



Rotary club of Farnham

## Newsheet March 2024

### The Rotary Trough

The trough looking beautiful with its array of spring flowers thanks to Roger Jude and his team.



### Events through March

#### Heath End School



Janet Alkema, member of Farnham Speakers Club part of Toastmasters and Anne Foster, our President and also member of the Farnham Speakers Club with a group of students from Heath End School. The two of them have been working with this group via the Toastmasters Youth Leadership Programme which consists of eight one- to two-hour sessions that enable students between the ages of 14 and 18 to develop their communication and leadership skills through practical experience.

Through our youth work with Weyside Rotary there are plans to build upon this to help more students improve their communication skills.

## Events through March (cont'd)

### Charity Event at the Classic Car Museum Churt

On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March a group of local medics visited the above private collection of classic cars to raise funds for Grace, a local charity based in Guildford which supports women diagnosed with gynaecological cancer through raising awareness and providing hospitals with equipment.

Member Sara Moss organised support for the visit as seen in the photos below, showing Richard Drummond, Michele England and Sarah Moss. The event was a great success with over 300 tickets sold.



### A Raid from one of our local Clubs – Farnborough

About 20 of their members joined us on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March, which made for a fun lunch, with entertainment from Michael Conoley – see below.



### Farnham Town Council Launch of Farnham in Bloom

Ann foster, Norma Corkish, John Lewis from Farnham Weyside and Vikki Orthmann, Friend of our Club joined the litter pickers in Gostrey Meadow and close by on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, enjoying hail, rain and wind at the same time.





# Talks Through March

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March - Royal Surrey  
Cancer Charity by Colin Simmons, Rotary  
Club of Godalming Woolsack



As he pointed out, we are very fortunate to have one of the best hospitals in the country – The Royal Surrey – which serves Guildford, Surrey, Sussex and beyond – serving up to 3 million patients. It was rated as outstanding recently, across the board, and is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest regional centre for prostate cancer, with Birmingham being the main centre, followed by Manchester.

What is now needed is an expansion and modernisation of what is on offer with a funding target of £41m. As part of this our Rotary District has committed to supporting a campaign – ‘Cut out Cancer’ - to raise funds of £2m for an additional robotic machine along with an additional £96,000 for a specialist surgical table that moves with the robot. Already £40,000 has been donated.



The present surgical centre is more than 60 years old and 50% under capacity. The NHS England planned expansion will include 6 new surgical centres for cancer and a surgical innovation centre. It is planned to be open in 2026, increasing capacity by 35% and will see 7,000 more patients pa (not just for cancer) increasing capacity from 21,000 to 28,000 pa. Funding is available for the build but not for the high-tech equipment needed.

They are already at the forefront of robotic surgery and a leader in global enhanced recovery after surgery, with world leading expertise across major specialities, with some of the best surgeons anywhere.

The use of robots in surgery means less invasive, more precise surgery leading to fewer complications, less blood loss and improved recovery. This is largely because small incisions only are needed.

The campaign, spearheaded by Godalming Woolsack, is supporting cutting-edge surgery and cancer care. Re cancer today:

- Some cancer rates have come down whilst others have gone up;
- 50% of people are expected to suffer from cancer over their lifetime;
- This is expected to rise over the next 10 years;
- All of us will know someone with cancer or has suffered from it;
- Survival rates are improving dramatically;
- Early intervention is best.

Already 12 Clubs have agreed to take part in the campaign. Marketing materials will be available from April, ambassadors are being recruited to help give presentations etc. and a website is being developed:

<https://rotarycutoutcancer.enthuse.com/profile>  
to enable donations to be made.

Potential sources of funds identified include:

- External organisations who will help to raise funds
- High net worth individuals
- Events, sponsors
- Members

## Next Steps

- Presentation at District meeting towards end of March
- Encouragement to Clubs to join
- Recruitment of Ambassadors with specific expertise/skills
- Publicity in local media, rotary publications and social media
- Application for global grant next Rotary year

## Rotary Talks (cont'd)

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March - Planning Applications  
by Michael Conoley, Farnham Rotary Member

MCA Architects, of which Mike is Senior Partner, are responsible for up to 300 planning applications/year over a large area – Cornwall to Dover and from Chichester to Buckinghamshire.

