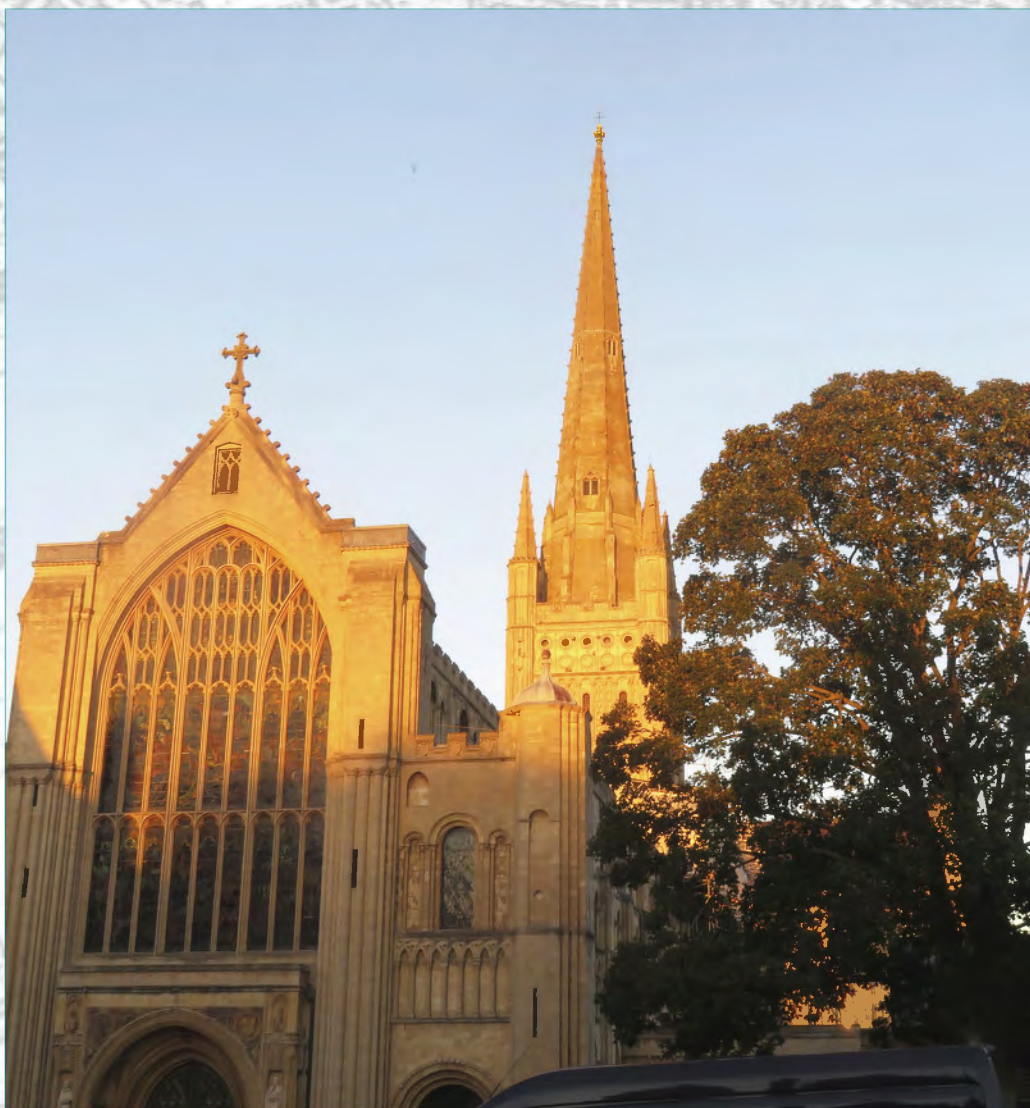




THE ARTS SCHOLAR

ISSUE NO 39 **WINTER 2024**



Four days in Norwich: The Master's tour revealed a city where past, present and future rub shoulders. See page 8.



THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF ARTS SCHOLARS

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NEWS

Liveryman of the year

Right: at the Livery
Dinner at Pewterers' Hall
on October 28th David
Needham was named
Liveryman of the year and
presented with the salver by
the Master.



Arts Scholars interns with PAS

Following the great success of the Arts Scholars' Auction of 2023, the Arts Scholars gifted £45,922.66 to the British Museum to fund internships with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS).

These were designed to give young people the opportunity to work alongside PAS Finds Liaison Officers (FLO) to provide them with essential skills to be the next generation of archaeological finds specialists.

With the input of Arts Scholars, two Internships were chosen from a shortlist: one in the North East, the other in the West Midlands.

Henry Morris is the Intern in the North East based with Ben Westwood (Co Durham FLO). Henry recently completed his four-year undergraduate degree at Durham University, during which he undertook a year-long placement with Archaeological Services Durham University. His dissertation focused on using burnt and heated objects to identify early medieval cremation cemeteries.

With the PAS in the North East he is learning the full range of PAS skills, including finds identification and recording, photography and outreach. He has already attended several outreach events during the Summer.

He is also undertaking two stand-alone projects. In Newcastle, Henry is identifying and recording a large number of metal-detected finds and looking at their context within a historical estate. With the Durham FLO, Henry is identifying and recording assemblages of Roman pottery and iron objects found at two Co. Durham sites.

Continued on facing page



Above: this defaced penny recalls the huge outcry against Lord Mayor Michael Gibbs in 1845. It was this coin that began Tim Millet's passion for collecting in this once-neglected field and led to the publication of Tokens of Love, Loss and Disrespect. See page 9.

My half-term report finds Arts Scholars in good heart and ready for new challenges

As I write this I am at the exact mid-point of my year as Master. Thanks to so many of you it has been a fascinating, uplifting and enjoyable six months. Raising well over £50,000 for the restoration of **The Light of the World** in St Paul's was a splendid achievement and one which many much older Companies would find difficult to emulate especially since ours was all "new money", not investment income.

I have attended many City of London functions alongside other Masters including the Master Carpenter in the form of our own Past Master Loyd Grossman. In parallel, Shirley has attended a number of separate events for consorts, some under the guise of the City Consorts Committee which is chaired so ably by our own Renter Warden, Sonya Zuckerman.

The message which Shirley and I pick up as we go is consistent – the reputation of the Arts Scholars stands high in the City of London.

While many companies now struggle with membership, we have a regular flow of well-qualified applicants. It was a great pleasure to bring on board six new freemen at the admissions ceremony a fortnight ago and advance three freemen to the livery (see page 15).

