

NEWSLETTER

The Arts Society of West Suffolk



A happy, healthy new year to all our members.

Despite the untimely arrival of the

Omicron variant of the Covid virus in December, we look forward to another year of varied and interesting lectures as listed in the programme. Sadly, our first lecture of 2022 had to be given via Zoom due, once again, to the intervention of the virus. David Worthington was scheduled to speak at Blackbourne Community Centre but new government rulings in response to rising cases of Covid threw doubt on the wisdom of meeting in large numbers. However, the decision was taken out of our hands when David had to self-isolate because of Covid, and was therefore unable to deliver the talk except via the internet. As this was the case, we provided the facility for anyone unable to join Zoom from home to view the talk on screen at the Blackbourne Community Centre. In the event, only one person went to the centre but greatly appreciated the efforts of the three committee members who made the screening possible. Over fifty members attended the talk online, notes on which may be seen below. The format for future lectures will, of course, depend on government advice and members will be notified beforehand, but every effort will be made to make them "Live".

Next Meeting: Tuesday 1st February 2022

Blackbourne Community Centre (or by Zoom only if necessary) from 10am 'Art and Architecture of Historic Pools and Lidos' - Simon Inglis

Whilst not all swimmers' memories might be positive, the baths themselves are cherished. Those of the late Victorian and Edwardian era are rich with decorative tilework, stained glass, polished wood and terracotta detailing. This sense of municipal pride continued when Art Deco and Modernist lidos became the urban beaches of their day. This lecture highlights the treasures of aquatic art and considers how the pools of today compare.

Writer and historian Simon Inglis specialises in the architecture and heritage of sport and recreation. After a history degree at University College London, he freelanced for various publications, including the *Guardian*, *Observer* and *Radio Times*. He has curated exhibitions for the Building Centre and the British Council, been a regular contributor to radio and television, has travelled and lectured extensively and written a number of much acclaimed books. A recent highpoint in his work for English Heritage was the listing of a 1970s skatepark in Essex, a world first that made the 10 o'clock news.

We are delighted to report that our pleas have been answered and that we now have a

new Honorary Secretary 'Julie Ashdown'

Julie is a new member of our society, but has previous experience with Arts Societies elsewhere. She kindly volunteered to take on this vital role and has now been co-opted onto the committee. Julie was warmly welcomed onto the team.

SPECIAL INTEREST DAY

The Mayan Civilisation Maria Chester
Blackbourne Community Centre
Tuesday 15th February 2022 9.30am - 3.00pm £27

Coffee, tea and biscuits will be provided.
Please bring your own lunch.

2022 VISITS:

The Queen's House and the Fan Museum, Greenwich.
Date to be decided soon.

Public Art: should every square have one?

David Worthington illustrated his talk this month with an amazing variety of examples of public art, revealing the sometimes contentious decision-making regarding their display. Ranging from modern day wire sculpture badgers created by Helen Godfrey, abstract dynamic sculptures by Jacob Epstein, and technically engineered structures by Amish Kapoor to figurative memorials sculpted by Rodin and Charles Sergeant Jagger, each piece of public art has its own story, often involving controversy over its initial erection or, as with many commemorative statues today, its removal. The diversity of form of public art is immense and is sometimes intended to be impermanent, as were Paul Cummins' ceramic poppies commemorating the dead of WW1. Deciding which art should be shown or rejected can be controversial. Should this be decided by the public or corporation, by taste, culture, or patrimony? Undoubtedly at times detrimental decisions have been and will be made but the public pieces, in all their myriad forms, will continue to be an inspiration to many.

