

January 2011



contemporary art society for wales
cymdeithas celfyddyd gyfoes cymru

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Newsletter

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www.casw.org.uk

Visit our website for all you
need to know about the Society

- illustrated history of the Society, its objects and support for the arts
- programme of all activities for the year
- complete archive of our acquisitions since the Society's inception, with an easy search facility
- images and notes of all our acquisitions since 1999
- details of membership - including on-line application
- useful links to contact officers, museums and galleries

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Members viewing Anthony Gormley's installation 'Another Place', Crosby Beach, Liverpool

CHAIR CHAT 2010

D Gareth Davies CASW Chairman

Jean has summarized, quite admirably, yet another year of fruitful and fulfilling activity, representing again the Society's hugely successful public face. For the officers and executive members this is the enjoyable aspect of the duties they undertake on your behalf. But, committee meetings and working groups have become increasingly focussed on intransigent difficulties facing the Society, in terms of management problems and, more fundamentally, of reconciling its very purpose to 21st century needs.

The Executive feel it would be useful to share, in outline, these concerns with you. On the management front, storing our purchases over a five year period, the normal interval between distributing works, is an on-going problem of increasing proportion, especially now that the solution negotiated with the University of Glamorgan (UoG), to mutual benefit, is on indefinite hold. Without the continuous support of Pete Goodridge (Art & Exhibition Logistics) and to a lesser, though valued extent, the National Library, we would have been forced into drastic action. Although, hopefully, the 2011 Distribution Exhibition, which MOMA, Machynlleth has kindly agreed to host, will help alleviate matters, this will only be a temporary relief, particularly if our collecting (buying) activity reflects past policy and in the highly likely absence of an effective UoG alternative.

A more radical solution seems necessary, bound up with the need for a critical appraisal of the Society's role, or more accurately of the weighting it gives to the operational activities supporting that role. Our Mission Statement (Constitutional Object) is the *fostering, promoting, maintaining, improving and developing of artistic taste and the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the arts among the people of Wales*. Traditionally our main way of achieving this has been through the purchasing of artworks and their subsequent donation to, mainly, public museums and galleries. The CASW Collection has made signal, sometimes seminal contribution to artwork collecting in Wales. As we have discussed, this function is now associated with huge storage problems. Indeed, recipient museums and galleries are facing similar problems and increasingly unable to store or display works, and are reluctantly refusing our offers. They face an even more difficult problem in relationship to accepting CASW material. With the introduction of the government's Registration Scheme in the 1980s, museums and galleries have to define their collecting policies very closely and consequently are unable to accept material, including gifts, falling outside these criteria. CASW material often fails to conform. Informal discussion with the museum community strongly suggests that our traditional pattern of collecting/buying is of diminishing value to them.

Additional to these factors, CASW now faces financial difficulties and the amount of funds available for art purchasing will need to be seriously reappraised.

Given all these circumstances, CASW will need to review the mechanisms used in support of its constitutional object, in which artwork collecting may have to become a substantially smaller activity. It has been decided, in 2011, to take advantage of the major distribution exhibition to forego collecting in that year. There are many other ways of supporting the visual arts in Wales open to the Society and your Executive is actively exploring these. Potential areas include assisting museums & galleries with the acquisition of specific works, joining with other funders to make major purchases, supporting exhibitions and publications and increased support for art students. Nobody is necessarily happy with these changing circumstances and the Executive needs to know that the membership is, at least, comfortable with the Executive's analysis and general approach to the problem. No major policy decisions have been taken and we need your views to move forward. If you have any worries or suggestions please do not hesitate to contact us (see page 12 for Secretary contact details). CASW is your Society.

An unwelcome aspect of Chair Chat is the recording of the death of former members of CASW Executive. Earlier this year Professor Albert Davies died. A long time supporter of the Society he will be much missed.

At the 2010 AGM Dr. Anne Price-Owen retired from the Executive after many years of service. It has been my good fortune, both as Secretary and Chairman, to benefit from her good advice, particularly when CASW has needed to consider academic issues. She is young enough to return!

You will have noticed that this year we have not produced a Society Christmas/New Year card. This decision was taken in the light of our financial position. I take this opportunity of sending you

*CASW
Festive Greetings
and Best Wishes*

Cyfarchion y Tymor



Jean Williams CASW Secretary

2010 saw the biennial **Artes Mundi** in the National Museum. As part of CASW's ongoing support, Tessa Jackson, Chief Executive and Artistic Director, Artes Mundi 4 started our 2010 season of Tuesday lectures with a review of the participating artists and their interest in the human condition. This was followed in March with a private and guided tour of the Artes Mundi 4 exhibition.