Continued from facing page

Kate Potter-Farrant is the Intern in the West Midlands, based with Susheela Burford (Warwickshire & Worcestershire FLO). Kate graduated from the University of Worcester in 2022 and worked part-time as a museum assistant in Evesham and as a field archaeologist.

While with the PAS in the West Midlands, she will be learning finds identification and recording, the Treasure process, getting involved with outreach events, and potentially developing object handling boxes for the team to use during school sessions.

With Museums Worcestershire, she will be helping to develop a new gallery at the County Museum to house a newly acquired coin hoard. This consists of 1,368 gold and silver Iron Age and Roman coins (dubbed the Worcestershire Conquest Hoard) recovered in the remains of a ceramic vessel.

In due course, it is hoped that Henry and Kate will be able to meet with Arts Scholars so they can tell them more about their work with the PAS.

Martin Lewis



Away from the "earthlings' pomp and show" – as the hymn writer John Newton might have put it – some of the activities which I have enjoyed the most have been those involving young people, for example in our affiliated units where voluntary engagement and effort achieve so much.

Much of what we achieve as Arts Scholars is also the product of voluntary effort, not least in our most recent educational initiative, the "Treasure Chest" in schools (see page 4).

I had the opportunity to take part in one of the sessions last month in a primary school in north Westminster.

Seeing the enthusiasm and seriousness with which the pupils handled the objects and then wrote about them was inspirational. History seems to have lost ground in many schools as an academic subject. The "Treasure Chest" helps to reverse that trend. The form teacher of the class I spent time with said he had never seen the class more engaged.

I cannot praise highly enough Felicity Marno and Georgina Gough who have set the scheme up. If you are able to help them develop it further then please do so.

I cannot let the moment pass without honouring the memory of Past Master Nic Somers whose funeral I attended at the end of November. Nic was loved by all who knew him, most especially Anne, who ensured that Nic received every comfort at the end of his life. Nic is now rejoicing with his Pol Roger on another shore. Let us toast his memory at our next merry meeting (see obituary page 14).

Roy Sully – Master



Treasure Chest Challenge – our new initiative for younger children...

The Treasure Chest Challenge was launched in June by Georgina Gough and me at Hollydale Primary School, Nunhead, with a group of 24 pupils from Years 5 and 6. This school has a high level of immigrant children, many with very impoverished lives with little material culture. Often their home life is limited to television or an iPad.

This Challenge is an attempt to broaden their experience of objects and through these illuminate some socio/cultural background and history, and raise their aspirations in life.

It consists of a large chest containing different types of object, in this case: Victorian brass candlesticks, a pocket watch, an antique silver teaspoon and bowl, Regency wooden tea caddies, a leather-bound book, Second World War medals, 19th century Willow Pattern plates and a Japanese dish.

Each object has a worksheet which, by a combination of pictures, descriptions and questions, leads the pupil to handle, observe, think about and discover the piece and its background context.

The children worked in pairs and the engagement, concentration and discussion were intense. The excitement in the room was palpable. A particular hit was the pocket watch. Pupils, who could wind the watch, were intrigued by the mechanism and had never heard a watch tick before.

The head teacher, Ms Reid, was delighted with the workshop, and with the pupils' engagement and enthusiasm. She wrote, "This initiative served as a vital platform for pupils who were still familiarising themselves with the nuances of English culture and history. The workshop ensured that pupils from all backgrounds had the opportunity to deeply engage with and understand the broader historical context of their community."

At the end each child was given an Arts Scholars flyer explaining who we are and our involvement with careers in the arts which was received with interest, and a certificate for having



completed the Challenge. If we can assemble more chests and take them to more schools, we will be making a small but important contribution to education in a neglected field and will also be enriching the lives of underprivileged children. This would require a team of "Challengers" and more objects. Any volunteers?

Felicity Marno – felicitymarno@gmail.com

...for older students we offer work placements

This year, we chose two new state schools – The Charter School at North Dulwich and Haberdashers at Hatcham to participate in our work placement scheme. It seems that the majority of 6th forms provide some form of workplace opportunities and they are keen to find outlets for their students. Having received reports on this year's placements I thought the students and institutions could speak for themselves:

Student 1 – "As a year 12 hoping to study history at Oxford, I was delighted to be able to spend a week at the National Maritime Museum.

Continued on page 6

In the slipstream of his father – Paul Viney proves he's a Past Master at the controls

At the Arts Scholars' Charity Auction at Christies in 2023 I was fortunate enough to be the successful bidder on a flight in a glider which took place back in the summer.

Sally (my ground crew!) and I arrived at Lasham airfield in Hampshire and were introduced to my instructor, Anne Knight. I was somewhat relieved when she told me that she had been flying gliders for over 30 years. There was a fair breeze and the clouds were high: "perfect gliding weather", I was told.

We were driven out to the runway where our glider was waiting. It was a dual-control plane with Anne sitting behind me. She explained the fairly simple controls, with each of us having a control stick which is pushed left or right for direction, forward to descend and backward to ascend.

I was then fitted with a parachute and shown the three levers which release the Perspex cover, undo the seat belt and deploy the parachute in case of an emergency (help!).

There are two ways of getting a glider airborne. One is by a winch (rather like releasing a huge taut elastic band). The other is an aero-tow where the glider is joined by a cable to a propeller-driven aeroplane and towed up to an appropriate height. We used the latter method and rose to about 2,500 feet before the cable was released. Suddenly all was quiet and still and we seemed to hang in the air.

We were below the clouds and had wonderful views down to the Solent in the south and London to the north. I felt very relaxed and was enjoying the moment when Anne suddenly said: "You now have control Paul". This certainly brought me up with a start.

After a bit of trial and error I got the hang of the control stick and even managed a 180 degree turn at one point. The flight lasted about 40 minutes before Anne took over the controls again and guided us in to land.

My father, Laurence Viney (who incidentally was Master of the Stationers' Company in 1984/5) was a glider pilot in the Second World War and this flight fulfilled a long-held ambition of mine to see what gliding was like. I found it to be an exhilarating experience.

Paul Viney



Back from the dead

SIR – During the Second World War my father, Laurence Viney, was in the Glider Pilot Regiment.

In June 1942, just six weeks after he had married my mother, he was instructing a trainee pilot when their glider crashed into an Oxfordshire wheat field. Both men were declared dead at the scene and taken to a nearby mortuary.

A short while later the commanding officer of the regiment came to inspect the corpses. He examined my father and said: "I think Major Viney may still be alive" ("Declared dead? Perhaps not...", Features, October 10).

