

Art Friends Warwickshire

ARTLOOK

April 2020

Dear Art Friend

Thank you to everyone who wrote so supportively after receiving our last issue of **ARTLOOK** where we announced the cancellation or postponement of most upcoming events. We are still unable to predict when we can re-schedule three of the events but all our speakers are keen to talk to us once the virus is under control and we are free to meet.

Also postponed for twelve months is our annual tour, this year planned for the south of England, based at a hotel in the New Forest and including a visit to the Isle of Wight and Osborne House. Johnsons, partners in our tours, are happy to re-schedule the five-day visit to 2021 and those who booked for this year are not only having their deposit refunded now but also will be given first refusal for places on next year's tour. The holiday is always very popular and will be missed this summer – along with so many other things.

We have huge sympathy for those museums and galleries who have worked years in advance to stage some amazing exhibitions only to see their plans fall apart. Some may be resurrected but some may be impossible to recreate. However, many museums are turning to the internet and offering on-line 'entry' to exhibitions. The *Picasso and Paper* show, reviewed in our last issue by Sue Yeomans, is now available in a video on-line and although you don't see everything, at least there is nobody standing in front of you discussing their grandson's piano grades as you crane over them to view the artwork. A list of links to such exhibitions and museums is included in this issue.

On Hold

A brief reminder of the talks we hope to resurrect:

Sarah Shalgosky, Curator University of Warwick, *Art in the Landscape*.

Professor Paul Smith, University of Warwick, *Cézanne, the Mont Saint-Victoire and Bibémus Quarry*

Fuchsia Hart, art historian, *When Persia came to London: an introduction to the Arts of Iran*

Future Events

Wednesday, 23 September: travel by executive coach to Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, the home of Horace Walpole. Booking is still open for this event. Contact: brian@artfriendswarks.uk.

Friday 16 October: our annual Shottery afternoon tea. Our speaker will be Dr Rosie Dias from the University of Warwick. Topic together with booking details will be announced in a future **ARTLOOK**.

Art Fund

We would like to acknowledge the help of Art Fund who have provided us with the seed-funding for our website and other start-up costs as part of their transition funding for volunteer committees

wishing to continue in a new guise. In addition, their National Fund-raising Manager, Katy Richards, has been delighted to accept life-time honorary membership of Art Friends Warwickshire in thanks for her past support of our group.

ARTLOOK

Not only did we receive compliments from readers for the inclusion of two art-related articles in our last issue, but also it has spurred a number of you to contribute pieces on your own art experiences. In this issue we are pleased to include Jenny Matthew's feature on three lesser known museums based in Florence or nearby. Closer to home is the piece on a painting in Christ Church Picture Gallery in Oxford contributed by supporter, Kevin Grant.

Do you have a short article you could write, not only about an interesting museum? Maybe you have studied art history and could produce a thousand or so words based on a past essay or dissertation? While we are starved of the 'real thing', it is good to broaden our experience, albeit 'virtually'. If you can help, please contact our editor, Dianne Page on dianne@artfriendswarks.uk.

An Appeal to William Morris Fans

Supporter, Sue McAllister is considering running a series of study days and a weekend festival, *William Morris and the Arts & Crafts Movement*, aiming to start at the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021. The events would take place at The Birmingham and Midlands Institute opposite the Birmingham Museum and Gallery.

Although this venture would be independent of Art Friends Warwickshire, she would be grateful for your feedback as she and her team start to plan.

Possible topics for Study Days: influences and legacies; the European dimension; key players, Ruskin, Rossetti etc; artists and writers; design and designers; crafts, craftsmen and guilds; architectural styles, buildings and interiors; gardens and green spaces; education, lifelong learning, literacy and human flourishing; politics and art; environment and the well-being economy; gender/sexuality, marriage and the new life; and of course, the great man himself. Study weekends and longer study tours are also being considered.

The Festival: an action-packed couple of days with talks, audio visuals, workshops, demonstrations, exhibitions, guided tours, retail stalls (Arts & Crafts and more), representations from numerous societies, book talks and launches (if timely), music, readings and possibly some theatrical performances.

