



# THE ARTS SOCIETY SHREWSBURY

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*Enriching lives through the arts*

Chairman's Newsletter  
April 2019

Dear Members

It is wonderful to start this newsletter with three pieces of congratulations. First of all, congratulations to our Committee on winning The Arts Society's Committee Marsh Award 2019. The Marsh Christian Trust was founded in 1981 by Mr Brian Marsh OBE to celebrate the outstanding contributions of people who are committed to social, cultural and environmental causes and who voluntarily go above and beyond to make a difference. The panel of judges was very impressed by the range of activities undertaken by our Society including the Young Arts Bursary, the wonderful project on Chinese textiles that benefited the students at Shrewsbury College as well as our Heritage Volunteering and Church Recording. "Shrewsbury Society clearly understands and embraces the values of The Arts Society and demonstrates them through the impact they have on the community around Shrewsbury". We are very grateful to the judges for their recognition of the hard work and dedication of the committee and, with 385 societies and 90,000 members of The Arts Society, we are very honoured to receive this award which will be presented at the National AGM in London on 15 May.

The second cause for celebration and thanks was the presentation of a Golden Jubilee Award to Caroline Auger. We were delighted to welcome David and Mary Brass to our meeting in March. David is the West Midlands Heritage Volunteers representative, and we were very grateful to him for presenting us with £150 for our new project at Shropshire Archives. Working at getting our number of volunteers up from three to 18 was just one of the many things Caroline has done for us in the over 18 years she has served on our committee, first as Treasurer, then in her continuing role as Membership Secretary, as a Church Recorder in charge of cataloguing the books in the churches our team recorded, and lately as our Heritage Volunteers Representative. The prolonged applause on the announcement of this award was testament to how much Caroline is valued by our members.

The third cause for congratulation is the announcement of the winner of Shrewsbury's Young Arts Bursary in celebration of the Golden Jubilee of The Arts Society. From a field of 26 applicants, the interview panel was impressed by all three short-listed candidates on the interview day, April 7, but Gabriel Watt, a student in the Fashion Department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp (one of the most prestigious in the world), was outstanding, and they had no difficulty in reaching a unanimous decision. They were struck by his drive and determination, his creative vision and his technical skill. Gabriel is passionate about what he is doing and has become more aware of the importance of his English and Shropshire roots while he has been studying in Antwerp, and has used this to inspire his designs. He has the potential to be an excellent ambassador for Shrewsbury and The Arts Society. The £2000 will make a difference to the garments which he can make for his final year show by giving him the freedom to use more expensive fabrics, and possibly buying a knitting machine and/or overlocker. We look forward to watching his exciting progress in the future. Many thanks are due to the panel Chairman, Deborah Yates, and her wonderful team of Ceri Lewis, Sally Stote and Gloria Partridge for their preparation and focus on the day, and to Anne Wignall and Rosie Bynam for helping with the selection of the final three. This would not have been possible without Shrewsbury's Celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Arts Society on 19 May 2018 at the Blackburn Theatre, Prestfelde School, and the generous sponsorship from Lowe & Fletcher Ltd, Award Productions Ltd, and Tanners Wines, for which, again, we thank them very much.

## **Past Events**

Our lecture on 16 January, *Velázquez and the Golden Age of Spanish Painting* by Siân Walters, got our year of The Art of Spain off to a fabulous start.

On 20 February, our lecture, which attracted our biggest audience to date, was *Romans, Christians and Moors: Andalucía and its Golden Age* in which we enjoyed a scholarly presentation of a wide-ranging subject by Tom Duncan.

On 21 February, we enjoyed a magical production of Birmingham Royal Ballet's *Beauty and the Beast*, with the breath-taking choreography by David Bintley, from the wonderful seats which Corinne managed to secure for us.

On 28 February, we enjoyed a visit in conjunction with The Arts Society Wrekin to St Barnabas Church and Brampton Bryan Hall in which we had fascinating tours, learning about the defence of the now-ruined castle from the Royalists by Lady Brilliana Harley in 1643 in the Civil War, and the generous hospitality of Mr and Mrs Edward Harley. Our delicious organic lunch was at Aardvark Books in which we enjoyed a browse round their collection of 50,000 books.

On 13 March, we enjoyed an outstanding Day of Special Interest with Douglas Skeggs who talked to us on *Bankrolling the Renaissance: a history of the Medici family*. They may not have all been saints, but we are very grateful they had a conscience to commission some of the most dazzling art of the Renaissance.

On 20 March, Gail Turner took us with her on her journey along the Camino with her charming lecture on *The Sword and the Staff: art and architecture on the Pilgrim Way to Santiago de Compostela*.