My father was rushed to the nearest hospital, where he lay unconscious for two weeks before coming round. He eventually made a complete recovery and went on to lead a full and very active life for the next 59 years.

**Paul Viney
Farley, Wiltshire**

Above: what Paul does not reveal is just how close his father came to making the ultimate sacrifice as a glider pilot, and the misgivings he must have felt taking to the skies more than 80 years later. This cutting of a letter he wrote to the Daily Telegraph completes the story.

This is where your donations are going

Thanks to the generosity of members of the Company, the magnificent sum of nearly £100,000 was raised at the September 2023 auction and half of this has been dedicated to supporting the Portable Antiquities Scheme, managed by The British Museum.

As Professor Michael Lewis writes on page 2, this has enabled them to appoint two new Finds Liaison Officers, one in Durham and one in West Midlands.

The other half of the funds raised (just under £50,000) will now be devoted, as envisaged, to further enriching "...the cultural lives of pupils in both secondary and primary schools by enabling them to experience at first hand works of the fine and decorative arts."

Continued from page 4

It was fascinating to hear from all of the different people who work at the museum and understand their job roles. I was especially interested to learn about handling artefacts. Among the items I saw was a watch worn by a passenger on the Titanic. Later in the week I studied conservation at the Kidbrooke Centre where I learned about old and new techniques for extending our knowledge of the past. On the public-facing side, we were trained to work with children and tourists looking at the Cutty Sark as well as other artefacts and explain the history and significance of the items.

I am currently studying the British Empire in my history A level and being able to undertake this placement really helped me to understand more about the role of the British Navy during this period.

This is a great placement for anyone with a passion for history or museums."

Student 2 – "I visited the Sir John Soane Museum for 5 days for my work experience via your programme. I arrived hoping to learn more about conservation and curation as I have an interest in pursuing museum conservation in the future.

I was able to spend time with the conservation team and see their workspace on one of the days of my placement and it was a very interesting experience. The team at the museum created a very varied timetable so I was able to visit and talk to a wide variety of the departments there, such as library, retail,

development and social media. I was also able to do many tasks, such as helping with a workshop for a primary school that visited and checking a list of archival drawings in the library.

Also, throughout the week I worked on an independent project where I focused on an individual item in the museum and did further research on it. I then had to present my research to visitors in the museum, teaching me public speaking and presentation skills.

Overall, it was a very fun and informative experience which taught me a wide variety of skills and showed me an interesting side of museums that very few get to see. I feel much more confident with working with the public and for future museum positions now."

The Imperial War Museum took two students and reported back:

"The students were a delight. We put together a week of working alongside different departments. This was the first time we had run work experience in this manner and from our perspective it was a great success. Each team involved discovered they could find something interesting for the students to do, as well as explaining to them the work of the team. We will be using this model moving forward rather than putting the student with one team for the entire week."

Students and employers have something to gain from work experience. Let us keep this scheme going and place more students next year.

Georgina Gough

Your trustees are delighted to have entered into a formal agreement with the Group on Education in Museums (www.gem.org.uk) who immediately launched our joint fund – "The GEM Arts Scholars Enriching Lives Grant Programme 2025-2027".

This received an enthusiastic early response. They have invited applications from smaller museums to apply for grants up to a maximum of £4,500 per year for 3 years to "seed fund" their education programmes for school-age children, launching this month.

As trustees we are always conscious that we can only undertake such programmes due to the generosity of contributing members of the Company. Reports on these projects will appear in future newsletters.

The next newsletter will also see the final report from the special Post-Covid relief fund administered on our behalf by the Association for Independent Museums who have already reached 25 separate museums.

We were so pleased to learn from AIM that: "It has been a pleasure to share with you the feedback from the projects who have received funding to date. All of the 25 projects were so grateful to have been awarded grant aid to improve the care and access to their historic, decorative, and fine art collections."

All such information can be found on the AIM website at aim-museums.co.uk under 'Brighter Day'. Their final report will set out how our aims of supporting museums at risk of closure, losing vital skills and knowledge, or unable to provide effective collections care after the Pandemic, were met through the projects.

We are also continuing with our Cultural Placements Scheme, which has proved challenging to reignite after the Pandemic, but we are persevering and as always are very grateful to the institutions that agree to take penultimate school year students for a taster week.

Hillary Bauer

The Awards Lunch: a chance to meet those we support

The 2024 Charitable Awards lunch was held at Founders' Hall on July 1st. This is the trustees' chance to welcome some of the recipients of our awards. I approached it with some nervousness as chair of the trust since it was my first big event, having been passed the crown (or diadem as Tim Knox had put it!) by the infinitely more experienced Tom Christopherson. Would I know how to do it all?

But thanks to the superb organisation and detailed execution by Alan C. Cook and above all by Georgina Gough, the event was a big success with near record attendance.

We had a sparkling array of guests, including a brief appearance by the newly appointed Director of the British Museum Nick Cullinan, Tim Knox from the Royal Collections Trust and many good friends from our grantees such as the V&A, the Maritime Museum, the Museum of London, English Heritage, the Guildhall Art Gallery, QEST, Arts Council England and the Cartoon Museum – beneficiary of one of our special, post-covid small grants – and managers from the majority of the Universities that we support.

We were delighted also that so many members of the Company attended and their support enabled us to invite the guests!

Most important, of course, were our awardees themselves and we heard reports from a number of them, including Emily Pryke (researching the Turner Prize for her MA), who touchingly explained how our grant had enabled her not to have to take another job while studying for her Master's degree.

She explained that, having come from a state school, she would never have embarked on this course without our support. She also told us how she had already gone on to experience valuation work. We wish her a most successful career.

Catrin Jones of the V&A delivered a vivid report from Randeep Atwal (who was unable to attend in person) on all the progress she has made on cataloguing the precious Wedgwood archive, its importance already recognised by UNESCO.

She has also taken on another part-time archive cataloguing position and an MA evening course in Records Management, all thanks to our "kickstarting" support. These are truly great results for your very generous contributions to our charitable trust.

And a final note: far from bowing out, Tom Christopherson is working hard on the Young Arts Scholars' Alumni Project, designed to link the students we have supported and help them with further career opportunities.

Hillary Bauer – Chair of Trustees



Above: Georgina Gough with Edward Joyner of York University and Tom Christopherson at Founders' Hall for the Charity Awards Lunch.



Above: Catherine Shearn with Emily Pryke at Founders' Hall.

