



# RADLETT ART SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 260

## Chairman's Report. February 2026

At the beginning of December we set the tone for Christmas with a tasty 2 course lunch in the beautiful setting of Porters Park Golf Club. We held a raffle which was well supported and very ably organised by Cherrie and Inga. Anna and Edward organised a "not too difficult" art quiz, which helped create a lovely friendly atmosphere amongst those who attended and I think was enjoyed by all.

After our very successful trip to North Wales last year, we have recently released our 5 day holiday at the beginning of September to Kent. It is a full itinerary with



many interesting and varied places to see, including Knole House, Leeds Castle, Batemans, the home of Rudyard Kipling, Great Dixter House, some beautiful gardens and the odd castle. Our hotel is in Canterbury and we will enjoy a guided tour of Canterbury cathedral and explore the city.

On our way home we visit the very pretty Tudeley church, which has all its 12 stained glass windows decorated by the Russian Artist Marc Chagall. We

then travel on to Ightham Mote, a superb moated Manor House

I have already received application forms from many of you. If you would like a hard copy of the holiday flyer, then please ask or call me or you can download it from our website

The holiday is a wonderful opportunity for you to meet other members of our society socially and maybe make new friends

Closing date for applications is April 30th 2026

The society continues to be able advertise our presence in the village in the Harpenden Building Society window -which we can do several times a year. Sadly the rules about displays have changed this year so we are no longer able to show our paintings but we have posters showing paintings and exhibition photographs.

Our Thursday afternoon workshop remains popular -

**On Thursday February 26th we have invited a live model to sit for us.**

You will be able to draw or paint his portrait - he has a most interesting face!

The session, from 1.30 - 3.30, will cost £6 . This is payable on the day - exact money would be appreciated or you can pay by direct debit.

Bring paper, a 2B pencil and maybe an eraser +/- or paint and brushes - come and have a go.

We shall also be organising a full day workshop later in the year - all members are welcome to sign up when details are available!

Adam Lewis, one of our regular Thursday Workshop artists, is interviewed in what has become a regular feature in our newsletter - 'Meet the Artist'. Cherrie Chester and Inga Armstrong chatted with Adam about his artistic life. It is the 4th of these fascinating informal interviews - do make sure to read it.

We would love someone to volunteer to organise some "days out" for us. Unfortunately our hard working committee is so small, none of us can take on anything extra. Any offer of help from any of you would be gratefully received.

Best wishes  
Gill

### Lecture News

**Clare Ford-Wille February 19<sup>th</sup> 2026 Zoom only; 7.45 for 8.0 pm.**

**Lecture on Joseph Wright of Derby, The National Gallery Exhibition 'From the Shadows.'**



Wright of Derby 'An experiment on a Bird in the air Pump', National Gallery 176

This is the first major exhibition dedicated to the 18th century British artist and his 'candlelight' paintings.

The lecture will be an opportunity to rediscover this important artist and his extraordinary paintings. We shall see his engagement with light and darkness, his artistic practice and the historical background as well as contemporary scientific, industrial and artistic developments which were crucial to his work.

The lecture will also focus on his visit to Italy and his novel and dramatic paintings of volcanic eruptions, inspired by Vesuvius, as well as his other dramatic landscapes, and portraits."

This exhibition is on at the National Gallery until 10<sup>th</sup> May 2026 it is highly recommended

**Linda Collins March 26<sup>th</sup> Zoom only; 7.45 for 8.0pm. Lecture on 'History of Art. Changing ideas of Beauty.'**



The National Gallery in London has re-presented its collection, grouping pictures into themes.

We shall be looking at a selection of paintings from the point of view of history of art, changing ideas of beauty, or how the choice of frames influences the way we see paintings.

A leisurely stroll through some of the nations most accomplished works.

1782 Vigee le Brun Self Portrait in Straw Hat

**Val Woodgate April 30<sup>th</sup> 2026 Live Radlett Reform Synagogue, 118 Watling Street, WD77AA 7.30 for 8.0 pm and on zoom: Lecture on 'Picasso and his Women.'**



Olga Khokhlova, Picasso's 1<sup>st</sup> wife oil on canvas 1918

Picasso told his biographer, John Richardson, that his work was like a diary – "*to understand it, you have to see how it mirrors my life.*"

This lecture examines the way Picasso's emotional life influenced what he painted and how he painted it. His response to each new love in his life can be seen in the different styles in which his many women were represented. When he fell out of love that fact would be revealed first in his paintings. The lecture concentrates on the seven most important women in his life (two of whom he married).

### **London Exhibitions related to forthcoming 2026 lectures**

Joseph Wright of Derby - National Gallery, until 10th May. (Clare Ford-Wille - February 19th)

Lee Miller - Tate Britain until 14th February (lecture by Frank Woodgate 11th June)

Frida Kahlo - Tate Modern 25th June - 3rd January 2027 (lecture by Jessica Faye 16th July)

## Meet the Artist

Welcome to this month's Meet the Artist article which this time focuses on Adam Lewis, one of the long standing members of the Radlett Art Society and one time Chairman. Over delicious biscuits and coffee he told us something of the part art has played in his life.