In order to provide some anonymity, he gave the local authorities, any personnel and statistics etc fictional names – Waverlittle, Ruthvale, Cornwalk, Illstream, N Downs National Park and SE Hants District Council.

The examples he gave of his experience illustrated the many inconsistencies involved in planning decisions, though as he pointed out most decisions are completely fair and there are some very good local authority planning departments who are doing exceedingly well:

- Application to convert an existing building into a house resulted in the planning officer objecting on the basis that the acorns from a nearby oak tree would create a serious nuisance as they block drains and much more.
- Request for planning permission for a new house that was turned down on ground that it was a long way from the settlement zone. However, it was actually sited in a row of houses in the middle of the settlement zone. They appealed with costs against the local authority of the order of £100,000.
- On another occasion, one of the contracted officers couldn't access the appropriate website and, in order to meet the decision-making deadline, used their own local authority one and ended up refusing the application. Again, this has resulted in an appeal and an application for costs.
- With some applications it is important to know whether 'previously developed land' is involved eg a barn conversion. Here it was stables and their research had concluded 'previously developed land' was involved rather than it being for agricultural or forestry use. They were initially given redevelopment permission but this was overturned on basis that the site had been of agricultural use – why such a change of previously made decision, which will lead to another appeal.
- Want to develop a new house in the west country – permission can only be given if the

- local authority hasn't reached its agreed building target. So it would seem reasonable to be able to contact them to ask how many houses they have built. The response was 'not telling you'. To get around the problem they put in a Freedom of Information request at significant expense, with a cost to the local authority. But the information would have been at planning officer's finger tips.

However, in our own Borough there is now a new Chief Planning Officer who is determined to improve matters and make a difference, though it has to be acknowledged she does face a few challenges. A year ago our local Borough had 24 planners, many with the local authority for some time and some over many years and so a number with considerable experience. They now have only 19 in total, of which 14 are on contract from other Boroughs, 8 of which have only been in post for less than 4 months. One of the 5 permanent officers will leave shortly and of the 4 left 2 are part-time.

Mike told us there are 317 planning departments in the country. A year or two ago the worst 2 had been Waverley (WBC) and Guildford. WBC has moved up considerably and Guildford a little. Waverley have reduced the number of planning applications/officer from 60 to 35, which is more manageable, though it still puts stress on dealing with them within the time limits set.

He made reference to CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy – a payment for necessary services associated with a building/development eg roads, boardwalks and a whole range of things. At present each Borough is different in terms of the payments demanded, with WBC being the highest in the country (higher than Kensington and other rich London Boroughs), which as pointed out can decrease the number of planning applications submitted and followed through. The levy can represent 10% value of the property which potentially means the return to developers is an insufficient incentive to go ahead. All this leads to unintended consequences with the inability of the local authority to implement its local neighbourhood plan(s) which then leads to unregulated development.

## Rotary Talks (cont'd)

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March – The 14<sup>th</sup> Century Renaissance by Peter Duffy, Farnham Rotarian Member

As Peter pointed out most of us understand the Renaissance to be the period which began in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and continued for 200 years. His talk looked at the work of an early 16<sup>th</sup> century art historian – Giorgio Vasari – who contributed to the creation of this privileged paradigm and the model that he created, at the same time asking why it differed so materially from previous and later renaissances in that, unlike them, it focussed on artworks rather than science, astronomy, technology and law that were the drivers of other renaissances. What we see is that this vision of the Renaissance is a construct which is largely the work of three people - an historian, an art connoisseur and an art dealer. He began with a look at the writings of Vasari, with a brief look at two men of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century - the art connoisseur Bernard Berenson and the art dealer Lord Duveen, who played a huge role in popularising the idea of this art led Renaissance.



Giorgio Vasari

Many centuries before this Renaissance we are all aware of the world of the Greeks and the Romans which produced a classical culture of works of philosophy, science, literature, architecture and art, all disseminated across Western Europe, North Africa and the Middle East by the Roman Empire. Italy had been the centre and heart of this world. From the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the structure of the Empire and the culture that it maintained had been smashed by invasions – those in the West by the “barbarian” Huns, Goths, Franks and Vandals.

The result was the period of the “Dark Ages”, when virtually all the old classical culture was lost, particularly so in Western Europe, along

with the over- arching government structure that had protected it. Gradually though, peace was restored and economic activity revived, especially in Northern Italy, and the old classical culture was rediscovered. There was a resurgence, based on classical models in architecture, exemplified by Brunelleschi, sculpture by Donatello and in paintings by Da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo. This Renaissance was thus primarily an artistic/architectural venture and by 1600 was largely over. Art then moved on to the passionate drama of Caravaggio; architecture to the theatre of Bernini.



work of Brunelleschi Florence



Donatello David



Leonardo da Vinci  
Virgin on the Rocks



Raphael School of Athens





Michelangelo Last Judgement



Caravaggio

So this is where, as the earliest contributor and first art historian to this story, Giorgio Vasari comes in. In 1550 he published "Lives of the Prominent Painters, Sculptors and Architects" in which he posited a structure for the history of art saying that it followed a natural cycle, a wheel of fortune, with rises and falls. Art forms are born, they grow up, they then grow old and die. And this is then eventually followed by a rebirth, just as the fresh growth of spring follows the death of winter. This idea was hugely influential for later historians. For example, it formed the base for the structure of Edward Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" 200 years after Vasari's work.

Vasari began by describing the process in some detail: "And then in the act of creating man, (God) fashioned the first forms of sculpture and painting in the sublime grace of created things. It is undeniable that from man, as from a perfect model, statues and pieces of sculpture and the challenges of pose and contour were first derived; and for the first paintings, whatever they may have been, the ideas of softness and unity and the clashing harmony made by light and shadow were derived from the same source." He then went on to say: "I am sure that although the arts of sculpture and painting continued to be practised until the death of the last of the Twelve Caesars, their earlier perfection and excellence

were not maintained. We can see from the buildings constructed by the Romans that as Emperor succeeded Emperor, the arts continually declined and gradually they lost all perfection of design." Decline, according to Vasari, had begun to set in. "Nevertheless, this was before the coming of the Goths and other barbarian invaders, who destroyed the fine arts of Italy, along with Italy itself." Furthermore he said "...we can see that sculpture and painting and architecture went inexorably from bad to worse. And the most convincing explanation for this is that once human affairs start to deteriorate, improvement is impossible until the nadir is reached."... "Consequently, those who practised architecture produced buildings that were totally lacking in grace, design and judgement as far as style and proportion were concerned. And then new architects came along, who built for the barbarians of that time in the kind of style that we nowadays know as German. They put up various buildings which amuse us moderns far more than they could have pleased the people of those days." Eventually the bottom was reached and there was a turning point. "... Helped by some subtle influence in the very air of Italy the new generations started to purge their minds of the grossness of the past so successfully that in 1250 heaven took pity on the talented men who were being born in Tuscany and led them back to the pristine forms."

In writing this, Vasari invented the idea that art had suffered a decline before and after the fall of the Roman Empire and through the Dark and the Middle Ages, but that in Florentine Italy in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century it had begun to revive with Cimabue and Giotto; later achieving its peak, as noted, in the two following centuries with the works of Raphael, Da Vinci and Michelangelo.

In fact, as Vasari saw it the process of the improvement in art involved three successive phases over time anticipating the Antique Road Show model of Good/Better/Best. The key to this improvement lay in artists' ability to represent nature truthfully, as had been done in the classical world, which, before the time of decline, Vasari held to be the exemplar. So, in the first cohort of "great" artists Vasari has those such as Giotto, beginning the climb from the stiff formalism of Byzantine influenced art, to representation that was truer to nature. The second stage, with artists such as Masaccio,

was one where artists were able to portray subjects with increasing naturalism, but still retained a dry style. The third and final stage was that of artists such as Perugino, who were able to introduce sensibility into their works more than just representation. Yet, over and above all these, and coming to his own time, Vasari cited the works of the immortal three, Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo, who excelled not just in painting, but also in sculpture and architecture. What Vasari envisaged was a progression of artists with later ones dependent on the foundations laid by their predecessors.



