Antiques Roadshow's poor sign of value?

In my article of 30 July 2023, I reported on the sale of a 4-inch high Japanese cloisonne vase at auction after it had been purchased for only a couple of pounds in an Epsom High Street charity shop.

Readers may recall that the charity shop find referred to sold for many thousands of pounds, so when I discovered that one of my own charity shop finds was identical to a bronze wild boar that featured in an episode of the BBC's Antiques Roadshow TV programme, I became very excited.

Upon discovering that my *porcine* statuette was Roman and potentially worth ten thousand pounds, I positioned it away from Dobby, my cat on a much higher shelf so it would not get knocked over and damaged.

The Antiques Roadshow expert advised the young man who dug up his bronze Roman wild boar as a child to report his find, but who should anyone in Surrey report similar finds to?

Dr Simon Maslin FSA AClfA is the Finds Liaison Officer for Surrey who works on behalf of the Portable Antiquities Scheme for Surrey County Council at the Surrey History Centre in Woking, Surrey.

The role of Dr Maslin is to identify archaeological finds in England and Wales, but this does not include charity shop finds with no secure provenance like my bronze boar.

Dr Maslin is unable to consider finds unless they are archaeological items found (not bought) locally and he cannot provide assistance with valuations.



The items considered therefore include my metal detecting finds eg the medieval cruciform pendants shown in the photo because Dr Maslin is the point of contact for items that people may find when metal detecting, gardening or out walking etc which may be part of the local archaeological record. He is also the person to contact for any finds which need reporting under the 1996 Treasure Act.

If Dr Simon Maslin had appeared on the BBC's Antiques Roadshow TV programme, he would have been quick to tell the millions of people watching at home that the bronze boar identical to the one I found in a charity shop was not Roman and that it was in fact of far eastern origin, most probably Javanese and a modern reproduction that is only worth a few pounds – not ten thousand pounds as claimed by the Antiques Roadshow expert (pigs may fly).

If nothing else, my miniature, bronze Javanese wild boar figure has become a conversation piece that has enabled me to write this article about who to contact when real Roman artifacts are dug up in a garden.

My bronze wild boar has now been returned to its original position on a lower shelf, as I no longer live in fear of Dobby the cat knocking it over.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme website and database can be accessed through the British Museum's website at www.finds.org.uk.

Related Reports:

Urning a big profit on rare Epsom find

Excellence in aging for LGBTQ+

More can be done to make sure LGBTQ+ adults age with dignity and their needs are met in the UK, say researchers from the **University of Surrey**. Together with Tonic Housing, the UK's first LGBTQ+ affirmative retirement community, researchers from Surrey are launching The Life House Project – a participatory theatre-based initiative to explore the unique housing and care needs of the LGBTQ+ community in London.

Many LGBTQ+ individuals face anxieties about housing and care as they age. The Life House Project aims to address these concerns by providing a platform for older adults to share their experiences and explore solutions collaboratively.

Through seven workshops and one-on-one interviews, the project will create a space for participants to use creative expression through theatre, scriptwriting, and poetry. This approach will help participants tell their stories and highlight their specific needs and desired forms of support.

Dr **Georgia Bowers**, Lecturer and Programme Leader of Applied and Contemporary Theatre BA (Hons) at the Guildford School of Acting and lead researcher, said:

"We are particularly interested in how creative methods can support LGBTQ+ older adults to not only share their own experiences but also become advocates for themselves and the wider LGBTQ+ community. By communicating their concerns and aspirations through theatre and creative expression, we hope to ignite a conversation that leads to a more inclusive future for individuals in terms of housing and care."

Dr **Richard Green**, Surrey Future Fellow at the University of Surrey, said:

"We are excited about the potential of theatre and creative expression to empower LGBTQ+ older adults to share their stories and advocate for better care and housing options.

"This project goes beyond simply collecting data; it's about creating a space for authentic expression and collaboration. By working together with participants to explore their needs through creative mediums, we aim to amplify their voices and create a lasting impact on how LGBTQ+ care is approached."

