

## The Arts Society Blackmore Vale Members' Newsletter: January 2021

I know it's now late January, but Happy New Year everyone. I am perfectly sure you share my fervent hope that 2021 will improve on 2020.

We started these Newsletters to stay in touch with everyone, to share news about the arts and related events and to recommend online offerings. However, there is now so much going on that information overload can be a problem. So this may be a good moment to ring the changes and talk more generally.

The internet has proved a lifeline for staying connected. While it cannot replace meeting people face-to-face, it still provides closer links than a letter, email or 'phone call, plus the chance to view exhibitions and take tours from the comfort of home. And it's getting easier to use. There is lots of good stuff, notably at:

The National Gallery; <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/>

The Royal Academy: <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/>

and my much-loved National Portrait Gallery: <https://www.npg.org.uk/>

More locally, Messums Wiltshire, Wiltshire Creative and (for gardeners especially) The Newt <https://thenewtinsomerset.com/> have interesting online courses.

The Arts Society is also doing sterling work, both nationally:

<https://theartsociety.org/>

and in Wessex: [wessexarea@theartsociety.org](mailto:wessexarea@theartsociety.org)

As Sheila outlined in her last letter, we had hoped to run the last 4 lectures of this Programme (April to July) as live lectures, but have concluded that this would be premature, so we will instead run them as Zoom lectures. The first will be Justine Hopkins on William Blake. Justine's lecture was originally scheduled for April 2020 (Blake was having a moment then), so we have had to wait a while but it will be worth it, I'm sure. It will be very easy to access the Zoom lecture and to have a chat beforehand. We hope you will join us on Thursday 1 April and will be sending you full details nearer the time.

Finally, some recent successes:

Local Arts Societies arranged a Zoom guided tour of Ca' Rezzonico in Venice. Wonderful.

Jill Harris recommends an online free Art History course at [edx.org/course/](https://edx.org/course/)

European Paintings: from Leonardo to Rembrandt to Goya.

She comments:

'I did it in March and found it very interesting.

My other saving grace during lockdown has been [Virtualtrips.io](https://Virtualtrips.io) Tour guides from all over the world have started doing online tours of their cities. It is free, but there is the ability to pay a tip if you enjoy the tour. So far I've been to Moscow, St Petersburg, New York, Lisbon, Tunis Copenhagen, Pamplona, London and Berlin. A website well worth a visit if you are longing to travel,

and the tips help replace the lost earnings of the tour guides. The tours are usually 1/2 to 3/4 hour long, and happen at all times of the day (and night - I have yet to make it to Thailand at 2am!!)

We are all really looking forward to seeing very many of you online in April.

Warm Regards,  
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