ON TOUR

Living in the past, present and future: normal for Norwich

For four days in early October, the sun shone out of a deep blue sky, the company was excellent as always, and we had all the history we could handle right on our doorstep. The Master’s four-day excursion to Norwich was a revelation. Not since we ventured to Rome back in 2016 have the Arts Scholars been let loose in a city where the past and the present is so intricately and intimately intertwined. Nor could we have been better situated. From our base at the Maid’s Head Hotel it was just a step across the road to the magnificent cathedral, a short walk to the medieval jetty merchant houses on Elm Hill and only a few hundred yards to the alms house complex of the Great Hospital. The Maid’s Head has its own place in history, with claims to be the oldest surviving hotel in the country. Certainly it was thriving during Kett’s Rebellion in the summer of 1549 when it is recorded that both the Royal and the Rebel commanders were in residence at different times as they wrestled for control of what was then the nation’s second city. Other landmarks of Medieval Norwich were more cruelly treated during that uprising, as we were to learn during our visit to the Great Hospital. Occupying a seven-acre site in a loop of the River Wensum, this institution was founded in 1249 by Bishop Suffield as a home for destitute clerics and has continued in constant use as a community of alms houses ever since, with new buildings added over many centuries. Here medieval accommodation rubs shoulders with Tudor accretions, Georgian splendour, some elegant Victorian accommodation and a number of sympathetically designed modern buildings. A rare survivor among the housing was a medieval swan pit – an enclosed rectangular pond in which cygnets were fattened for feasts. Our conception that these were birds destined only for the Royal table were confounded by advertisements offering oven-ready swans to the general public as late as the 1930s. The real gems of the Great Hospital were to be found in the great church of St Helen. It was this building that suffered at the hands of Kett’s rebels who set fire to it during one of their incursions. Strangely, it seems that the thick layers of soot which accumulated as a result of this blaze may well account for the miraculous preservation of the wonderful roof bosses in the chantry chapel in the south transept. The full glory of these beautifully carved bosses depicting the life of the Virgin Mary were revealed when restoration took place in the 1940s and much of the original colouring was found to be intact. Almost as surprising is the survival of the Women’s Ward on a floor built high up in the former chancel of St Helen’s. Here ladies



Above: outside Kirkstead Hall. Left to right: Peter Marno, Felicity Marno, Diane Boucher, Celia Hale, Jenny Botsford, Martin Allen, Bruce Boucher, John Benjamin, Ian Kelly, Patricia Benjamin, Deborah Charles, Mark Bridge, Roy Sully, Georgina Gough, Mary Foster, Shirley Day, Anthony Hale, Mary Spanner, John Spanner, Jane Oxenford, Sonya Zuckerman, Tony Alston.

were provided with accommodation in a series of tiny Victorian Gothic bed-sitting rooms, opening onto a communal dining area. just feet beneath a panelled ceiling painted with no fewer than 275 spread eagles. These were probably done to honour Anne of Bohemia when she visited Norwich with her husband, Richard II, in 1383. The Women’s Ward was occupied until 1980 and has been left as a time capsule, furnished as it was when in use. On the morning of day two we were expertly guided down Elm Hill where the medieval merchants’ houses narrowly survived demolition, across the shopping district and the colourful market square to the English perpendicular splendour of St Peter Mancroft. This church alone would justify a visit to Norwich if it was not for the soaring beauty of the cathedral and its cloister – our afternoon destination. Here we were treated to yet more decorative bosses. Some 275 of them narrating the whole of the New and Old Testaments. These were saved from later destruction, not by soot but by being 70 feet up in the vaulted ceiling of the nave. Binoculars are needed here to fully appreciate the medieval charm of Noah’s crowded ark or the ox and the ass craning to sniff the Christ Child in the manger– not to mention the spectacular depiction of Pharaoh and his train drowning in a sea that was literally painted red. As the autumn sun sank in the west we returned to the cathedral for a magical sung Evensong, seated on the monks’ benches with yet more medieval life depicted on the misericords beneath. Saturday morning brought us up with a jerk as we made a short journey out to the campus of the University of East Anglia and the 1960s ziggurat student accommodation, hailed as a

PUBLICATIONS

Tokens of love, loss and disrespect

Arts Scholar Tim Millet has produced a very scholarly book on a subject which was considered anything but scholarly when he started work as a teenager in the highly respectable coin-dealing family firm of A.H. Baldwin & Sons. He explains how it all began: “Rather than latch on to the Roman gold aureus or Renaissance medals, the thing that first grabbed me in the numismatic world was a group of defaced 1797 cartwheel pennies and most notably one with the legend ‘Gibbs Lord Mayor Pelted with Rotten Eggs 1845’. On the reverse where Britannia sits beside a shield, the shield has been turned into a caricatured face and Britannia is sitting on it.” Tim researched the rogue Lord Mayor Michael Gibbs and so his fascination for what Baldwin’s considered mere ‘numismatic sweepings’ grew into an important collection with sociological significance and eventually the 360-page book **Tokens of Love, Loss and Disrespect (Paul Holberton Publishing ISBN 978-1-911300-94-6. tim@historicismedals.com).**

The practice of venting strong feelings by defacing medals, tokens or coins of the realm was surprisingly widespread and it is no exaggeration to say that “all human life” is revealed here, as the book title suggest. Not only is this an important book with essays contributed by over a dozen authorities, it is a captivating read for all, even those with no interest in numismatics.

Arts scholar Adrian Ailes has transcribed and edited **Church Notes of Berkshire 1665-66. (The Harleian Society ISBN 978-0-9540443-7-4. harleian.org.uk/Sales/index.htm#back_issues)**

This is the first scholarly edition of Elias Ashmole’s comprehensive church notes taken on his heraldic visitation of Berkshire between 1665 and 1666. It includes hundreds of detailed descriptions of all the drawings and notes he made of the monuments, effigies, carved shields, and glass of the churches he visited (including St George’s Chapel in Windsor), as well as those he found in the homes of local gentry. The result is a unique record of the county’s monuments at the time of the Restoration.



Right: Church Notes... was launched at the College of Arms on September 18th. Left to right: Sir Thomas Woodcock, Chairman of the Harleian Society, Adrian Ailes with his wife Professor Marianne Ailes and Dr Dominic Ingram, Honorary Secretary of the Society.



Above: exploring the Victorian Women’s Ward beneath the medieval chancel ceiling of St Helen’s church.