On 28 March, Pippa Walker and Lucy Harvey-Scholes went to the National Directory Day in Westminster Central Hall. 900 committee members attended together with 250 accredited lecturers, 140 of whom presented on the stage for one minute, and 29 of whom presented for two minutes as new lecturers. We look forward to seeing what delights Pippa and Lucy have in store for our enjoyment in 2021!

On 4 April, we experienced a delightful day with guided tours of the majestic Architectural Heritage of Manchester and Manchester Art Gallery with its permanent collection of local and national significance, particularly of Pre-Raphaelite art, and its special exhibitions of *Leonardo da Vinci: a life in drawing*; Halima Cassell's *Electica-Global Inspirations*; Martin Parr's *Changing Landscapes*; and *Nordic Craft & Design*.

Thank you to Deborah Yates, Pippa Walker, Lucy Harvey-Scholes, Ceri Lewis, Jane Benson, Corinne Russell and Cathy Young for all their thought and meticulous preparation in these enjoyable events.

### **Future Events**

On 20 to 23 May 2019, there will be a three-night UK tour to the North East.

On 6 June 2019, there will be a trip to Morton Hall Gardens and Coughton Court. (Details enclosed)

On 8 June 2019, our Summer Party will be at Wollerton Old Hall Gardens. (Details enclosed)

On Tuesday 16 July, our West Midlands Day of Special Interest will be run by The Arts Society Arden. It would be good for support from Shrewsbury. (Details to follow; save the day!)

On 31 July, we shall visit the Sidney Nolan Gallery and Stockton Bury Gardens. (Details enclosed)

From September 25 - 4 October 2019, our overseas trip will be to Madrid, Segovia, Salamanca and Toledo to study The Art of Spain.

On 12 November, there will be a visit to the Barber Institute and the Birmingham Hippodrome to see Carlos Acosta. (Save the day!)

Thank you to Corinne Russell, Cathy Young and Ceri Lewis for organising these events for us.

### **Heritage Volunteering**

The training day at Shropshire Archives on 19 February was a great success with 18 members volunteering for the project to clean and restore negatives and plates of old photographs on Tuesday mornings between 10.00 am and 12.00 pm. It is a warm and friendly environment in which to work, and it is a great opportunity to help the Shropshire Archives to undertake this

valuable work. Thank you to Caroline Auger for organising this and drawing up the subsequent rota and to our team of volunteers.

On 27 March, there was a training day in The Long Warehouse in Ironbridge for the new project, this time involving sorting cleaning, recording and cataloguing plans and blueprints from the Aga Foundry at Coalbrookdale. The project will start in late April/beginning of May in conjunction with The Arts Society Wrekin.

We wish all our heritage Volunteering teams good luck and look forward to hearing about their progress.

### **Church Recording**

Our new Church Recording Project got off to a splendid start when Sir Michael Leighton talked to the team about St Michael's and All Angels Church in Alberbury. Thank you to Martin Locke for his efforts in getting this latest project off to such a positive start, and thank you to the team. We wish you luck and look forward to hearing of your future progress.

### **Young Arts**

On 7 March, I was delighted to present a cheque for £500 to Shropshire Youth Theatre for the costumes and design in their production of *Pride and Prejudice* at Theatre Severn. Jerry Wallace and I felt very privileged to attend one of their rehearsals in The Hive in which we were inspired seeing the way the Producer and the Director worked with the enthusiastic young cast with such encouragement to get the results they wanted with patience and determination. They all made us so welcome at what was a most enjoyable evening.

On 11 April, it was wonderful to see the journey of improvement they had been on when I was privileged, together with Roly Trevor-Jones, Deborah Yates and Ceri Lewis, to attend the last night of their performances in the Walker Theatre. The audience was very responsive to the young performers' portrayal of Jane Austen's subtle humour, and it was pleasing to see how our money was spent on the delightful costumes they had made for the ladies and the splendid outfits they had hired for the gentlemen.

On 25 March, Howard Franklin, Roly Trevor-Jones, Deborah Yates and I were privileged to attend the 10th Anniversary Celebration of Theatre Severn with the enchanting and uplifting performance of *Romany Wood* featuring singers and musicians from the Shrewsbury area and student dancers from Elmhurst Ballet School in Birmingham. It was a wonderful evening, and it was so good to hear their recognition and appreciation of the Young Arts donation of £500 from The Arts Society Shrewsbury which was donated for singing workshops and the performance. It was gratifying to know we made a difference and helped them stage such an inspiring performance of singing and dancing with the young people of Shropshire.

Thank you to Jerry Wallace for all his amazing efforts to ensure we continue to support worthwhile Young Arts projects in Shrewsbury with the profits from our events and the raffle tickets which you buy so generously each month.

Finally, thank you to you all for your continuing support of everything our wonderful committee arranges for the Arts Society Shrewsbury. I wish you all a very Happy Easter and a happy summer ahead.

Best wishes  
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