A guide to the cost of a study day would be between £35 to £45. The Festival is more difficult to quantify at this stage.

She would like to know:

- which topics indicated above would encourage you to join a study day?
- what else would you like see on the agenda for both the study days and the Festival?
- Would you be likely to join us?
- Can you suggest a personality to open the Festival?

Sue would appreciate hearing your views to help her group tailor the programmes for participants at sm.mcallister@googlemail.com.

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Again, our thanks to you all for continuing to support Art Friends Warwickshire. We are talking with members and with our local museums and galleries with the intention of resuming services as soon as possible (doesn't that hark back to early BBC TV transmissions?) and offering you stimulating events and opportunities to raise funds for art.

Dianne Page, Editor

Art Friends Warwickshire Committee: Brian Phillips, Chairman, Gill Ashley-Smith, Sandra Clowes, Alex Corrin, Dianne Page, Susan Yeomans

Virtual Museums

Many of you will already have picked up from the media that galleries are 'opening' their doors to their collections and exhibitions. Here are just a few to explore. Simply hold Control and click on the link to reach the website.

Picasso and Paper at the Royal Academy: video visit to the recent exhibition.

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/video-exploring-picasso-and-paper-24>

Cranach at Compton Verney: overview of the postponed exhibition and conversation between contributing artists. <https://comptonverney.cmail20.com/t/r-e-jhkdlhjl-uuhuljos-g/>. S

Staffordshire Hoard: short video on the display at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAAHhrVsf8s&t=&utm_campaign=42472_AIYI_020420&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Art+Fund

Courtauld Gallery: a virtual tour including the splendid collection of the French Impressionists, produced prior to their closure for reconstruction.

https://courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/about/3d-gallery-virtual-tour?utm_campaign=42472_AIYI_020420&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Art%20Fund&dm_i=5L9B,WRS,BDGLJ,35Q3,1

Restoration of self-portrait of Artemisia Gentileschi: a series of short National Gallery videos recounting the process. https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/behind-the-scenes/film-series-restoring-artemisia-gentileschis-self-portrait?utm_campaign=42472_AIYI_020420&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Art%20Fund&dm_i=5L9B,WRS,BDGLJ,35QI,1

https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/behind-the-scenes/film-series-restoring-artemisia-gentileschis-self-portrait?utm_campaign=42472_AIYI_020420&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Art%20Fund&dm_i=5L9B,WRS,BDGLJ,35QI,1

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Kettles Yard: an image and text-based tour of a unique house and art collection in Cambridge.

http://tour.kettlesyard.co.uk/?utm_campaign=42472_AIYI_020420&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Art%20Fund&dm_i=5L9B%2CWRS%2CBDGLJ%2C36LB%2C1

The Ghent Altarpiece: an opportunity to see close-up the work undertaken on Van Eyck's masterpiece. <http://clostovaneyck.kikirpa.be/ghentaltarpiece/#home/sub=videos>

Google Art Project: virtual tours of many top galleries around the world; zoom-in on paintings; loads of information. <https://artsandculture.google.com/>

The Metropolitan Museum, New York: an extensive site presenting the wealth of this important collection. <http://metmuseum.org/>

The Herbert, Coventry: Sign up to receive regular *News from the Archives*.

<https://www.theherbert.org/news>

Leamington Museum & Art Gallery: *Making Histories* – the curator takes us through the responses of modern ceramics artists to items in their collection. A 16 minute video of an exhibition that cannot be visited.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIOJATvgaEI&feature=youtu.be>

Museums of Venice: Particularly look out for the Mocenigo museum of costume and perfume, a jewel of a palazzo close to San Stae vaporetto stop. <https://www.visitmuve.it/it/virtual-tour/>

The Two Lives of Four Musical Angels

Supporter, Kevin Grant shares his love of a painting to be found in Oxford.