In **February** Roger Moss, Artist in Residence at UWIC, gave a talk on **Light makes shape**, in which he explained the creation of sculpture using haptic technology and laser prototyping.

Also in February, a day trip to Swansea to view Rozanne Hawksley's exhibition **Offerings** at the Mission Gallery, followed by a splendid lunch at the Mermaid restaurant in Mumbles, proved very popular. Rozanne, as ever, gave us an engaging gallery talk and we are very grateful to Jane and staff at the Mission for their hospitality and to Alan Spiller for organising such a popular event.

In **March**, at the Lisvane lunch, William and John Gibbs guided us through a tour of the artistic history of the Llanthony Valley, in the Black Mountains, from the 18th to the 20th century. **The Artists of Llanthony Valley** was illustrated with works created by artists who were inspired by the Abbey or who lived and worked nearby.

All Lisvane lunch events are well supported and are invariably oversubscribed, so we urge early booking.

The **March** Tuesday night lecture was given by the Art Historian and writer Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan. Her title **Reaction or (Re)-Interpretation of Biblical Imagery in Welsh Art** was stimulating and thought provoking.

It was an **April Annual Dinner** this year. It was indeed a very pleasant spring evening as we gathered at the SWALEC Stadium at Sophia Gardens, not for cricket, but for convivial company, followed by CASW members talking about a favourite painting in their collection. The new venue was a success and thanks once again to Sonia for organising a successful event.

A **study visit to Madrid** also took place in April/May. Organised by Dan, this took in the major Madrid galleries and visits to Segovia and Toledo.

In **May** we slotted in an extra event with a 2-day trip to Liverpool, organised by Tom and Ilse Hayes, to see the **Picasso: Peace & Freedom** exhibition at Tate Liverpool, which brought together over 150 works by Picasso, from across the world. We also visited Crosby Beach to see the Antony Gormley installation **Another Place** and the Lady Lever Art Gallery, in Port Sunlight, to view the iconic **Salem**.

The Prado Museum, Madrid



In **June**, Monica Bohm Duchon gave us a fresh insight into the world of Josef Herman, in her talk **From Warsaw to Wales and Beyond : the life and work of Josef Herman**. Monica was delighted to meet CASW members who had met Josef Herman during his time in Ystradgynlais.

The **July AGM** seems to come around so quickly each year. This time it was held at the **Halliwell Centre** at Trinity University Carmarthen. We visited Carmarthen Museum at Abergwili in the morning, where a small exhibition of CASW works gifted to Carmarthen had been mounted by Anne Dorsett. Visitors were equally interested to view the extensive and eclectic collections held at the museum. We are grateful to museum staff and friends for their hospitality.

Our buyer Audrey Walker, a distinguished, professional artist of international reputation, and a CASW executive member, presented her purchases in the afternoon. Audrey raised a number of concerns regarding the storage of works, not only for CASW, but for museums and galleries. She stated that, from the beginning of her role as purchaser, she had been very conscious of the importance of linking purchases to museums and galleries. Audrey concentrated her purchases on ceramic and textiles. Seven pieces were chosen with six works being shown. One work, an installation piece by Christine Mills, would, because of illness, be carried over into the next year.

Audrey explained that she was keen to give the audience a feeling of the working conditions of each artist so that they might understand and appreciate better the process, as well as the end product. To this end, she showed images of each artist at work in their respective environment, linking their personality and philosophy to the work at hand.

In **September** our annual **Art At Home** was hosted by Professor Tony and Margaret Curtis. There was overwhelming demand for this event, requiring two sessions of visiting. A sculpture exhibition of works by Robert Harding, in the garden, complemented the splendid collection of Margaret and Tony.

The Autumn Tuesday lectures began with Sue Hiley Harris presenting her work **Woven Sculptures**. Sue gave us a superb insight into the research and complex techniques she adopts to create her unique sculptures.

We welcomed Professor Sioned Davies to Lisvane in October. Sioned, who published the most recent translation of the Mabinogion from Welsh into English, gave a lecture on **Illustrating the Mabinogion**, introducing the the visual devices used over the years to illustrate those magical tales.

The Tuesday night talk in October was given by artist and CASW member Peter Spriggs. In his lecture **Continuing to make art and trying to make it better**, Peter reviewed his

art practice through a career spent in Cardiff, London and now in Carmarthen.

The study tour to London, in **November**, was a great success. We enjoyed a varied and stimulating programme visiting exhibitions, galleries and studios in London as well as visits to the Stanley Spencer gallery in Cookham and the spectacularly decorated Sandham Memorial chapel at Burghclere.



Sandham Memorial Chapel

The Tuesday lecture in November was given by the sculptor Harvey Hood. The Society was treated to a splendid review of his work in his talk on **My time in Wales**.

Our final event of 2010 was the December Lisvane lunch, with a talk by Sally Moss on **Art and Industry**. Sally enthusiastically shared with us her research on the links between state support, industry and the arts, illustrating her themes with reference to Graham Sutherland.

The Society continued its wider sponsorship for the visual arts in Wales, awarding a purchase prize at the **National Eisteddfod** in Ebbw Vale, and supporting Artes Mundi.

This year there were two studentships, the CASW - David Tinker award, and the President's prize. These were presented to Michael Ruggier, a sculptor studying at Newport School of Art, and Karly Dugdale, a student of ceramic arts (notably pottery) and sculpture at the West Wales School of Art in Carmarthen, by the president Professor Bryan Hibbard. We also gave grant support to the International Cast Iron Conference and sculpture exhibition, held at Kidweli, and in November the recent CASW purchases were shown at the Visual Arts Exhibition at **Glasbury Arts**, ensuring that CASW works are seen by a wider public.

On a personal note, I would like once again to thank colleagues on the executive and CASW members for their support and friendship during the year.

Jean Williams

APRIL 2010

Zuleika Dobson is famously quoted as saying, “I don’t know much about art, but I know what I like”. Why is this thought to be so funny? One of the great joys of a CASW trip is the companionship of like-minded people, many of whom know a lot about art and some, like me, who just like it; so when I was asked to write the account of the “Study Tour” [NB the word Study] I was filled with consternation. It’s not easy to be knowledgeable, but there is a lot about which to be appreciative. Chris and Dan Evans, our tour leaders, looked after us impeccably; from the welcome and introduction of new fellow travellers as we left Cardiff in the coach, to the happy choice of a comfortable hotel, *The Gaudi*, on the Gran Via, within easy walking distance of the three main galleries and a good choice of restaurants; plus the two trips to Toledo and Segovia and the traditional CASW dinner in a private room at the Barraca Restaurant. The latter was a happy choice, on a recommendation by Charlie Burton’s son, who lives in Madrid and who was there to record the jollity with his candid camera.



Reine Sophia

As the tourist bus informs one, Madrid has, near the Prado, the highest concentration of works of art on one street in the world, so the three-plus days allocated for our own exploration were more than adequately filled. The new entrance to the Prado, housing superb visitor facilities, leads one into the side of the lower floor and some confusion, as the room numbering starts from the old front entrance on the upper floor. One could easily find oneself moving from a room full of medieval paintings to one of 19th century Spanish landscapes of the impressive Picos de Europa. We had been well prepared for this visit by Roger Pinkham’s lecture in Lisvane, so it was good to have the opportunity to stand and marvel at Roger Van De Weider’s *Descent from the Cross* and then to pore over the detail in Bosch’s *Garden of Earthly Delights*. Durer’s self portrait was a revelation: what a handsome man!

Goya’s *Black Paintings*, in their own room, were compelling, nasty and frightening, the brush strokes angrily applied. It was surprising to learn that he had painted them on the walls of his own house, as decoration! They were such a contrast to his court paintings, so was the gallery trying to keep a distance between the two styles? It was difficult to accept them as the work of the same artist until one saw them come together in the beautifully restored frescoes in the cupola of the Glorietta Chapel, across the city.

In Spain, as we remember from the nursery groups admiring Miró in Barcelona, art education appears to be taken seriously from a very early age. One well prepared group of 5-year olds, in the Prado, sported large name labels in cut out and coloured card in the boxy shape of the *Las Meninas* costumes.