Adam when did you first start doing art? – I can't remember doing art at school. My first recollections of drawing are as a medical student at Barts. When I was studying anatomy drawing the various parts of the body helped me learn. Then as a surgeon I did drawings of the area of the body to be operated on both before and after. This was before the days of instant digital photographs. This practice honed my drawing skills as well as being a useful record of the operation! In an increasingly litigious world this was a useful tool. One of my drawings was once used in a case at the High Court and helped the case to collapse.

Have you had any formal art training? –

Yes I did a City and Guilds course in watercolour at Great Missenden in the early 2000s. Diana the teacher was quite fierce and if she didn't like what you had done she would take it over to the sink and give it a dousing with water and improved it no end! The subjects for painting were very varied; landscapes, seascapes, portraits and abstract. The still life picture shown in this article is one of the paintings I did on the course.

Did any of your relatives do art? - My mother and paternal grandfather were both artists and I still have examples of their work. My grandfather exhibited at the RA and during the 1stWW he used to draw funny picture postcards to send to my father.

You are known for painting portraits, is this your favourite subject? -Yes I like doing portraits in oils. And I have done several commissions for friends over the years, most of the time they like what I produce, but not always!

Do you like going to art exhibitions? – Yes I am a Friend of the National Portrait Gallery and recently went to a wonderful Cecil Beaton exhibition.

I know you go to Italy quite a lot, do you enjoy painting there? – Yes I have done a lot of paintings and drawings in Italy over the years. I think that watercolour is not suited to the Mediterranean as the light is too bright and harsh so I tend to use oils when I'm there. It is lovely to look at the pictures I've painted over the years and have the memories of when they were painted.

Have you any advice for anyone taking up art? – Practice is very important. You can soon get rusty! The Thursday workshops are a great environment to be with like minded people and enjoy the creative process together.



Finally.....did you know....one of Adam's daughters makes costumes for Bridgerton! – the artistic genes have been passed on.

Thank you Adam, interview conducted by Cherrie Chester and Inga Armstrong.

## **Dates for your Diary.**

**AGM** - Tuesday March 17th at 7.30 on Zoom  
Papers to follow

**Radlett Art Society Summer Exhibition** - June 5th - 7th at Radlett Village Institute  
5th hand in, hanging and Private View, 6th & 7th Open to the Public.

Further details and submission forms to follow but to all artists - please start painting now if you haven't already.

## **Exhibitions of Interest - but not related to any RAS lectures this year**

Turner & Constable at Tate Britain - marking 250 years since their births - until 12th April  
Seurat and the Sea at The Courtauld Gallery - 13th February - 17th May  
Anna Ancher: Painting Light at Dulwich Picture Gallery - until 8th March.

**Lecture Report** - just 1 in this Newsletter edition

### **The Guildhall London, sculpture, monuments and 17th, 18th and 19th Century Art'.**

**Lecture by Ian Swankie on 6 November 2025.**

In this engaging lecture, Ian Swankie divided his subject into three distinct parts.

He commenced with the location and architecture of the various ancient and modern buildings that make up the site of the historical and present administrative and ceremonial centrepiece of the City of London Corporation. The Guildhall itself was built in 1411 and, having survived both the Great Fire of London and the Blitz, it is the only secular stone structure dating from before 1666 still standing in the City. The relatively narrow front entrance (which I vividly recall from my first visit in 1962!) has since been widened into a spacious piazza. Ian also drew attention to two major sculptures, the first of Winston Churchill by Oscar Nemon, and the other William Beckford, Lord Mayor, philanthropist and slaveowner, in 1767, by John Francis Moore.

Ian concluded with a survey of the Roman remains, the piazza being largely on the site of the ancient Roman amphitheatre, a discovery which hugely delayed construction of the new Art Gallery, designed by Richard Gilbert Scott, and provided with ceilings sufficiently high to admit the pikes of the Pikemen of the Royal artillery Company.

The centrepiece of the evening was devoted to a tour of some of the highlights of the Guildhall Art Gallery. This was conducted with an eye for details, otherwise possibly overlooked, which shed much light on the subject. The pictures were varied and by many well-known artists. I would focus on those relating to the City of London in particular. These included a striking panorama of the Great Fire of London in 1666 'after Henry Waggoner' and the portrait of Sir Hugh Wyndham by John Michael Wright in 1670. Wyndham was one of 22 Fire Judges appointed to deal swiftly with compensation claims following the fire and a fascinating old photograph showed them all arrayed round the walls of the Great Hall. Most of these were ruined by water damage in the Blitz; the second Great Fire.

On a lighter note was Harold Workman's 1930s landscape of Traffic Chaos on (old, narrow) London Bridge; showing that traffic congestion is not just a modern phenomenon. By way of complete contrast came 'Animal Spirits' by Sir Grayson Perry in 2016, where all the artist's criticisms of the world of capitalist finance were strikingly embodied by a creature half-bull and half-bear.

This was an energetic and stimulating lecture and well-illustrated. I am hoping to follow it up soon with a guided tour of the Guildhall Art Gallery, preferably one led by Ian Swankie.

Edward Cross