Professor **Andrew King**, Head of Sociology and Co-Director of Surrey's Centre of Excellence on Ageing at the University of Surrey, said:

"The Life House Project can make a significant contribution to creating more inclusive and supportive housing and care environments for LGBTQ+ people. It provides a new interdisciplinary and creative approach to highlight often hidden inequalities and issues and we hope it will influence policy changes and inspire service providers to create spaces where individuals can truly

feel safe, valued, and supported as they age."

A celebratory event will also be held on Monday 24 June, to coincide with London Pride week. This event will showcase a project film documenting the journey of The Life House Project and its impact on participants. The event will also serve as an opportunity to connect the project's findings with the broader LGBTQ+ community and discuss potential solutions for creating more inclusive and supportive housing and care environments.

Bob Green OBE, Head of Operations at Tonic Housing said:

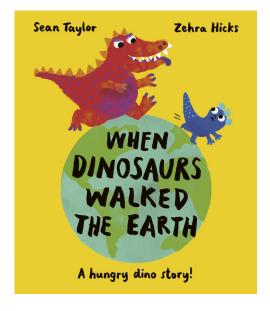
"Tonic is very excited to take part in the University of Surrey's Life House Research Project. The use of theatre and drama to examine the themes of housing and care in later life has piqued the interest of many residents and it has attracted other older LGBT people from outside Tonic.

"We are particularly interested to learn about residents' experience of living in the UK's first LGBT+ Retirement Community as well as how housing and care services for older LGBT people can be improved.

"Some older LGBT people have had terrible experiences in the past but having worked with University of Surrey researchers, we value their inclusive approach and supportive attitude, so we look forward to exploring challenging incidents safely and positively."

Walking with dinosaurs ... not quite

Epsom-based **Zehra Hicks** is an award-winning children's book author and illustrator whose books have been translated in over 20 languages. Through her work, she shows the magic of storytelling to children through her comical illustrations, which has led to an already impressive list of accolades, including being highly commended for the Macmillan Prize for Illustration and winner of the Heart of Hawick Award, to name a few.



When Dinosaurs Walked The Earth, authored by Sean Taylor and illustrated by Zehra, is one of five shortlisted books for this year's £10,000 Oscar's Book Prize. Founded in honour of book-loving Oscar Ashton who passed away aged three and a half from an undetected heart condition, the prize seeks to find the best children's picturebook, and is supported by Amazon and the Evening Standard with Princess Beatrice as a patron. The winner will be announced at a ceremony in central London on the 7th May.

Zehra is a tutor at Chelsea College of Arts, where she completed a short course in Book Illustration in 2009.

Since then, she has been highly commended for the Macmillan Prize for Illustration, winner of the Heart of Hawick Award, named Lovereading4Kids Debut of the Year in 2011and shortlisted for the Read It Again! Cambridgeshire Children's Picture Book Award.

About Epsom Zehra told the Epsom and Ewell Times: "I moved to Epsom from London 14 years ago when I was pregnant with our second child. For quite a while I missed living London, but now I definitely have the best of both worlds. I feel incredibly lucky to be living in a town with so many open green spaces like Epsom Common and Epsom Downs, yet only being a 35 mins train ride away from the capital.

"I love going for daily walks with my sausage dog, Vincent. Sometimes I even run with him. I'm much more likely to come up with book ideas on a walk or run than stuck behind my desk! And I love bumping into people for little chats. Being an author and an illustrator can be quite lonely, and I find Epsom residents and dog walkers so friendly.

"I work in cafes too, so although some people may think there are too many cafes in Epsom, I happily make use of them ALL! You may often see me in Gail's or D's Coffee House with a sketch book working on new ideas. I love the buzz in cafes – it helps my creativity, and I love that there seems to be more and more residents working in cafes, creating a lively working community."

"Having an art shop and bookshop is a huge benefit to me too, as is the market. It would be lovely to have some more independents though. A few are cropping up, but very, very slowly!"

Image: Zehra Hicks and her sausage dog on Epsom Common

1st generation UCA graduates celebrated

Two graduates from the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Epsom, Surrey have been named in Universities UK's 100 Faces campaign, celebrating the stories and achievements of first-generation students.

McKenna Marsden and **Troy Hunter** feature in the campaign's arts and sports talents category alongside Happy Valley star, Amit Shah, the crime writer Sir Ian James Rankin OBE, and BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2022, Beth Mead. All 100 graduates listed by Universities UK were the first in their families to attend university.

