

NEWSLETTER

The Arts Society of West Suffolk



NEXT MEETING Tuesday 2nd April 2024 Blackbourne Community Centre, Elmswell
Doors open 10am for Welcoming Coffee/Tea
10.45 am Is this real life? Mary Sharp

When Lucy goes through the wardrobe into Narnia, when Harry Potter opens his letter and when Nemo takes the red pill they all discover that the worlds they thought they knew are only part of the truth. From Plato onwards, writers and artists have been inspired to push beyond the norm and to create other worlds that inspire our imagination. This lecture explores what these stories tell us about how we view our lives and what it is that we most desire.



Mary Sharp is an experienced broadcaster and teacher with a particular expertise in literature and drama. She worked for many years for BBC Radio 4 producing some of its most popular programmes before joining the senior management team as a Commissioning Editor. She subsequently worked as a teacher and Director of Sixth Form before running her own company 'Opening Up' which offers literature courses for adults including studies of Shakespeare and Creative Writing. Her most popular course is 'Telling Tales' which explores how writers and artists have reinvented classical stories. Mary is also a professional bridge teacher and lecturer.

SPECIAL INTEREST DAY Many thanks to Jennifer Decker and Jacky Livens, ably assisted by the committee, for organising such a successful Special Interest Day last month. Marc Allum held everyone's attention with his amusing anecdotes about his life as an auctioneer and fascinating insight into the workings of the Antiques Roadshow. Casper's Catering provided an excellent light lunch, after which the afternoon descriptions and valuations of Marc's own artefacts as well as items brought along by members, perfectly rounded off most enjoyable day.

VISITS

There are still a few spaces left to visit the Suffolk Archives in Raingate Street, Bury St Edmunds on Wednesday 27th March from 10.30 to 12.30. The Bury St Edmunds Psalter will be on view. Cost £7 per head. To book please contact Julia Eeles, our Visits Organiser, on 01359 240838.



Visit to Island Hall, Godmanchester, Wednesday 22nd May from 2 pm Tour of the Georgian mansion, home to the Vane Percy family for eight generations, followed by tea. Details will follow soon by email.

SWIMATHON



It's that time again, when our intrepid team of swimmers take part in the Rotary Club Swimathon to raise funds for Young Arts to help to fund a local school project or individual. This year's Swimathon takes place on 17th March and at present

we still need one more swimmer for the team. Please contact Jacky Livens on 01359 242425 or email jpliv56@gmail.com if you can help or would like to sponsor our swimmers.

Van Gogh: 444 days in Provence Mariska Beekenkamp-Wladimiroff, this month's speaker, focused her lecture on the happiest time in the otherwise bleak life of Van Gogh, one of the most famous Dutch painters. The paintings he produced in Provence will be part of the exhibition 'Poets and Lovers' in the National Gallery from 14 September 2024 to 19 January 2025.

Van Gogh was part of a large middle class family with a history of insanity on his mother's side. An elder brother, Vincent, died before he was born and the name was then given to him. One of his sisters was sent to an asylum and a brother committed suicide. The stalwart of the family was his younger brother

Theo, a successful art dealer, who encouraged and supported Vincent, both emotionally and financially, throughout his life. Vincent was an introverted young man who was unsure of his career path, taking on several diverse occupations before being persuaded by Theo to concentrate on his art. Moving to Paris, Vincent became part of the art set and gained inspiration from many other artists resulting in a change to his painting style, which began to incorporate impressionism. He was also fascinated and greatly influenced by Japanese art. However, Vincent's reticent character did not fit well into the Paris set, so in 1888 he relocated to Arles. He moved into the yellow house depicted in his paintings, and decorated it to reflect his personality. Although the location was seedy, the house small and its furnishings plain, Vincent felt uplifted by the South of France light. He took pleasure in the simplicity of his surroundings, which he portrayed as beautiful, depicting the rather ordinary park in Arles as a place of colour and charm. Many of Vincent's most colourful and vibrant paintings come from this period. Vincent was inspired to set up an artists' community in Arles but failed to attract other artists to join him. Gauguin visited him for two months but the two artists eventually fell out, resulting in the infamous incident when Vincent cut off his own ear. Vincent's optimistic paintings from this time reflect his admiration for nature, farmers and landscapes. It is sad that his creative genius was largely unrecognised during his lifetime with only one painting known to have been sold until after his death when his widowed sister-in-law dedicated herself to promoting his art.



EUSTON OPEN DAYS 2024

March 25th to 28th.
April 1st, 6th, 7th, 19th, 20th, 21st.
May 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th.
August 16th, 17th, 18th.
September 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd.