

NEWSLETTER

The Arts Society of West Suffolk

Our Next Meeting: Tuesday 4th February 2025 Blackbourne Community Centre, Elmswell

Doors open at 10 a.m for welcoming tea / coffee and biscuits
10.45 am Niven from Extra to Institution: Richard Burnip



Niven's remarkable life and career in cinema is explored, with an examination of his enduring place in public affection. Rising from studio extra to Hollywood leading man, although Niven remained characteristically modest about his abilities, they were in fact considerable, as this lecture demonstrates. Particular attention is paid to his military film roles, and insights are offered into his writings, and the huge range of his wartime activities. From his personification of an ideal young subaltern in *The Way Ahead*, to the reality of being a Lieutenant Colonel on General Eisenhower's staff, there was much more to this unique actor



Richard Burnip is an actor whose work includes theatre, documentaries and audiobooks. Richard has a BA Hons in English Language and Literature from the University of Manchester and an acting diploma from the Birmingham School of Speech and Drama. He combines acting, writing and lecturing. Highly experienced in audio work, he has narrated numerous documentaries and over 180 audiobooks for publishers including Penguin, HarperCollins and Hodder and Stoughton. Richard is an accredited lecturer for the Arts Society and has lectured at many venues in the UK and Europe. He guides on many specialist topics for London Walks.

A note from the Chair

It was good to see so many members, as well as several guests and a new member, at the recent lecture on Understanding Buddhist Art. There are a few places still available for the Special Interest Day, which we would like to fill. Please do consider bringing along a guest to what promises to be a stimulating day (£35 with lunch). Jeremy (comms@tasws.org.uk) will be delighted to take both bookings and payment. - *Diana Hollins*

It's Swimarathon time again



Each year a member's team swims in the Rotary Swimarathon. This is a fun event that raises funds for our Young Arts programme. This year the event will take place on Sunday 16th March in the Abbeycroft Leisure. If you would like to join in, please let us know. More details will follow.

Special Interest Day: Tuesday 18th February 2025



This special interest day is being well supported once again. Just a few places left so do still get in touch. As last time sadly, our refreshment capability is unable to deliver two rounds in the time available because the urn takes an age to heat up! With a heavy heart, we find we are unable to welcome you in the usual manner with tea, coffee and biscuits but these will be served at 11 o'clock.

Programme for the day:

9.30 am Doors open
 10.00 am Lecture: "Hot Stuff - The Birth of Studio Glass"
 1.00 am Coffee/tea break
 11.30 am Lecture: "Mid 20c Modern Italian Ceramics"
 12.30 pm Lunch - a light lunch with soft drinks.
 You are welcome to bring your own wine and wine glass.
 1.30 pm A spontaneous discussion about glass and ceramics you have brought
 3.00 pm Finish



Young Arts Report

Brenda Hunt



It has been a busy time since my last newsletter starting with a wonderful visit to Thurston Primary Academy to discuss the funding of outreach workshops provided by Gainsborough House and art materials for other creative projects. At a meeting with the arts team from St Benedict's Catholic School we discussed support for future endeavours and the introduction of a sublimation printing capability - on hold for now.

Thurston Sixth Form Community College have sought support for an exciting new digital design venture and additional screens for their screen printing work. I am delighted that this project has been approved. I will let you know more when it is complete. I am also delighted to say that the joint project with the KEGS Foundation to provide an additional potter's wheel for Abbeygate Sixth Form College is complete with installation this month. This has created an opportunity to offer a ceramic speciality at A level.

Sadly the work submitted for The Arts Society A level Art Competition was not short listed. This is no reflection on the wonderful and exciting creativity I have seen presented from our talented young artists. It is as ever, a privilege to be able to offer, on your behalf, funding that I know will make a real difference and enhance curiosity and creativity in our young artists. Thank you once again for your generous support.

Understanding Buddhist Art

Vivienne and Paul

Beginning with a brief summary of the Buddhist faith, from suffering to Enlightenment, Matthew Wilson went on to illustrate how such complex beliefs had been interpreted by artists over time.

The earliest examples from the second century BCE did not show the Buddha himself but imprints of his feet representing the path to be followed, surrounded by symbols such as wheels, lotus flowers and the swastika, whose original meaning of well-being was sadly hi-jacked later by the Nazi party for their own purposes. The fifth century CE brought the tranquil, and more familiar, figure of the seated Teaching Buddha. Set within a triangle of perfect symmetry and with a head surrounded by a huge halo it demonstrated the universality of religious symbols. There was an unexpected meeting of ideas when the spread of Buddhism encountered Alexander The Great's relentless eastward expansion. The result was the introduction of Hellenistic features, such as drapery and more emphasis on the male body, into Buddhist sculpture. As Buddhism developed so more symbols became part of an ever widening range of representations of The Enlightened One. These included the Third Eye, seen as a dot on the forehead, and the mudras, or hand gestures familiar to both Buddhists and Yoga enthusiasts.



Finally, at the end of a fascinating talk, we came to the abstraction of Zen Buddhism represented by a Japanese pen and ink drawing of 1470. We left delighted and, I think, definitely enlightened.