"Going to university gave me a lot more independence and taught me new skills, developing my abilities in a subject which was once just a passion," said McKenna, who is a BA (Hons) Fashion graduate. He was chosen by British Vogue as one of its top 50 emerging designers, showcased his graduate collection at London Fashion Week, and interned at Christopher Kane.

He said: "University gave me stability while allowing me to break into the fashion industry, leading to many big achievements. I don't think I would have had the success I did without studying at university."

Originally from Newcastle, McKenna's working-class background was the main inspiration for his final graduate fashion collection and continues to influence his designs.

"Anything is possible if you believe it and work hard for it no matter how many setbacks you may have, if you believe you can achieve your goals you can," McKenna added.

Troy, who graduated from UCA in 2013 with a degree in BA (Hons) Film Production, has gone on to write episodes for the hit Netflix show Sex Education and an episode of Eastenders. He was also nominated for Outstanding Breakthrough Creative (Television) at the NAACP Awards.

Troy said: "Studying film production at UCA made a huge difference in my life, it gave me the confidence and determination to continue pursuing a career in the TV and Film industry when people around me were telling me otherwise."

His success continues in the form of a short film called Mya and his debut play Black Pride, as well as a television adaptation of the same name, with Maia Pictures.

New research commissioned by Universities UK revealed the transformative impact of going to university, with almost three-quarters of first-in-the-family students agreeing their degree gave them the confidence to apply for jobs without feeling like an imposter.

Vivienne Stern MBE, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said: "There are those who say that too many people go to university. I disagree. These stories tell you why. In this country, you are still twice as likely to go to university if you are from the wealthiest background, compared to the least wealthy. That's not right.

Music for our times

Shelagh Godwin reviews last Saturday's Epsom Chamber Choir concert at St Martin's Church.

Imagine writing a piece that means a lot to you and then never hearing it performed. This was the fate of **Maximilian Steinberg**'s Passion Week. Composed in the 1920s just as the Soviet regime was banning any religious music, the piece was published in Paris at the behest of the composer in 1927, and scores eventually made it to the United States, but it was not until 2014 that a complete performance and an award-winning recording took place. It has had its enthusiasts since, one of whom, Epsom Chamber Choir's conductor Jack Apperley, presented a performance on Saturday 23rd March in St Martin's Parish Church in Epsom.

Based largely on Russian Orthodox chants, Passion Week could not be more different from the sacred music composed by Steinberg's contemporary and fellow-student Igor Stravinsky. Indeed, it draws more from the influence of his father-in-law Rimsky-Korsakov. It is more reflective in mood than Rachmaninov's more celebrated Vespers, and the stepwise movement of Orthodox chant pervades the work and the general mood. The texts are Church Slavonic hymns for Holy Week, and are reflective tableaux rather than narrative. The eleven sections tend to sound somewhat the same, but there are great moments, enhanced on Saturday by the Epsom Chamber Choir's well-co-ordinated ensemble and effective use of excellent soloists from within the choir. Like much Russian choral music of the time, it abounds in low notes for the basses, who dealt with that challenge magnificently.

Interspersed with the hymns of Passion Week were the five deeply moving spirituals from **Tippett**'s A Child of our Time, which received superb and moving performances from the choir.

A more unfamiliar interjection was **Owain Park**'s Phos hilaron (Hail gladdening Light), a complex setting of psalms and Greek liturgy. I say complex because it was very difficult to follow the words! It did achieve the desired effect, as did the extremely evocative encore, **John Rutter**'s heart-rending Prayer for Ukraine, sung in Ukrainian. Entirely appropriate in view of the tragedies of the previous few days.

Shelagh Godwin

Ashtead Choral Society give a lesson in three Rs

Jane Pickles reviews a concert given by the Ashtead Choral Society in Epsom's St Martin's Church on Saturday 16th March that included works from Rameau, Rossini and Rutter.

I don't know about you, but when I open my Spotify application to listen to music I am immediately drawn to the familiar where one finds comfort and pleasure. The glory of this programme was to take the audience on a spiritual journey from the less familiar Catholic Baroque to the well-known glory of the modern English church tradition.