Masaccio Expulsion from Garden of Eden



Perugino Archangel Michael



Giotto Kiss of Judas



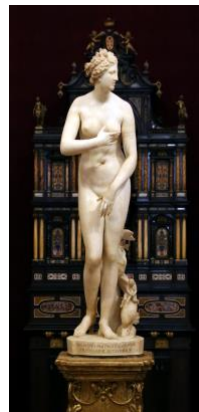
Michelangelo David



Michelangelo St Peter's

native Tuscany that the rebirth of the classical world – The Renaissance or the *Renascita* as Vasari called it - began. Artists had exemplars of classical works around them when creating their own. Drawing on this, what Vasari did was to demonstrate to his readers the five qualities that were needed to demonstrate excellence in art and that they should be looking for these when purchasing or commissioning art works. He detailed these five qualities:

“By rule we mean the method used of measuring antiques and basing modern works on them. Order (in architecture) is the distinction between one kind of architectural style and another so that each has the parts appropriate to it and there is no confusion between Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Tuscan. Proportion is a universal law of architecture and sculpture (and painting too) which stipulates that all bodies must be correctly aligned, with their parts properly arranged. Design is the imitation of all the most beautiful things in nature, used for the creation of all figures, whether in sculpture or in painting, and this quality depends on the ability of the artist's hand and mind to reproduce what he sees with his eyes accurately and correctly on to paper or a panel or whatever flat surface he may be using. The same applies to relief in sculpture. And then the artist achieves the highest perfection of style by copying the most beautiful things in nature and combining the most perfect members, hands, head, torso and legs to produce the finest possible figure as a model to use in all his works, and this is he achieves what we know as fine style.”



Venus de Medici



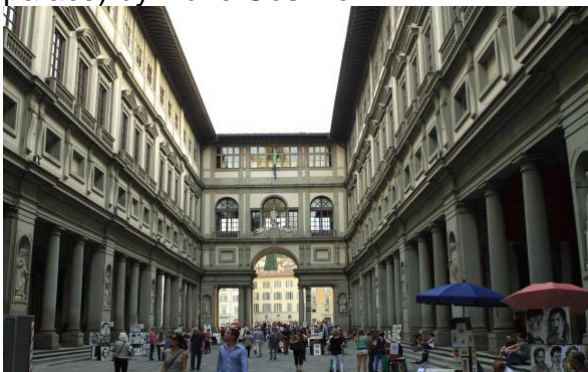
Botticelli Birth of Venus

In assessing the quality of art Vasari had one overriding principle and that was that it should be as true to nature as the art of the classical world at its best had been. And it was in Italy that the remains of the classical world could best be seen and it was therefore in Italy and especially in his

It is useful to ask “Who did Vasari see as the reader of his work?” There are two significant clues. Firstly, it was a printed book and thus could be widely distributed and read in its first edition in 1550. In addition, in its second edition in 1558 it had illustrations of the works of the



artists Vasari was discussing. Secondly, the book was dedicated to Duke Cosimo de Medici, the de facto ruler of Florence. Vasari was aiming at a well to do and literate readership, including those who were likely to buy or commission art works. He wanted to educate them in what he considered to be the “best” art and artists, largely Florentine - and including himself. He was to a significant degree successful – he was appointed to paint the frescoes inside Brunelleschi’s dome in Florence’s cathedral and to design the Uffizi, the offices for Florence’s government and the corridor on the bridge over the Arno (linking the Uffizi with the Medici residence in the Pitti palace) by Duke Cosimo.



Uffizi



Bridge over the Arno

So, from the works of Vasari there grew a number of ideas about this Renaissance which have ever since governed its reception and understanding. Firstly, that it had to do mainly with art produced by great artists, secondly, that it represented a break from the recent past of darkness, and a return to the light of the classical world, and finally, that it was linked to a very specific period, time and place - Italy in the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, during subsequent years, up until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, these ideas remained largely cloistered in the world of academia. It needed the work of two further men

- Bernard Berenson and Lord Duveen - to bring them onto the world stage and into the mainstream of public consciousness.

So who was Berenson? He was one of the leading art connoisseurs of his age and, following Vasari’s approach, he had developed an extensive experience and understanding of Italian painting and especially of works of Renaissance artists. (To assist his studies, he lived in a villa - I Tatti - near Florence.) Connoisseurship involves using the connoisseur’s trained and experienced eye to recognise minute but characteristic details of style, which would reveal the hand of the individual painter. In this way, it becomes possible to ascertain whether a work was solely by one named painter, or whether he was responsible only for a part, the face, say, or the hands, with assistants completing the rest; or indeed, whether a work was “of the school of”, where the style appeared similar, but the master’s hand was absent. From this skill in attribution, Berenson was able to judge a work’s quality and hence its place in the canon of art; the canon which originally had largely been defined by Vasari into good/better/best. For Berenson, the practical contribution of connoisseurship lay in making the correct attribution of works to artists.