Brutalist masterpiece but currently closed due to concerns over the safety of its lightweight concrete construction. Our main focus was on the sculpture park (where we learned how the eccentric nodules of Norfolk flint had inspired the reclining nudes of Henry Moore) and the Sainsbury Centre which houses the super-eclectic collection of Sir Robert and Lady Lisa Sainsbury. Here we were treated to the best of everything from Francis Bacon to Inuit toggle harpoons. On our final morning we relaxed back into the past with a visit to the restored Tudor Kirkstead Hall. This a private house owned by Dermot and Judy Murphy, who were the most hospitable of hosts. After plying us with coffee and cake, Dermot introduced us to his furniture restoration workshop, while Judy explained the history of the house and the work they have put in to save a Tudor gem that was a virtual ruin when they purchased it in 1978.

Mark Bridge



Above: Arts Scholars at Sandycombe Lodge

Seeking tranquillity in Turner’s Twickenham

In early June a group of Arts Scholars met for a tour of Sandycombe Lodge, the former home of J. M. W. Turner. Now located a little incongruously in a suburban street on the outskirts of Twickenham, the house was built in 1813 on a three-acre plot of land chosen by Turner.

According to our tour guide, Catherine Parry-Wingfield, he wanted to live somewhere which boasted an uninterrupted view of the Thames and would be an ideal spot for silent contemplation, walking and drawing. Needless to say, this early 19th century pastoral idyll can only be imagined today.

The house itself has had a number of owners since Turner’s time and was in a state of considerable disrepair before it was rescued by Catherine and a group of dedicated volunteers.

With a simple, if somewhat spartan interior, this was clearly the home of someone who might have led a fairly unlavish – even frugal – lifestyle and there was very little evidence of any decorative embellishment or superfluity in its décor. Together with a number of prints and items of Regency furniture on display was a facsimile of one of the sketchbooks Turner customarily carried on the half-hour walk from Sandycombe to the top of Richmond Hill.

We also learned that Turner’s father, known affectionately as ‘Old Dad,’ lived at Sandycombe, acting as housekeeper and gardener for his illustrious son. Sandycombe thus offered a rare opportunity to learn more about the ‘private Turner’, revealing a very different perspective of this extraordinarily gifted man.

From here we proceeded just down the road to Marble Hill House, a different proposition entirely from Sandycombe. A Palladian villa on the banks of the Thames, Marble Hill was the former home of Henrietta Howard (1689-1767). A supremely witty and intelligent woman, Henrietta had the misfortune to be orphaned at the age of 12.

Continued on facing page

A walking tour of the Royal Chelsea Hospital

On a fairly chilly, but mercifully dry, day we met outside the London Gate of the Royal Chelsea Hospital. Admirably shepherded by Alexandra Verney and Sonya Zuckerman, we were introduced to our splendid Chelsea Pensioner guide, Ted Fell.

Ted, a very spritely octogenarian, was charming with a fine sense of humour, and it soon became apparent that his knowledge of the buildings and the history of the hospital was really excellent. How he remembered all the facts he gave us during the two-hour tour was quite beyond me.

We began in the museum where we watched a video of the history of the hospital which was approved by Charles II in 1681, designed by Christopher Wren and finally able to admit the first elderly or disabled soldiers in 1692. There, we were also able to view the Sovereign’s Mace designed by Norman Bassant and presented to the Pensioners by the late Queen on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee.

Moving out into the gardens and squares we moved through the East wing to Figure Court with the impressive statue of Charles II, dressed as a Roman emperor, surprisingly made in bronze by the pre-eminent wood carver Grinling Gibbons and re-gilded in 2022 for the Jubilee. Then it was into the chapel for a view of more work by Gibbons (he must have re-sharpened his tools after carving the bronze statue) and a magnificent mural by Sebastiano Ricci depicting the Resurrection.

From there we proceeded to the Great Hall where every panel lists campaign battles fought by the military in great detail and where, also in great detail, we learnt of the dining habits of the residents. At the end of the hall an exceptional 1690 mural by Antonio Verrio, finished by Henry Cooke, showing the RCH in the background and a mounted Charles II in the foreground.



Above: Ted Fell in scarlet with Charles II in gilt-bronze.

All surrounded by allegorical figures.

Moving on to the west wing we witnessed the living space formerly granted to each Pensioner. At only six square feet, it was difficult to imagine anyone of the size of our guide fitting into one. Fortunately, today their accommodation is far more fitting to their dedication and service.

Our tour came to an end and we all thanked Ted for giving us such an exceptional, and frequently humorous, couple of hours.

Eric Bryan

A scholar’s delight – the Sir Percival David Collection at the BM

Arts Scholars were recently treated to an exclusive tour of the Sir Percival David Collection of Chinese ceramics at the British Museum, led by Colin Sheaf FSA, the Foundation’s chairman and a fellow Arts Scholar. The collection made headlines in November when the Trustees donated the 1,700 pieces to the Museum. Estimated at £1 billion, it is the highest-valued gift to any British museum in history.

Over 50 years, Sir David tirelessly pursued the finest ceramics the market had to offer. The collection spans centuries, showcasing the evolution of Chinese ceramics from the 10th to the 18th centuries, focusing on wares used at the Imperial Court. Sir David’s aspiration was for his collection to be used as an educational tool; by donating it to the British Museum, the Trustees ensured that aim would be achieved, in perpetuity.

Colin’s tour began with the Song Dynasty (10th-13th century), exemplified by the magnificent meiping vase. Its elegant shape, perfect ivory glaze and attractive carved decoration make it an early tour de force. Colin himself admitted it is probably his favourite piece.

We were then challenged to identify the most valuable ceramics, a task that proved daunting for the untrained eye. They were the Ru ware pieces, which might not immediately stand out in a collection with more flamboyant vessels. Produced circa 1100, each feature a unique sky-blue glaze with delicate crazing.

Only about 60-80 pieces are known, and the Foundation holds the second-largest collection in the world. Identifying Ru remains challenging. In fact, Colin admitted one piece was only recently recognized through chemical analysis, suddenly causing its value to skyrocket over 6,000-fold!

Continued from facing page

She became a ward of Henry Howard, 5th Earl of Suffolk, and went on to marry his youngest son Charles – a violent drunk, gambler and spendthrift. Nevertheless, Henrietta was sufficiently resourceful to insinuate herself into the upper echelons of Georgian society becoming mistress of the future George II, who presented her with £11,500 of stock, jewels and furniture.

Built in 1724, Marble Hill is a beautifully proportioned house looked after today by English Heritage. Our guides informed us that Henrietta loved the peace and tranquillity of her home. Regular visitors included Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift and Horace Walpole and it is easy to imagine just how attractive this setting must have been, providing both a refuge for its original owner and a delightfully informal and, no doubt, discreet location for Henrietta’s many friends and acquaintances. Well worth a repeat visit!