The University of Oxford has a Department for Continuing Education which runs an exceptional series of courses for the public outside the undergraduate body; short courses of up to 10 weeks, day and weekend courses, summer schools, online and face to face, in science, arts, social science, for accreditation or not. I regularly attend a short course called Focus on Art; each week an artwork held in the Ashmolean Museum or Christ Church Picture Gallery is discussed in a face to face meeting with the tutor Anita Pepper. In the past I had visited both museums and I would just glance at the early art; “14th and 15th century religious art, nothing for me here”. How wrong I was, there is much to appreciate once you know how the object was made, who the people are and its purpose. The artwork I have chosen is a painting that has changed its context over time, and I think it has much to interest any viewer.



This essay discusses *Four Musical Angels* by Bernardo Daddi, in Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford. Bernardo Daddi, c1280-c1348, was a resident of Florence and a follower of his fellow Florentine and near contemporary, Giotto, in the use of modelling and shading to create realistic images and hence a more involving and dramatic narrative.

Life as a Religious Image

The painting dates from c1340-45 and is small, just 44x53 cm, in egg tempera on a poplar panel. There is much use of gold leaf, both in its pure form and as mordant gilding on top of colour. The wood panel would have been prepared in the usual way, covered in gesso to create a fine, flat surface for painting. Tempera dries extremely quickly and mixing of colours is not possible as it would be in oils, so highlights are created by successive applications of colour in fine strokes. Tempera ground colour can be seen in the red robes of the two angels at the back. These probably had drapery created by vegetable-based tempera highlights which have faded over time; such highlights can still be seen in the robes of the two front angels. However, the image as seen is curious; the left front angel is looking upwards and there appear to be attendants standing at the sides, cut off by the edge of the painting. But they seem to be important figures, as their clothing is richly decorated and has tooled gilding.

The answer is that the current painting is not as it was originally created. It has been cut out of a larger work showing the *Coronation of the Virgin*, acquired by the National Gallery in 2004. Researchers at the National Gallery¹ have reconstructed how the original would have looked, with the musical angels' scene under the main painting. It then makes sense; the angel is looking up to direct the viewer's attention to the main scene and the attendants are saints; St John the Baptist on the left and St Stephen on the right. Two other saints may also be in attendance. It is unclear whether there were further panels to make a polyptych and how it was displayed, whether attached to a wall or free-

standing. However, what is clear is that Daddi's vision of *The Coronation*, showing Christ crowning Mary as Queen of Heaven, on a sumptuous cloth of honour, was a gorgeous devotional object.

Life as a Secular Image

Paintings like this were often held in churches in small towns, even villages, and a cash-strapped diocese could make money by selling paintings to Grand Tourists. It looks like this is what happened to the painting in the early 19th century. *Four Musical Angels* was detached from *The Coronation* and the two paintings were sold.



The musical angels were a good candidate for this treatment, for, unwittingly, Daddi had created an image that works as a standalone, even as a secular object. Though colourful and gilded, the overall tone is harmonious. The angels themselves present a pleasing symmetry. Daddi has arranged the farthest two inside the other two in order to make them clearly visible and draw the eye into the painting, and has arranged them so that we can see both sides of the instruments being played; the two manually pumped pipe organs, a tambourine and a bowed instrument. It has been discovered that the organ pipes were once covered in silver leaf, now much rubbed off and tarnished.

The angels themselves, with their enraptured expressions, look more like a contemporary quartet than supernatural beings. Though they have folded wings and gilded and tooled haloes, they are far from ethereal. Daddi has given the angels convincing bulk and weight through modelling their drapery. The reality of the angels can also be read in their faces. Not only are there highlights on foreheads and cheeks to give structure, but each has a unique expression, lost in concentration or emotion. Elaborately tiled or carpeted floors are often a

feature of Daddi's work, and in this a complex lozenge design covers the floor and base of the throne behind. But here Daddi's modernism fails him. To contemporary eyes, the tiling does not show perspective making its recession clear, but with its colour and gilding it is an eye-catching feature.

So, while being clearly medieval, with its realism, harmony and rich gilding, Daddi has created an image that works for multiple audiences and times.