After the first day, with one gallery “done”, it was pleasant to sit back and relax for the 90-minute journey to Toledo, which we first viewed from the terrace of the Parador, across the Tagus from the old walled city. It was a relief next to see the series of escalators taking us from the coach park up to the city centre. Our guide took us at a leisurely pace through the winding streets and alleys [the temperature then being 30 degrees C] to the massive cathedral built on the foundations of an older mosque. As one entered one was immediately struck by the glorious early 14th century stained glass high above us; the austere pale grey stone arches and the touches of colour from the cardinals’ red hats, seemingly floating in mid air above their tombs. Austere is not a word which immediately springs to mind when thinking of Spanish cathedrals and certainly the riotous carvings in the choir and the lofty gold retable behind the high altar challenged this, as did a statue of the Virgin, carved from a single tusk of ivory, retaining its slight curve and giving it an appearance of gentle movement. The obligatory visit to the treasury, to see the usual hoard of gold stacked up from the Americas, was rewarded by a delightful small double sided wooden cross painted by Fra. Angelico.

In the old Sacristy was a wonderful collection of El Greco’s paintings including the hauntingly sad *Tears of St. Peter*. It was here that I realised why CASW trips are so special! Guides do go on a bit so sometimes it is good to be able to withdraw a little and get into profitable and enlightening conversations. This is how I learnt about Renaissance Mannerism from Charlie Burton, first in the sacristy and later in front of the *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*. After viewing this masterpiece the energetic continued down a hill to the Old Synagogue, whilst the rest sought lunch in shady squares before assembling for the return journey followed by the evening’s foray into gastronomic Madrid. This resembled a game of Sardines in that one often joined a crowd of friends, which gradually expanded.

We had two more full days to visit galleries, continuing with the other three star galleries the Thyssen–Bornemisza and the Reine Sophia. The latter is part of an old hospital to which a large modern extension has been added, currently mainly full of offices, glass lifts and a minimalist restaurant. The crowd puller in the Reine Sophia is of course Picasso’s powerful *Guernica*, attracting a posse of mobile phone photographers. Accompanying the work were contemporary propaganda posters and his sketches for the painting. This gallery is strong on modern Spanish paintings and particularly interesting is their collection of Dalis, the early ones showing his superb technique and the feeling for colour which underlie his later surrealist paintings.

To me the jewel in Madrid’s crown is the Thyssen–Bornemisza Collection, a treasure trove of European and American art, ranging from the medieval to Rothko and Andy Warhol. The galleries are well lit, the sequence logical, so that one progresses through the history of art, rather like leafing through a comprehensive and well–ordered stamp collection.

Here a fellow CASW member revealed the mysteries of Rothko to your foot–sore reporter. As we talked on a bench, in front of a Rothko painting of a green rectangle, the underlying shapes and nuances sprung to life for me, and also for the very pretty young girl eaves–dropping behind us. Eventually she joined the discussion whilst her bemused and besotted boy–friend grinned and tickled the back of her neck with her pony tail. As she left she thanked our interpreter saying she would never again walk straight past a Rothko and neither will I. The special exhibition at the gallery continuing on a second separate site was on Monet and Abstraction, showing vividly how Monet had influenced later artists such as Joan Mitchell, Robert Ryman and Jackson Pollock.

View overlooking Segovia



Saturday’s May Day trip to Segovia revealed another hilltop city from another Parador. Our coach then dropped us at the base of the magnificent Roman aqueduct where swallows and swifts darted in and out of the arches and storks nested on the church tower, watched by a kite soaring high above. On the ground was

a delightful children’s carousel with giant metallic insects, birds and a bobbing boat, complete with dolphin. We made our way up to the city through old streets lined with golden sandstone houses whose owners had decorated their outer walls with fine carved honeycomb patterns to demonstrate their wealth and Moorish tastes. On the way to the Alcazar, we stopped at the cathedral and admired its lovely cloisters, rebuilt stone by stone from its earlier site. Those of us who were not put off by the rather gruesome restaurant window displays of suckling pigs and fluffy lambs [echoes of Zurbaran?] enjoyed this local delicacy before the large queues of locals formed outside.