John Benjamin



Above: Colin Sheaf explaining the significance of the Ru ware in the Percival David Collection, which turned out to be the most valuable

Right: this Song Dynasty ivory glaze meiping vase was one of the earliest pieces in the collection and also a personal favourite of our guide.



We were then told how underglaze colours revolutionized production. Before then pigments would misfire and turn black, but the use of cobalt and copper oxide was game-changing. The famous ‘David vases’ (1351), also on display, are the earliest known dated blue and white porcelain, and they revolutionised Chinese studies.

The tour moved on to the Chenghua reign (1465-87). The collection boasts several exquisite examples with translucent white bodies and vibrant colours, partially painted in overglazed enamels. The famous ‘chicken cup,’ a small wine cup once used by the Emperor, is a charming yet extremely valuable example.

The visit concluded with the Kangxi (1662-1722), Yongzheng (1723-35) and Qianlong (1736-95) reigns. While traditional shapes persisted, innovative techniques emerged, such as white powder creating shading in the enamels. Porcelain production peaked with decoration that imitated ink paintings, and Colin concluded the tour with a particularly exquisite pair of Yongzheng bowls adorned with delicate prunus and calligraphy.

This very enjoyable and informative tour took us through centuries of Chinese ceramic history. We thanked Colin Sheaf warmly for guiding us through this treasure trove, offering us a rare glimpse into the beauty and significance of the collection. Unfortunately, our post-tour coffee served in humble disposable cups was a stark contrast to those exquisite Chinese vessels and a sobering return to reality.

Alexandra Aguilar



Above: Rupert Maas with Gainsborough's portrait of Mrs Moody.with added children.

Turning Japanese among the wonders of Dulwich

Dulwich Picture Gallery is (as any fule kno) the most amazing place, with a remarkable collection of paintings by artists that even non-arty people have heard of – Fragonard, Poussin, Constable, Canaletto, Rubens (not a fan of the svelte maiden), Gainsborough, Lawrence, Rembrandt, van Dyck, Cuyp (big skies, nice cows) – a real A list, and I could go on; and on.

The Gallery also has special exhibitions, and the Arts Scholars braved the September rain (my goodness, it was wet) specifically to see “Yoshida: Three Generations of Japanese Printmaking”, and to be guided round it by Rupert Maas, another A-Lister.

Carving woodblocks is an incredibly difficult and complex art, particularly when fine detail is required, and the results went from the traditional landscapes by Yoshida Hiroshi, and the intricate flowers of his wife Fujio (looking more like copper engravings, so detailed are they), to more abstract productions, reminiscent of Cyril Power and Sybil Andrews of the Grosvenor School. The latter, produced by their sons Toshi and Hodaka, and Hodaka’s wife Chizuko, took the art of woodblock printing to another level.

Finally, Hodaka and Chizuko’s daughter, Ayomi, has produced an installation, site-specific to the Gallery, inspired by the cherry blossoms in Dulwich. “Transient Beauty” is a room that is a reflection of impermanence and the passing of time. Three generations of incredible talent in one family.

After that, there was time to covet the rest of the collection at Dulwich, and be talked through a few paintings by Rupert – particularly Gainsborough’s “Mrs Elizabeth Moody and her sons” – beautifully painted but so sad. Mrs Moody was painted as a portrait, commissioned by her new husband, had 2 sons, then died while they were wee. Mr M had the children added a couple of years later. Gainsborough – an early photoshopper.

Another cracking Arts Scholars event!

John Spanner

Treasures of the Ranger’s House and secrets of the fan

On a very windy day in mid August a merry band of Arts Scholars embraced the treasures to be found on the western side of the Greenwich Royal Park.

At the Ranger’s House, built in the 1720s, we walked into a treasure chest of decorative arts, the phenomenal collection of Sir Julius Wernher, who had made his fortune in the Kimberley diamond mines by 1880.

Originally this was displayed in his home at Bath House on Piccadilly and his estate at Luton Hoo. There were Venetian bronzes, tapestries, ceramics by Bernard Palissy (who used actual reptiles for his moulds), fine art, jewels (including a tiny ring set with the Lord’s Prayer) and antique furniture (generously further explained for us by Lennox Cato). The house is a mini V&A and the actual film location for the Bridgerton family home.

After a convivial lunch stop in the local pub, we entered a Georgian town house, home of the Fan Museum. While listening to a “fanscinating” presentation, we admired an array of fans from many countries and eras. The collection was founded by Hélène Alexander MBE and her late husband, ‘Dickie’ A.V. Alexander OBE.

Materials used to make these fans include feathers, horn, silk, paper, mother of pearl and the now-banned ivory and tortoiseshell. The survival of delicate lace-like designs so intricately carved, is a testament to years of careful handling and guardianship.

We were also introduced to the Victorian craze for fan flirting. This apparently originated from a marketing ploy by a French fan maker. For example, a lady closing her fan meant “I wish to speak to you”. Useful, but not a subtle signal when the entire assembly could see the positioning of your fan!

Deborah Charles



Above: a merry band of Arts Scholars in Greenwich.

State of the Art – a Palace tour is a Royal banquet for the eyes

The events committee had played another blinder when two groups of 30 Arts Scholars gathered at The Ambassadors’ entrance to Buckingham Palace on September 19th and 20th for tours of the State Rooms led by our own Dr Richard Williams – Learning Curator, Royal Collections.

The Palace and the collections contained within are managed by the Royal Collections Trust which we learned about in the Weininger Lecture earlier this year. This visit was an opportunity to see the trust’s work up close.

The Palace is open to the public from July to early October, the final week being reserved exclusively for schoolchildren, an initiative encouraged by the King, who was not in residence when we visited. We learned that he tends to stay at Clarence House when he is in London as it is more comfortable and there are significant renovations or re-servicing works taking place at the Palace at present.

Do some ambassadors think that they are on the naughty step when they are led in through all the corridors and passages that have had their works of art temporarily removed?

All this is forgotten when you enter the magnificent State Rooms which occupy one of the four wings of the Palace. The others contain the private apartments of the Royal Family, an admin hub and the central east wing that Queen Victoria built to house her children. This forms the public-facing front of the building, including the balcony where the Royal Family appear on state occasions. This wing also contains rooms for high-status visitors.

Security, as you would expect, is a constant consideration and our groups were followed by at least three liveried assistants whose roles range from assisting visitors with mobility issues to making sure no one gets lost at the back of the tour.

St James’s Palace was the official seat of the Court in the 18th century but was too small for family life and consequently George III bought Buckingham House in 1760 as a private retreat. George IV converted it to a palace by hiring John Nash and lowering floors to create height and volume.

He then filled the house with art bought at the post-revolutionary dispersals in Paris and created one of the greatest art collections in the world, then or now! Space does not permit a full tour on these pages so here are my impressions of each room or space...

Staircase – a great domed ceiling, Ritz style of white and gold. Queen Victoria chose the portraits to illustrate her journey to the throne. Rather an odd choice of a statue of Perseus at the top of the stairs.

Green Drawing Room – 5 stars for beauty. The practice room for investitures, they bring in a dubbing stool so that one can get used to kneeling.



Above: the White Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace. The secret door is concealed behind the mirror on the left.

Throne Room – very red, used for investitures since Covid. King Charles and Queen Camilla’s thrones are the late Queen’s re-upholstered, an impressive commitment to sustainability.

Picture Gallery – Immense. Featuring among many others Vermeer, Titian and a Rubens self-portrait sent as an apology by the mortified artist when Charles I was unimpressed by the picture he had commissioned, feeling that there was little of Rubens’ own hand involved.

Ballroom – Formerly hosted investitures, now hosting the new Jonathan Yeo portrait owned and loaned by the Drapers, which was commissioned when Charles was Prince of Wales to recognise 50 years as member of the Drapers’ Company. He became king while it was being painted and this metamorphosis is represented by the butterfly on his shoulder.

State dining room - originally George IV’s ballroom, not as grand as I expected but I’m sure it is fabulous when set out for a state occasion.

Blue Drawing Room – featuring the Table of the Great Commanders, one of a set commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 to immortalise his reign and later a gift to Britain from a grateful Louis XVIII in 1817 after he had been restored to the French throne following Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo.

Music Room – a very beautiful calm room with great acoustics under a dome and half-dome. Apparently, the wonderful chandelier can be lowered for cleaning.

White drawing room – fabulously palatial. A space for entertaining, divided from the private quarters by a secret door enabling members of the Royal Family to emerge unheralded into a gathering.

There is too much to record here. If you have not been then you should book a tour next summer. You will not be disappointed.

One last thought: the guidebook was revised in 2023 and features the Duke of Edinburgh three times and the Duke of Sussex twice, pictured in happier times.

Simon Berti

OBITUARY

Nic Somers –1946-2024

With the death of Nicholas Somers on November 8th, aged 78, the Livery has lost a commanding presence. Always impeccably turned out with his trademark bow tie, he brought great drive to the many spheres in which he operated during a career that spanned over half a century. He began as a dealer, before becoming an auctioneer and valuer and finally putting his accumulated knowledge to work as an expert witness and forensic appraiser.

However it was in later life that he appeared to have found his true vocation as he fully embraced the combination of good fellowship, ceremonial and serious charitable work which is unique to the Livery movement.

He served as Master of the Arts Scholars in 2013-14 and when we became the 110th Livery Company on February 11th, 2014 he had the privilege of being sworn in as the first Liveryman of the Company. Always a stickler for tradition, he insisted on paying a single peppercorn in recognition. It was a gesture that will not have been lost on the many dinner companions who have enjoyed a twist of pepper from his personal mill. This was cunningly disguised as a Dunhill lighter and was one of his dearest possessions – a gift from his wife Anne.

He had a fascination for the small and curious. Throughout his life he collected treen and would delight in testing the knowledge of his guests with strange wooden objects. In many cases only he seemed to have divined their true purpose. He leaves a fine collection to entertain and baffle future generations.

Nic grew up in a farmhouse full of antiques in Shropshire and his love of all that was best from the past never left him, though that never prevented him exploring new avenues. In recent years his principal interest shifted to all that was best in contemporary turning and he quickly built up a truly world class collection.

This new enthusiasm coincided with his membership of the Worshipful Company of Turners and he was Master Turner in 2016-17. He went on to become Master of the Tanners Company of Bermondsey and President of the City Livery Club.

Nic's working life began in the 1960s. After a brief spell with auctioneers Jackson & McCartney in Shrophire, he worked with several antique dealers, migrating to London in 1965. By 1967 he was enjoying life with Royal Warrant holders M. Harris & Sons in New Oxford Street, where he helped to sell some of the finest English furniture and enjoyed daily lunches prepared in-house for the staff.



Above: Nicholas Somers in his element, proposing a toast as Master Arts Scholar in January 2014.

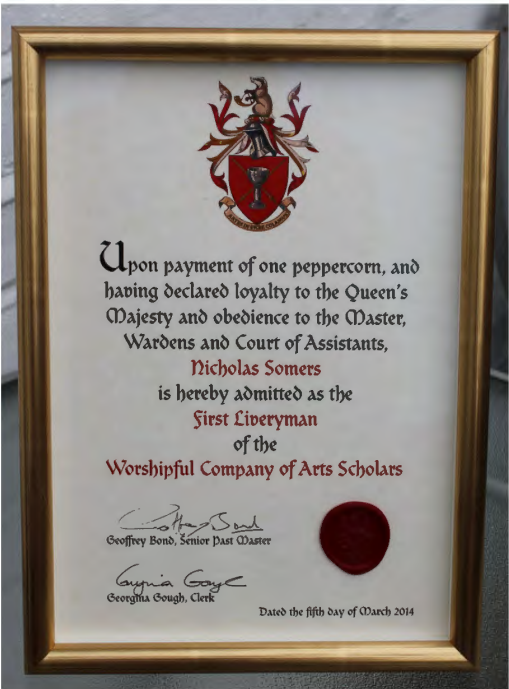
This was a way of life that was soon to disappear, but he fondly remembered striding out from his then home in the London suburbs at Northwood Hills complete with a bowler hat and a tightly furled umbrella.

As the 1970s dawned, so the Shires beckoned once again and Nic spent eight happy years dealing on his own account as Somers at the Sign of the Chair in Friar Street, Worcester.

The end of the decade saw him back in London and back on the other side of the fence in the valuation department at Sotheby's in Bond Street. As Sotheby's expanded into the provinces he found himself a director, overseeing all valuation work in the South West. When Sotheby's drew in their horns and shed their provincial outposts, he was part of a management buy-out and spent most of the 1980s as a director of Bearne's auctioneers in Torquay.

A new decade brought a new departure and in 1990 he struck out on his own once again in private practice as an independent valuer and consultant. In this phase of his career he became a pillar of the auctioneering establishment serving as chairman with

Continued on facing page



out on his own once again in private practice as an independent valuer and consultant. In this phase of his career he became a pillar of the auctioneering establishment serving as chairman with

NEW FREEMEN

Bruce Boucher A former professor of history of art at UCLA curator at the V&A and the Art Institute of Chicago, director of the art museum of the University of Virginia and the Sir John Soane's Museum (2016-2023).

Lewis Browning Senior specialist, valuer and auctioneer at Chiswick Auctions. A collector of Modern British art and of antique British military swords.

Ian Cadzow Chairman and founder in 1987 of Rosebery's Auctioneers.

Lucinda Chalmers A freelance silver specialist, cataloguer and researcher with over 20 years' experience at Woolley & Wallis Salerooms in Salisbury.

Wendy Phillips Deputy Chair of Sotheby's UK and Ireland. Head of Tax, Heritage and UK Museums.

Catherine Southon (right) Managing director of Catherine Southon Auctioneers and a presenter of several television antiques programmes.

Yexue Li Head of Asian Art at Sworders auctioneers with a master's degree in East Asian Art History at Sotheby's Institute.

Lucinda Wright A glass specialist with over 30 years' experience of dealing, cataloguing and working in auction houses.

Lise Lambton An art historian with a History of Art & Archaeology MA at SOAS. Currently working on a '3 to see' guide of local art and museums.



Above: the Master with six new Freemen admitted at the Guildhall on November 19th. Left to right: Lucinda Wright, Ian Cadzow, Lise Lambton, Wendy Phillips, Yexue Li, Lucinda Chalmers.

Newsletter Editor Mark Bridge
All copy should be sent to:
Simon Berti - bertissimo@live.co.uk
Deadline for next edition – May 31st

NEW LIVERYMEN



Above: The Master with the three new Liverymen admitted at the Guildhall on November 19th.

Left to right: Roger Massey, Evelyn Bell and Wendy Joseph.

OBITUARY

Continued from facing page

both the ISVA (Incorporated Society of Valuers and Auctioneers) and later with the RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) after the two bodies merged in 1999.

During his final years in practice, Nic specialised as an expert witness in cases involving art and antiques and both trade and auction practices, appearing in the Crown, County and High Courts. With his great experience and unwavering attention to detail, this was a role to which he was ideally suited, but he did confess that he was often disillusioned by facts that emerged in court. Clearly, not everyone aspired to the standards he strived to maintain.

Above all he liked to have fun and his enthusiasm was often infectious. With his wife Anne he travelled extensively all over the world and also found time for a surprising range of pursuits. As a younger man he excelled at judo and he was a fine rifle and pistol shot, winning prizes at Bisley. He loved sailing and enjoyed boules and croquet.

Not content with collecting, he also took up practical wood turning. In preparation for his year as Master of the Turners' Company he created a couple of dozen gavels, turned from exotic woods for presentation to dinner guests, including the Lord Mayor.

He was a man of many parts and will be greatly missed.

Mark Bridge

A memorial service to celebrate the life and work of Nicholas Somers FRICS

will be held at 11.30am on Thursday 13th February 2025 at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street EC4Y 8AU followed by a reception at Stationers' Hall, Ave Maria Lane, EC4M 7DD All who knew him are very welcome.

To help Anne gauge numbers for the catering, if you could email her with your attendance to nicsomersmemorial@outlook.com it would be hugely helpful.

THE MITHRAS LECTURE

The 2024 Mithras Lecture at St Paul's Cathedral was a multi-layered and highly integrated event. At its centre was an illuminating lecture from Dr Carol Jacobi, Curator of British Art 1850-1915 at Tate Britain, but the evening began with Evensong right under the great dome, where the Arts Scholars' party had front-row seats reserved.

Then there was a chance to see the subject of the night's talk: Holman Hunt's **The Light of the World**, newly restored thanks in significant part to the generous donation from our Company. We were able to admire it in its new position on the wall of the south aisle, where it will be better lit and more accessible to the hundreds of thousands of visitors who come to the Cathedral each year.

Once we had descended to the Crypt for the lecture, Dr Jacobi explained just how this final and much larger version of *The Light of the World* (he painted two smaller versions much earlier in his life) came to be one of the most widely viewed paintings in the world and how accessibility was always part of the project.

Soon after Holman Hunt finished the work in 1904 it was sent on a tour to Canada, Australia and South Africa and caused a sensation, having been viewed by an estimated four million people en route. When it returned it was purchased by the social reformer Charles Booth who deliberately donated it to St Paul's so that it could be seen by as many as possible.

Accounting for the extraordinary popularity of the work, Dr Jacobi pointed to the widespread crisis of faith in the years leading up to the First World War.

She also stressed that the mesmeric effect of the Christ figure knocking on a door that can only be opened from the inside also

relied on Holman Hunt's impressive attention to detail. For the symbolic orchard strewn with fallen apples in the background he ventured out to paint in the dark in a real orchard. He had been in the Holy Land to capture the faint glimmer of dawn beyond the twisted branches. He took great pains to find the right model and even had a real lantern made rather than relying on his imagination.

The Crypt proved a highly appropriate venue for the lecture. Holman Hunt died in 1910, a national if not international figure thanks to **The Light of the World**, and his ashes are interred there near Turner, Reynolds and Wren, among many others.

After the lecture we lingered to find out who else is commemorated in this artistic resting place. Some memorials are humble and retiring but Singer Sargent's monument was particularly dark and brooding. We then proceeded past the huge funerary urns of Nelson and Wellington and into the welcoming brightness of a champagne reception with canapés.

As we said our farewells at the end of the evening we might have known there was more to come.

To round off our involvement, the Master has produced a greetings card, illustrated below, featuring **The Light of the World** on the front and details of its conception and the Arts Scholars' contribution on the reverse.

Let the Master have the last word: "The insides are blank so that it could be a Christmas card or be used for other notes to your contacts. I think this will be an excellent means of demonstrating the Arts Scholars' work to an ever-wider audience. I encourage you to buy some for your own use."

Mark Bridge

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(reverse and front shown right)

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The Worshipful Company
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*Sponsor of the 2024 conservation and restoration
of the St Paul's Cathedral version of*

The Light of the World

William Holman Hunt
(1827-1910)

assisted by Edward Robert Hughes

Inspired by
The Book of Revelation ch.3 v.20:
Behold, I stand at the door, and knock:
if any man hear my voice and open the door
I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me.

and by
The Gospel of John ch.8 v.12:
Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying,
I am the light of the world:
he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,
but shall have the light of life.

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