For a fee Berenson provided attributions to the art dealer Lord Duveen. Peter said that some years ago he had gone to a fascinating play - “The Old Masters” by Simon Gray, with James Fox in the role of Berenson and Peter Bowles as Lord Duveen. The play revolved around a painting that Duveen owned and wanted to sell - “The Advent of the Shepherds”. Berenson had ascribed it to Titian. Duveen already had a number of Titians and wanted Berenson to change the attribution to Giorgione, which would make it more valuable. The tension between the actors - Fox’s/Berenson’s needing to preserve his integrity and Bowles/ Duveen exploiting the reasonable doubt in any attribution - made for a fascinating debate.

Duveen was born into a family based in Hull who were active in the furniture trade. Succeeding to his father, at an early stage he branched into dealing in fine art and became a resounding success, eventually becoming the leading art dealer in the world. His guiding principle was: “Europe has a great deal of art and America a



great deal of money". His clients in America were the nouveau riches who had made enormous fortunes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Men such as Andrew Mellon, in steel and banking, J P Morgan in banking, Henry Frick in steel and Henry Huntington in railroads. He sold 100s and 100s of old master paintings to help such men achieve the aristocratic and social status for which they longed -that of the European aristocrats who had become short of cash. What was more important was that the works that he sold to such men were in turn donated by them to the many museums and art galleries that were being set up in America during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. For example, the Mellon collection became the foundation of the National Gallery of America - 95 of the 115 pictures in the Mellon collection came from Duveen. Except for the English collections, largely put together in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, America has the largest collection of Italian paintings outside Italy, and according to experts, 75% of them came from Duveen with many given their attribution by Berenson. (There is another viewpoint on Duveen's activities as illustrated by the art critic Waldemar Januszczak who wrote, "Duveen was a crooked art dealer who specialised in flogging optimistically attributed Renaissance paintings to gullible American millionaires"). He almost certainly helped to create the art market that we know today, with vastly inflated prices for attributed masterworks.

Parallel with the proliferation of Renaissance works in the museums and art galleries being set up in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in America came the development of art history as a subject in American universities. Art history faculties were set up in leading American Universities such as Yale, Harvard and Princeton and the works they had available to study were the Renaissance ones exported to America by Duveen. This was reinforced in the 1930s, when a number of leading German Jewish art historians were forced to flee their country and found refuge in American universities. Men such as Erwin Panofsky and Paul Frankl went to Princeton, and Rudolph Wittkower to Columbia. bringing the new perspectives such as iconography, sociology, ethnography and psychology that in Germany had been built into the Vasari model. America became the world centre of art history studies, particularly of the Renaissance, with an explosion of general studies, detailed studies, monographs. All these however still centred around Vasari's concept of the Renaissance and this thus became the dominant version whilst other Renaissances, such as those of the Carolingians or the 12<sup>th</sup> or the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a focus not just on art but on science, astronomy or law, or other sites, such as the Netherlands in the late Medieval period, have been far less studied and reported.

Peter Duffy

## **Correction to speaker in February Newsheet**

The talk on 'How is AI going to impact on our lives' was given by Mark Whitlock, son of Paul Whitlock, member of Farnham Rotary, and not Mark Whitfield as stated.

## **Lunchtime Talks in March**

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April** Business Meeting

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April** President's Evening for Members and Friends at Hogs Back Hotel 7.00 for 7.30pm

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April** Quiz organised by Richard Drummond

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April** See website

If, as a Friend, you are interested in coming along to any of the talks and for lunch (£22) please email [lunches@rotaryfarnham.co.uk](mailto:lunches@rotaryfarnham.co.uk) on the Monday before, saying whether you'd like, fish, meat or vegetarian, pudding or fresh fruit. We start gathering at The Bush, Farnham from 12.30 for lunch at 1.00 and the talk at 2.00, finishing at 2.30 pm.