CASW Dinner

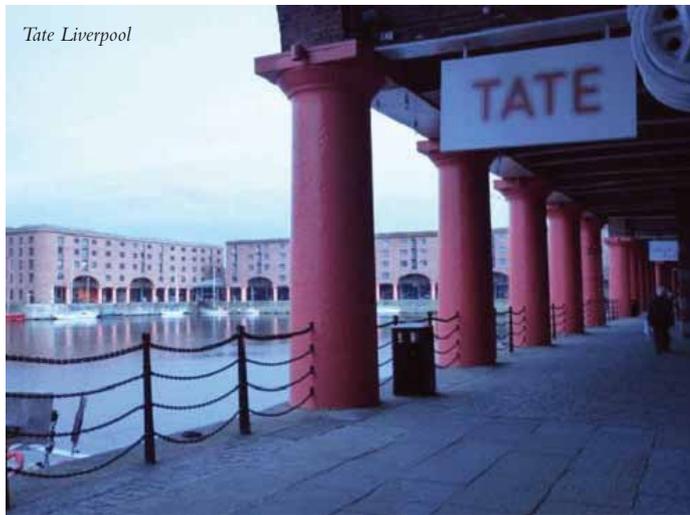
We returned to our hotel in time for a siesta before the festive Paella at the Barraca Restaurant where we were able in our raucous but heartfelt way to express our gratitude to Chris and Dan for organizing such a successful and instructive study tour. Now I know a little more about art and like a lot more of it.

Mary Kellam

CASW VISIT TO LIVERPOOL

26 MAY 2010

Many of us were not familiar with Liverpool, so we were interested to find that the drive into the City was one of contrasts. We passed through large derelict areas awaiting redevelopment, then magnificent civic buildings set alongside impressive examples of modern architecture and finally, reached our hotel, overlooking Albert Dock, in the heart of dockland.



Our first visit was to the Tate Liverpool, a few minutes' walk from our Hotel. We were greeted by John Hughes, Information Assistant, who gave us an excellent talk on 'The Peace and Freedom Exhibition' which covered works by Picasso during the Cold War era of 1944-1973. Over 60 works had been brought together for this Exhibition. *The Charnel House* lent by MOMA, had not been seen in this country for over 50 years.

John gave us some insight into Picasso's contradictory political views during this turbulent period. Picasso was an active communist yet continued to paint works that would certainly have had him imprisoned under a Stalinist regime.

While praising the quality of the exhibition, many critics objected to curators imposing misguided political readings onto works that just could not carry them. The critics considered, for example, that the reworking of paintings, such as the *Women of Algiers* was more a homage to the original artist than a political statement.

Putting aside this criticism, it was an excellent Exhibition and greatly enjoyed by us all.

An indication of the popularity of the Exhibition, perhaps, was the CASW groups encounter with a very large lift! The more this lift is used the more it is likely to overheat and descend into the basement! This is exactly what it did after the whole of our group had been ushered into it. A lot of joking took place but we were very relieved to be rescued and led out past the steam pipes

and electricians of the building and up to some altogether more conventional lifts!

We had to make a very prompt departure on Thursday morning in order to race the tide and get to Crosby beach before Antony Gormley's life-sized, cast iron statues were submerged. The installation *Another Place* consists of 100 statues placed along a 3-kilometre stretch of beach. They stare out to sea and are intended as a comment on emigration, expressing the sentiments of sadness at leaving, but having hope for the future. In this context they are very moving.



'Another Place'

Bryan, who had lived and worked in Liverpool, pointed out the changes in the buildings and landmarks that we passed. The sheer scale of some of these industrial buildings was quite breathtaking and gave us a glimpse of the extent of the trade and industry in Liverpool's heyday.

Our next stop was another treat, the 'Lady Lever Art Gallery' in the village of Port Sunlight. One could say that the foundation of the Gallery was based on the clever marketing of soap. William Lever was the first to package individual tablets of soap with vouchers in the wrapping. Before that time, soap was cut from a block. The vouchers could then be exchanged for reproduction prints of his first purchased paintings. His interest in art grew, as did his fortune, and today there is the magnificent collection of over 60,000 artefacts housed in the especially built Gallery. Port Sunlight is the model village built by Lord Leverhulme to house his workers in humane conditions. He believed that good housing, with amenities for education and leisure, benefitted both manufacturer and workers. The Gallery again was part of that ethos. Art and beauty enhanced people's lives.

The iconic Welsh watercolour *Salem* is housed here. The thousands of reproductions in Wales must surely be a testament to Sunlight soap. Gareth gave us an interesting talk on the background of

the painting. Apparently only one Welsh hat could be found and was worn by all the models. He also cleared up the mystery of the devil's face hidden in the shawl. The artist, Sidney Vesper, was highly indignant that this should have been seen in his very moral painting!

We finally made our way home via Shrewsbury having spent a packed and fascinating two days. We would all like to thank Tom for the excellent organisation of this very successful trip which was thoroughly enjoyed by everybody who took part.

