

Yarra News

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From the Chair

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2025.

I think that you will agree that we have had an excellent and varied series of lectures this year.

Please be aware that our final lecture Art and Architecture of Rumania by Nick Gordon will commence at 10am on 6 November in the Glen Eira Town Hall Auditorium. This lecture will be preceded by our AGM and afternoon members should note that there is no afternoon lecture. All members should attend the morning lecture.

Sadly, we were only able to have one special interest event and one excursion this year. In April Simon Whitehouse's special interest lecture Covent Garden; the Theatres Royal and the birth of Theatreland was well attended and well received by our members who also enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea put on by committee members. Our September event did not go ahead as the lecturer, Anna Mosznyska, had to cancel her Australian tour. However, those of you who attended the replacement lecture on The Art of John Brack were treated to a fascinating insight into the artist by lecturer Sasha Grishin who, we discovered, was a friend of the artist.

Our April excursion to The Stupa of Universal Compassion, Bendigo had to be cancelled due to insufficient bookings. I'm pleased to say that our September excursion to Beleura House and Garden went ahead although with fewer numbers than on previous excursions.

Membership renewal notices were emailed to members in early September. The majority of members are now comfortable with using the TryBooking system. However, since this is not possible for some members, the option to complete and return a renewal form by mail was also available.

As this is our last newsletter for the year I want to thank our committee members who, as in previous years, have put in an exceptional effort. Everyone on the committee works hard to ensure that lecture, special interest days and excursions run smoothly. I'd also like to extend the committee's appreciation of those members who offer their assistance on lecture days.

This year several members of our committee are stepping down. Jane Anthony has been a long term committee member, undertaking a number of roles, most recently as Treasurer. For the last three years Kerry Lee has been responsible for the catering at lectures and special interest events and for the organisation of excursions and Maggie Moran has been our Secretary. I want to thank them all for their dedication, enthusiasm and hard work.

Next year we will welcome Gillian Wilkinson, Rosemary Pullan and Tracy Wollen as Committee Members. Rosemary responded to our request for someone to become the Treasurer, Gillian, a new member in 2025, has been of great assistance on lecture days this year while Tracy will be a new member and will edit the newsletter in 2026.

As I will step down as Chair at this year's AGM I would like to say how much I have enjoyed my time on the committee. Working with the other committee members has been a real privilege and a pleasure. I also want to thank you, the members, for the support and appreciation that you have expressed for the work the committee does on your behalf.

I look forward to seeing you all at lectures in 2026.

Jan Bennellick

Remember Simon Whitehouse, our May lecturer on the topic of "a haaaaand baaaaag" - the importance of being Oscar (and Earnest)" That was a fun lecture and what a jolly fellow too.

I do enjoy my travels to wonderful places and the connections that I make. Because of Simon, when I was in Paris in May this year to treat myself to the French Open at the court Philippe Chatrier to see a day and a night matches, I also had an opportunity to go to the Cimetiere du Pere Lachais and visit Oscar's tomb! Plus! It's really worth a visit if you haven't already been there.

Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris is one of the most famous cemeteries in the world – often described as an open-air museum of art, music, and literature. It's the final resting place of hundreds of notable figures from different eras. Here are some of the most visited or famous:

Writers & Poets

- Marcel Proust - Author of In Search of Lost Time, Division 85.
- Honoré de Balzac - Novelist of La Comédie Humaine, Division 48.
- Colette - Celebrated novelist and performer, Division 4.
- Gertrude Stein - American modernist writer, Division 94.
- Apollinaire (Guillaume Apollinaire) - Poet and art critic, Division 86.
- Molière (reinterred) - The legendary 17th-century playwright, Division 25.

Musicians

- Jim Morrison - Lead singer of The Doors, Division 6 – one of the most visited graves.
- Frédéric Chopin - Composer and pianist, Division 11 – his heart was returned to Poland.
- Édith Piaf - Iconic French singer of La Vie en Rose, Division 97.
- Maria Callas (ashes were once here, later scattered in the Aegean).
- Georges Bizet - Composer of Carmen, Division 4.

Artists & Sculptors

- Eugène Delacroix - Painter of Liberty Leading the People, Division 49.
- Jean-Louis André Théodore Géricault - Painter of The Raft of the Medusa, Division 12.
- Amedeo Modigliani - Italian painter and sculptor, Division 96 (buried beside Jeanne Hébuterne).

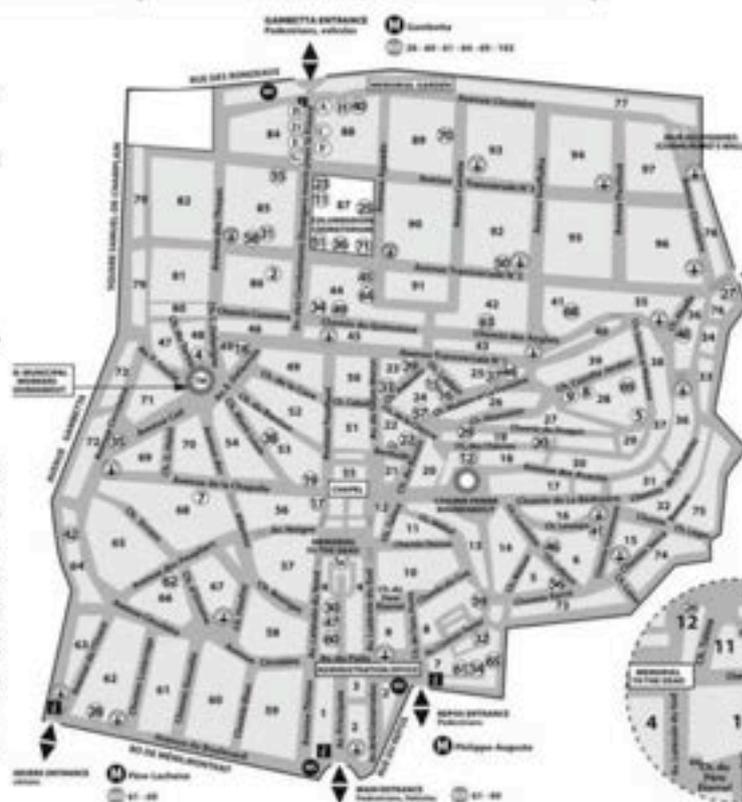
Actors, Filmmakers & Performers

- Sarah Bernhardt - Legendary stage actress, Division 44.
- Simone Signoret & Yves Montand - Famous film couple, Division 44.
- Isadora Duncan - Dancer, Division 87

Philosophers & Thinkers

- Auguste Comte - Founder of positivism, Division 17.
- Pierre Bourdieu - Sociologist, Division 93.

Oscar Wilde was buried on 3 December 1900. He had died a few days earlier, on 30 November 1900, at the age of 46. He was born on 16 October 1854, in Dublin, Ireland – so he was just six weeks past his 46th birthday when he passed away. You may recall in Simons lecture that he talked about histombstone that was designed in London and transported to Paris to the cemetery. The tombstone has been defaced, well not really defaced, but mutilated in the nether regions!



We had a fabulous day at the Victoria and Albert Museum

(V&A) where I saw all the highlights. What a fabulous place that is.
If you've been to London, I bet that you've been to the V&A!

What is the V&A?

- The Victoria and Albert Museum is one of the world's leading museums devoted to decorative arts, design, fashion, and applied arts.
- It was founded in 1852 (initially as the Museum of Manufactures), shortly after the Great Exhibition of 1851.
- The name "Victoria and Albert" was adopted in 1899, in honour of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.
- The main building in South Kensington is an impressive architectural complex, combining different styles and expansions over time.
- Its collections span some 5,000 years of human creativity, covering pretty much every medium: furniture, ceramics, textiles, fashion, metalwork, sculpture, architecture and more.

Here are a few must-sees at the V&A:

Tipi's Tiger.

A semi automaton from late 18 century.

The Ardabil Carpet.

A Persian carpet weaving Safavid Iran. The finest Islamic carpet in existence.

Michaelangelo's David.

A plaster cast in the Cast Court.

Raphael's Cartoons.

Designs drawn by Raphael (1483 - 1520) around 1515 -1516 are full scale preparatory drawings for the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel

Ceramic (tiles, mosaics,glazed painted panels) Staircase 1865- 1871.

The original mission of bringing not just art but craft, design and decorative arts including experiments and educational functions.

Theseus and the Minotaur by Antonio Canova 1781 -1787.

By going with a professional guide, you also see the very rare bits that you would so easily walk passed.

This was my favourite :



Simon Whitehouse

Award Winning
London Blue Ridge Tourist Guide



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Geelong Art Gallery....Archibald Prize on tour

I do enjoy all forms of art. I'm especially blown away by portraiture. As a viewer, we can sometimes recognise the sitter and have an opinion on supposedly, their likeness! It's incredible really, as in most cases they are not photographs per se, but likeness through an art medium such as acrylic, oils, tapestry, pen and ink etc

This years was certainly interesting but, for some reason, I wasn't blown away by either the people's choice or main prize. It's always interesting seeing them outside NSW. That Geelong Art Gallery is a great venue too. This years winner by Julie Fragar Flagship Mother multiverse (Justene)

I always enjoy the special characters though that make you smile and that you recognise!



Sarah Cove. A Day in the life of a picture restorer

What a great lecture we heard from Sarah Cove. We heard all about the common problems of associated with ageing and deterioration and the damage that can be done on canvas, panel and easel paintings in a range of mediums oil acrylics board and paper and ,of course egg tempura or mixed media. It could be simple neglect by placing the artwork over a fireplace, done by vandalism or sometimes just being hidden in an attic or cupboard. But once discovered requires the restoration by an expert!

Sarahs expertise made her the world authority on Gainsboro for example. She was so extremely interesting and had lots of wonderful slides.

Again on one of my many travels, I was so fortunate to see the original Rembrandt "Tthe company of Captain Frans Banninck cocq known as . "the night watch " 1642 at the Ryck Museum in Amsterdam being painstakingly restored in the gallery behind glass.

What a sensible idea to let the public see how paintings are maintained and being able to watch the experts, like Sarah , restoring wonderful works of art.

Here is my "night watch" already restored as it as it's not an original, just a print. I wouldn't be writing this if I owned an original Rembrandt and had cashed it in!



Beleura House and Garden

Excursion 18 September

Beleura House and Garden excursion was attended with a much smaller group but what a fabulous day. It looked like the weather wasn't going to be very nice but, as usual, Melbourne turned on a reasonable day! We called in to the Mornington golf course to be ferried to Beleura House.

The Villa is a fine example of Anglo- Palladian style featuring a featuring a majestic colonnaded veranda with composite- order columns, a balustraded parapet and urns. The house stands in an elevated position overlooking Port Phillip Bay, offering commanding views and elegant architecture

We had a most delightful morning tea followed by two groups walking around the beautiful gardens. We then returned to the house for a superbly prepared lunch followed by the alternate tour. Within the gardens, we discovered themed features such as an Italian garden, an Asian garden with a waterlily pavilion, a Temple of Ceres, a Floral Pavilion, and even a Hansel & Gretel garden!

The history is so interesting too. Over the years, Beleura has passed through notable hands, including Charles Edward Bright and Caleb Joshua Jenner, before being acquired in 1916 by Sir George Tallis, a theatrical impresario. His son, composer John "Jack" Tallis, later lived at Beleura until his death in 1996, at which point the estate—along with its furnishings and archival contents—was bequeathed to the people of Victoria, under the Tallis Foundation

We are so fortunate to still have reminders of the past available for excursions and wonderful musical encounters too. One of our recipients of funds for our young and emerging artists program is the Australian National Academy of Musiv (ANAM) and Beleura house also supports them. You can actually go independently to some of their musical recitals so do look up their website and make an effort. If you are lucky to secure some tickets, please book in for the 6th November .





Upcoming Events

THURSDAY 26 FEBRUARY ALBERT GODETZKEY *Albrecht Durer: Life, Ego and Afterlife*

In his day, Albrecht Dürer was a larger-than-life figure. Through the high quality of his woodcutting, and the facility with which printed culture could be disseminated, Dürer became an international success. Not a stranger to a mode of self-fashioning that would sit comfortably in today's social media channels, Dürer crafted a lasting legacy for his art through his prints, paintings, and copious writing.

This lecture traces the artist's origins in his goldsmith father's workshop in Nuremberg, his ambitious travels in Italy and subsequent patronage by the Habsburgs.



Albrecht Durer - Self Portrait

THURSDAY 4 JUNE JOHN WILLIAMSON *The Art of Maps: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*

This lecture discusses the development of maps of the world and the gradual improvement of maps for shipping, maps of the world, the addition of longitude and latitude, what maps show and what they leave out. Most of all it shows how beautiful they were and the skill of the cartographers who created them.



Abraham Ortelius - World Map

THURSDAY 26 MARCH ZANA DARE *Undercover - Australia's Camouflage Artists of World War Two*

In this lecture we will discover the secret camouflage artists who helped protect Darwin and Northern Australia when under the threat of invasion.

Artistic innovation provided low technology solutions. This is a story of crisscrossing boundaries between art and design, military science, biology and nature.



P.O.S.S. Stevedores

THURSDAY 2 JULY BARRY VENNING *Spectacular Bodies: Art, Anatomy and Medical Science*

Without the help of some supremely talented artists, sculptors, draughtsmen and engravers, the practice of medicine would not have advanced as rapidly as it did.

This lecture examines the mutual benefits that art and medical science have bestowed upon one another. It refers to the art of great Renaissance masters such as Leonardo, Antonio Pollaiuolo and Michelangelo, but it also considers examples of work by (among others) Rembrandt, Hogarth, the American realist painter Thomas Eakins and the English artist Henry Tonks, who was both a distinguished surgeon and a gifted painter and teacher.



Thomas Eakins - The Clinic of Dr. Gross

THURSDAY 7 MAY DAVID WORTHINGTON *Constantin Brancusi and 20th Century Sculpture*

Brancusi was the son of a peasant from a mountainous province of Romania yet he became an internationally famous artist and is now seen as one of, if not the most, important sculptors of the 20th century. Brancusi combined the Romanian wood working tradition with a Belles Arts fine art training. He also had an intuitive understanding of the significance of engineered products.



Brancusi Sleeping Muse 7

Brancusi is an enigmatic contradiction, and this will be explored in this lecture, along with his relevance to 20th century sculpture.

THURSDAY 30 JULY JAMES RENSHAW *Persepolis: Art, Architecture and Ideology of the Persian Empire*

The Persian empire exploded into life during the middle of the 6th century BC and was the largest empire in the world for the next two centuries.

In around 515, its third Great King, Darius I, commissioned the building of a new city, Persepolis, with his palace at its centre. We know a great deal about this palace, and one of its central features, the Apadana Staircase, can be seen in replica in the British Museum. What can this palace and its art tell us about the ideology of this extraordinary, influential empire?



Persepolis - Stairs of the Apadana relief

Send contributions, including interesting art and design articles, travel articles, jokes, life's helpful hints, art exhibitions to: **Editor:** Wendy Coxhead to adfasyarra@gmail.com
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