References: di Nepi, S., Roy, A., Billinge, R. 'Bernardo Daddi's "Coronation of the Virgin": The Reunion of Two Long-Separated Panels'. National Gallery Technical Bulletin Vol 28, pp 4–25.

http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/technical-bulletin/dinepi_roy_billinge2007

Image: https://d3d00swyhr67nd.cloudfront.net/w800h800/collection/OU/CHCH/OU_CHCH_JBS_5-001.jpg

Digital Reconstruction from reference 1

Christ Church Picture Gallery is just a few minutes' walk from the High Street. Entrance is £4 per adult, but I recommend the yearly ticket, amazing value at £10. Free to National Art Pass holders. It is currently closed, but its advertised opening times are:

<p>October - May (closed Tuesdays) Mon, Wed - Sat: 10.30am - 1pm & 2 - 4.30pm Sun: 2 - 4.30pm</p> <p>June (closed Tuesdays) Mon, Wed - Sat: 10.30am - 5pm Sun: 2 - 5pm</p>	<p>July - September (open every day) Mon - Sat: 10.30am - 5pm Sun: 2 - 5pm</p> <p>* Open as usual on bank holidays</p>
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A Souvenir from Italy

Jenny Matthew, Art Friends Warwickshire supporter

In the 17th and 18th centuries, members of the English aristocracy - the Grand Tourists – returned from Italy laden with souvenirs causing Italians to remark that ‘were our amphitheatre portable, the English would carry it off!’ Today we are more likely to come back with photos on our mobiles, a postcard, a catalogue, perhaps even some Italian fashion!

My favourite souvenir is the discovery of a lesser-known museum, where you can enjoy a thought-provoking, well designed and curated exhibition – without the crowds. On my recent travels in Italy I chanced on three: two in the city of Florence and a third some 30 minutes outside the city. All three house a memorable dedicated collection and shine a light onto the history of Italian design and the lives of the personalities involved in their creation. I would like to introduce them to you and urge you, once we are released from our lock-down, to go to see them!

Museo Salvatore Ferragamo, Palazzo Spini Feroni, Florence

As Roger Vivier, a French fashion designer said: “To wear dreams on one’s feet is to begin to give a reality to one’s dreams” and certainly in Florence at Christmas the windows of the Salvatore Ferragamo store were beautiful and made me dream! In particular one display of three different re-issues of Ferragamo shoes from the 1950’s, in black and gold, (see left) twinkled seductively. But I was not there just for the shoes.



Just inside the entrance to the store, on the left, a steep flight of stairs leads down to the former cellars of the palazzo - now the Museo Salvatore Ferragamo. Opened in 1995, it aims to ‘offer original approaches to interpreting well-known subjects.’

Certainly, from the exhibitions I have seen there over the last few years, I have learned much about the man nicknamed The Shoemaker of Dreams. The last exhibition I saw in 2018, entitled The Return to Italy, celebrated the 90th anniversary of Ferragamo’s return to Italy after his success in the US.

The exhibition was set in rooms with blue walls (see photo) emphasising the long sea voyage experienced by those emigrating from Europe to the US. Beautifully designed and curated, it used the backdrop of Ferragamo’s own struggle to explore the issues of the day – the changing role of women and dress, design in the home, differences in urban and rural life, all set against the turbulent political times in Italy in the 20th century. I returned twice more and bought the catalogue – my 2.5kg physical souvenir!



One of the rooms showing art and sculpture related to the theme of the invention of the modern body in 1920.

Museo Galileo, Palazzo Castellani, Florence:

Located a little way down the bank of the Arno, beyond the Ponte Vecchio, you will find Palazzo Castellani. Although I knew of Galileo, it was not until 1980 and the National Theatre production of Bertolt Brecht's play *The Life of Galileo* that I started to appreciate the life of this man. So, given the opportunity to learn more, I was delighted to seek out this museum.

The collection of scientific instruments and experimental apparatus housed here is not only the finest in Italy, but one of the most important in the world. After the rise of the Medici, Duke Cosimo improved the teaching of science at the University of Pisa, founding the Botanical Gardens of Pisa (1544) and of Florence (1545) and formed an exceptional collection of scientific instruments, which was added to subsequently. Initially housed in Palazzo Vecchio, then in the Uffizi, the collections were moved around until in 1930 their state of neglect was highlighted and the Istituto di Storia della Scienza was inaugurated. Now called the Museo Galileo, in honour of Galileo's service to the Medici, rooms entitled 'Astronomy and Time', 'The Representation of the World', 'The Science of Navigation,' etc reveal beautifully designed artefacts and instruments which brought alive for me the amazing discoveries of the times. Again, I went back and bought the smaller (and lighter) guide.

Museo e Archivio Storico Piaggio, Pontedera:

Last but very much not least, I recommend to you the Museo e Archivio Storico Piaggio at Pontedera. (Pontedera is a stop on the mainline from Florence to Pisa and the museum is a ten-minute walk from the station.) For a 'baby-boomer' whose aunt owned a Vespa in the 1950s and whose brothers owned a Vespa and a Lambretta, I was intrigued to go to a museum dedicated to this transportation! Created in 2000 to enhance the historic heritage of one of Italy's oldest companies, it covers their long history in the transport industry as a producer of rail-stock, aircraft and then motorcycles.

Italy had been devastated by WW2 and afterwards a cheap mode of transport was needed which could be a means to go to work but also out on Sundays. Working for the aerospace company Piaggio, Corradino D'Ascanio, an aeronautical designer, drew a person and designed a vehicle with a load-bearing frame around it, a motorbike that could be also driven by women and priests! When Enrico Piaggio first saw it, he said "it looks like a vespa (wasp)!" and so it was called. In April 1946 a patent was filed for the scooter which would be produced unchanged for the first 50 years of its life.



The success of the Vespa was phenomenal and the Museo Piaggio, located in a former aircraft factory site in the backstreets of Pontedera, is a delight and celebrates the story. It contains many examples of Vespas and other motorcycles, a small cinema where you can watch a film outlining the Vespa story with interviews with designers and makers, and a small exhibition gallery. The gallery has subsequently been extended, but when I went, they were holding a small exhibition called 'The Great Industry Game'. Drawing on Neil MacGregor's British

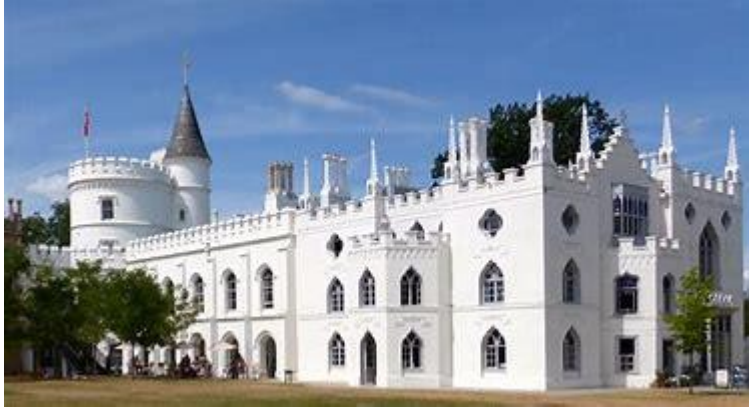
Museum project of 100 Objects, the Piaggio Museum had selected 50+1 objects to showcase the history of Italian industry – one of which was Salvatore Ferragamo's invisible sandal, patented in 1947, which won the Neiman Marcus prize - the fashion industry's Oscars – the first time it was awarded to a shoe designer. I brought home their paper catalogue and framed three of their featured objects for my kitchen wall.

Writing this piece has brought back to me the great enjoyment and delight I experienced visiting these three museums which truly deserve to be better known. Each of them revealed the story and art and design of objects which have contributed to our modern life but are perhaps not as celebrated as they should be. I urge you to go to see them!

STRAWBERRY HILL, TWICKENHAM

Travel by Executive Coach to the home of Horace Walpole

Wednesday 23 September 2020



Horace Walpole took a lease on a small cottage in 1747 with fine views over the River Thames. Having bought the lease in 1749, he later adopted the name Strawberry Hill for his property and spent the next 50 years purchasing more land and developing his vision of a Gothic castle and estate of 46 acres. Strawberry Hill was the first house since medieval times to be built in the Gothic style, and

can claim to be the starting point of the Gothic Revival. Walpole was a great collector acquiring a host of objects to fill his home. Many of these objects were sold in the Great Sale of 1842 because of ... but that's a story you'll hear at the house. Suffice to say that the current trustees have been scouring the world in efforts to have many of the original objects returned. After a £9 million, two-year long restoration, Strawberry Hill House reopened to the public in 2010.

There will be a refreshments and comfort break en route. On arrival, we begin with a talk about the house and its founder then we will have the opportunity to tour the house viewing the many objects from Walpole's time. Also, there will be the chance to view the gardens (Walpole was a great proponent of the "modern English Garden. Details of the optional lunch will be sent to bookers in August together with final information.

Timetable:

8.45 Depart Johnsons coach depot, Liveridge Hill, Henley-in-Arden B95 5QS.

16.00 Depart Twickenham. **18.30** approx. arrive Henley-in-Arden.

Cost: Priority booking is available to AFW members at the discount price of £40. Non-members can apply for remaining places after 1st May at £43.

Contact: Brian Phillips, 37 Polo Drive, Cawston, Rugby, CV22 7YW
Tel.01788 575565) **Email:** brian@artfriendswarks.uk

Payment dated 9 August 2020

Cheque – payable to Art Friends Warwickshire

Online - Lloyds Ac 36633668 Sort Code 309090 Art Friends Warwickshire Reference:
Strawberry Hill

Attending and Paying for Tickets to Events

We will make every effort to accommodate requests for mobility and access support and for any disability including those hard of hearing. Please notify us well in advance of any particular needs and we will also indicate where you may request on-site parking or whether there is a PA system or wi-fi access. You are welcome to bring equipment to facilitate your hearing needs.

Forms for postal application for each event are found below. If you have special requirements eg hearing, mobility or dietary needs, include these on the form or with your booking email.

On-line Applications for Event Tickets

Please **date** online payments according to the instructions on the programme and email the organiser to confirm *how much* you have paid online for *how many* tickets, providing your name and a telephone number, so we may contact you should the event be altered or cancelled. We will not use this number for any other purpose.

Take care to ensure on-line payments are made to **our new account:**
LLOYDS, Account number 36633668, Sort code 30 90 90.

Please mark your online payment with the **reference word** provided eg *Iran* for the talk on *Arts of Iran*. Refund policy is the same as for cheques.

ART FRIENDS WARWICKSHIRE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership subscriptions

Annual subscription runs for twelve months from date of receipt of your payment by the Treasurer and is £15 per member. This will give access to our events at a lower cost than for non-members and priority booking on some events.

Please mark the following Membership Application Form clearly with the name of each Member eg Jane and Joe Jones [2 @ £15] £30, and post the completed form and cheque made out to Art Friends Warwickshire, to Susan Yeomans at 7 Mallory Drive, Warwick CV34 4UD

Or pay online to the Lloyds bank account given above and email Susan on sue@artfriendswarks.uk.

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Name (s)

Address

Telephone Email

I attach a cheque/I have paid on-line £ for number memberships @ £15.

I confirm my permission for Art Friends Warwickshire to email me with information concerning this organisation.

Signature:

EVENT BOOKING FORM

Visit to Strawberry Hill, Twickenham **Wednesday 23 September 2020**

I require _____ tickets for AFW Member @ £40

1 require _____ tickets for non-Member @ £43 Donation _____

I enclose a cheque **dated 9 August 2020** for £ _____ payable to

Art Friends Warwickshire, marked STRAWBERRY HILL on the back.

Refunds for cancellations received before 9 August.

Acknowledgement by email or I enclose a stamped SAE.

Name _____ Tel. _____

e-mail _____

Please send completed form to: Brian Phillips, 37 Polo Drive, Cawston, Rugby, CV22 7YW

Email: brian@artfriendswarks.uk