Jane Evans

Port Sunlight and Lady Lever Gallery

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LONDON STUDY TOUR

12-15th November 2010

As I sit soaking my travel-weary feet, attempting re-juvenation, my brain has no such problems. It is awash with the colours and experiences of the last four days in London.

When Alan asked me to write the report I have to admit that I did feel a bit daunted, but I hope the words that follow will tempt even more members (43 went on this trip) to join one of these marvellous breaks.

We left a wet and windy Cardiff promptly at 7.30am in the capable hands of Mike, our driver from several previous trips. We were all sorry that Tudor and Iris were at the last minute unable to join us, but welcomed Bob Forster as Alan Spiller's joint leader. The work involved in organising such a diverse itinerary soon became apparent and was very much appreciated. During the next four days we were to visit nine different venues, interspersed with welcome coffee breaks and convivial lunches. Our time travel

took us from the lavish splendour of an 18th century town house to the studios of two 21st century Royal Academicians.

An old Methodist chapel, that Stanley Spencer attended as a child is now the fitting gallery for a permanent exhibition of his work in the peaceful village of Cookham-on-Thames. Chrissie Rosenthal gave half of us an informative illustrated talk there whilst the other half took a walk around Spencer's Cookham with guides Moira Carr and Sheila Heath. Then we changed over.



Stanley Spencer's Birthplace



Stanley Spencer's gravestone

The talk and photos of Spencer's home life and village helped us understand the influences that drove his work. His powerful, unfinished painting *Christ preaching at Cookham Regatta* is the first painting you see on entering the gallery and it illustrates perfectly Spencer's unusual idea of fusing the real with the imaginary and religion with more earthly pursuits.

It was fascinating to pick out the actual landscapes he had used in his paintings as we visited the village green, the war memorial and church yard, that now holds his grave.

After lunch we headed for London to be intrigued by the well-hidden Government Art Collection. We discovered that 112 years ago the Department was given £300 to buy oil paintings to cover over cracks in old buildings. The collection now comprised 13,500 artefacts, including a painting by Charles Burton, who was with us on the visit. The paintings, tapestries and sculptures are housed in 438 locations around the world, and 70% of the collection is on display. I enjoyed seeing the work of the conservators: preserving and repairing frames, mounts and paper, using such things as aeronautical tape to stop insects eating frames!

The racking room held valuable paintings, towering over us on floor to ceiling racks and we were able to view one or two of these, including one by Anthony Wishaw R.A. whose studio we would be visiting.

Saturday morning saw us in retro-heaven at the Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising near Portobello Road. Over 12,000 original items from the unique Robert Opie Collection have been moved from Gloucester to this new site. The history of consumer culture is revealed decade by decade in the "Time Tunnel", from the naive charm of the Victorian era to the sophistication of today.

It was good to be with a group of similar-aged travellers as we smiled and chuckled, sharing our own memories of the past 50+ years! Mary remembered the days of anti-macassers, informing me that they were specially designed to stop macasser oil spoiling the furniture. The tin proclaimed "preserves, strengthens and beautifies the hair"! I especially enjoyed the Victorian peepshows of the Great Exhibition which had attracted six million visitors in 1851. I could write reams on this museum, I think that you should go to see it yourself.



The Jill George Gallery

We were very much in the present as we visited the Jill George Gallery in Soho to be welcomed by Jill and Professor Chris Orr, (MBE, RA). Chris gave us an insight in to his exhibition "Work and Play". He told us "I am a narrative artist and I love theatre and film". His drawings were indeed full of stories and filmic references. Like Breughel, whom he admires, Chris fills his



Chris Orr

work with a multitude of figures. His *New York Play* bursts with humour and it takes a while to absorb the different stories.

Anthony Wishaw's studio is tucked away in a quiet cul-de-sac and would be the envy of many an artist. The main room has high ceilings, giving ample space for painting and hanging paintings. He is a quiet and unassuming artist but delighted us with his talk about his work. Spanish artists Goya and Picasso



were a strong influences and I could see that in many of the works on show. My favourite painting was *Upstream Thaw* which had a distinctly Japanese feel to it. He explained “I have continued to be fascinated by doorways, mirrors and windows, with or without grills” and upstairs we saw many examples of his later work.

I think Alan and Bob saved the best for last – as we had a



Both photographs - Anthony Whishaw's studio

marvellous time visiting Ken Howard (OBE, RA) at his home and studio. Revelation, Celebration. Communication – Ken's mantra about art. We sat having a glass of wine in his amazing lounge-cum -studio whilst he regaled us with stories of his journey as an artist. The artist William Orpen had once owned this magnificent building and through a series of “lucky breaks” Ken Howard became a full owner in 1996. Standing in his beautiful Studio one could understand why it has become one of his favourite subjects to paint.

Spencer House, built in 1756–66 for the first earl Spencer, is one of the finest 18th century town houses I have ever seen. I wrote copious notes as we were expertly guided from one magnificent room to another. Words cannot describe the opulence we beheld. The eight state rooms open to the public are amongst the first neo-classical interiors in Europe. The Palm Room and Painted room were breathtaking, with forty thousand pieces of gold leaf being used on the palms alone, all applied with squirrel hair brushes.

Our thoughts were brought to the present, when at 11.00am, we joined the rest of the country in a minute's silence on this Sunday of Remembrance.

The final Sunday visit was to the Gauguin exhibition at Tate Modern. This cleverly constructed exhibition “takes a fresh look at the work of Paul Gauguin (1843–1903), by focussing on myth, storytelling and the construction of narrative in his life and art”. It is a huge exhibition, housed in 11 different rooms, with the complexity of Gauguin's personality and the influences that drove his work well explored. I had once liked his Tahiti paintings, but now found them full of sadness with the women staring out at me with baleful eyes. I was pleased to see the ceramics and wood carvings included amongst the paintings and would recommend a visit to the Tate Modern before the exhibition closes in January, and of course you can see the marvellous *Sunflower Seeds* by Ai Wei Wei in the Turbine Hall.

On Sunday night we enjoyed the drinks party (glasses provided this time!) and dinner, which were their usual success, setting us up well for our final day.

On the Monday we had a free morning with some of the group visiting the “Glasgow Boys” exhibition at the R.A. whilst others saw Diaghilev and the “Golden Age of the Ballets Russes” at the V&A.

Our final visit was to the Stanley Spencer Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burghclere. The exterior of the Chapel belies what treasures it holds. The huge painting of the *Resurrection of the Soldiers* faces you as you enter. It is full of hope as, in a strange way, are all the paintings in the arched panels and below. Spencer finished the works in 1932 and called it “A Holy Box to remember the ordinary soldier”. The soldier Henry Sandham died of malaria, after the war in Macedonia, and his sister Mrs Behrend wanted a fitting memorial for him. I could have spent hours here. I loved the paintings and the way that Spencer brought such humour and humanity to such an emotive subject.

When we arrived back in Cardiff I'm sure we were teeming with ideas for future reading. I have the large Gauguin catalogue as a starter! What a fantastic trip! Many thanks to Alan, Bob, Bronwen, Chris and, of course, Mike.

Sylvia Olley



Top: 'Sunflower Seeds' by Ai Wei Wei in the Turbine Hall of the Tate Gallery

Above: Ken Howard in his studio

Right: Interior of Ken Howard's studio

CASW LEGACY

CASW promotes artistic taste and the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the arts among the people of Wales. CASW principally fulfils these aims by purchasing works of art for donation to appropriate institutions for enjoyment by the public, and organising lectures and study visits in the UK and abroad.

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A gift to CASW in your Will, will help to further fulfil these objectives and is an important source of income for the Society. Once you have looked after your family and friends, please consider a legacy to CASW.

Whilst there are a number of ways in which one can make a Will, CASW recommends that you consult a solicitor with experience in Will writing. A professional will ensure that all the legal formalities are correctly followed and that the Will is valid – giving you peace of mind that your wishes will be carried out as you intend. If you do not already retain a solicitor, ask family or friends for a personal recommendation. Alternatively, you can find a solicitor in your locality through the Law Society – www.lawsociety.org.uk. Follow the links to Find a Solicitor. The Law Society will give you independent advice on choosing a solicitor.

More details are available on our web-site www.casw.org.uk or available from

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Thanks to Oscar Ackerman, Rosemary Burton, Jane Evans and Sylvia Olley for images

JANUARY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday January 8th

Lisvane Lunch Julian Mitchell

The Wye Tour and its Artists.

Tuesday January 18th

Evening Lecture Osi Rees Osmond

The Cutting edge of Welsh Art: Where is it now?

The Society Dinner will be held on **Friday April 1st**
at Glamorgan Cricket Club, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff