellent or outstanding is the rating most regularly given during review.

Our trips to **Bath, Hereford and Broughton** were varied in terms of weather and content.



The heavens opened in Bath during our visit to **No 1, Royal Crescent**, but we enjoyed this fascinating town house and imagined living there for the season. One of the most surprising facts I learned was that back in Jane Austen's time, if you took this house for the season, you would bring your own art with you to adorn the walls in order to impress your guests!

Our visit to **Hereford Cathedral** was a great success. It started with refreshments in the College Hall followed by a guided tour of the cathedral and a visit to the Mappa Mundi and the Chained Library Exhibition. The group split into two, each with a very good and knowledgeable guide, so we were able to enjoy and learn about the many treasures on view.



The coach trip to **Broughton Castle** and **Broughton Grange Gardens** was well subscribed and hugely enjoyed. Largely unchanged since the 15th century, this fascinating castle has been the setting for many blockbuster films due to its entirely authentic nature. The gardens at Broughton Grange provided a wonderful, modern contrast. Designed by Tom Stuart Smith in 2001 who created a six-acre walled garden that is now considered to be one of the finest private contemporary gardens in Britain.



The long-awaited **Summer Lunch** and **Plant Swap** at Willesley House (it had to be cancelled twice due to Covid) were the triumph of the season. Oversubscribed by members, the tour around the garden, talk about its history and lunch were hugely enjoyed. We were so grateful to Denise and Peter for sharing this lovely setting with us.

Our **Welcome Back/Jubilee Tea Party** featured truly amazing refreshments. As you can see from the photograph below, we ate very well!



The committee and I hope you all continue to stay safe and well.

Julie Thomas, Chair.