You will find it difficult to find a recording of **Rameau**'s Blow the Trumpet. One wonders why as this joyful opening set the scene invigoratingly for the evening, bringing together the full forces of choir, organ and soprano, Helen Pritchard. If you were at the last ACS concert, you will have enjoyed the rich, operatic dramaticism of **Rossini**'s Petite Messe Solennelle. This time we were treated to three of his glorious motets in the same vein, with Musical Director Dr Andrew Storey making the most of the sacred setting and acoustic of St Martin of Tours and the powerful shifts in expression offered by Rossini.

Helen Pritchard's solo performance moved us firmly into the early 20 th century with a rare opportunity to experience Vierne's Les Angelus song cycle in which John Carnelley's shimmering organ playing underpinned Pritchard's effortlessly lyrical appeals to the Virgin Mary. This set the scene for another rarely heard classic: the intense homophonic simplicity of Gorecki's incantation Totus Tuus. Storey created and sustained a mesmerising soundscape, still yet kinetic, and crowned with a resounding silence at the end of this evocative chant to the Virgin Mary.

Faure's Pavane and Cantique de Jean Racine brought us back to the familiar and foreshadowed the last stage in the evening's journey, **Rutter**'s well-known Requiem. Rutter went to France to view the original manuscript of Faure's Requiem before he wrote his own, and Storey illustrated exactly why Rutter's offering is a modern classic.

The choir dealt purposefully with the anguished chromatic calls for eternal rest that open the work, before resolving into the simple, lyrical beauty of Rutter's requiem theme. In the psalm setting movements – Out of the Deep and The Lord is My Shepherd – the choir shifted seamlessly from simple lines shared between the parts, to glorious harmonies and well-delivered choral recitatives. Pritchard gave us grace and purity in Rutter's Pie Jesu, soaring to heaven and back again from the pulpit.

Storey gave a blazing Sanctus, an Angus Dei which tore at the heartstrings as he drove a crescendo of pleas to the Lamb of God from choir, and, finally, resolution and rest through the spare lines of the Lux Aeterna.

All in all, tour of Europe, a tour of musical epochs, and a tour for the soul. Storey must have tours on his mind as he mentioned that ACS will be taking much of this repertoire on tour to Italy later this year. Bravo!

Jane Pickles

Photo Credit: Sue Weeks

More than a Hollywood Moment for Surrey

Amazon MGM Studios and Netflix have taken up residence in the completed expansion of Shepperton Studios. The development makes Shepperton Studios the second biggest film studio in the world with a total of 31 purpose-built sound stages alongside ancillary production accommodation, the whole site covers 1.5 million sg ft.

Chris Bird, Managing Director, Prime Video UK said, "It feels fitting that, ten years from the launch of Prime Video, we're beginning our tenure in brand new facilities at Shepperton Studios. It's so exciting that some of our most loved series and movies around the world will be made right here in the UK, including season three of our fantastic UK Original The Devil's Hour. Shepperton Studios have long been synonymous with world class filmmaking, and we're delighted to continue supporting and investing in the UK creative industries."

Anna Mallett, Vice President Production EMEA/UK Netflix said, "The UK is our most important production hub outside North America. Today's announcement reinforces our long-term commitment to Britain's creative sector. Since 2020, we have invested over \$6 billion in the UK creating shows like Sex Education, The Crown and Bridgerton here. The completion of Shepperton will allow us to expand our footprint even further, creating incredible new shows, jobs and a boost for the economy."

Paul Golding CBE, Chairman, Pinewood Group said, "We're incredibly pleased to have opened our new state-of-the-art facilities at Shepperton Studios and to see Netflix and Amazon MGM Studios making this long-term commitment to the studios and to the UK."

Commenting on the announcement, **Tim Oliver**, Leader of Surrey County Council, said: "This is fantastic news for Shepperton and for Surrey as a whole, cementing our reputation as a region for innovation, creativity and top class talent.

"The fact that two of the largest content producers in the world have chosen Shepperton and Surrey for a global base speaks volumes for the amazing offer the county provides to businesses, large and small.

"We look forward to deepening our relationships with Shepperton, Amazon and Netflix in the months and years to come, so we can ensure our residents and businesses benefit from the investment, jobs and opportunities this brings."

Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak** said, "The decision by the two largest content producers in the world to choose their long-term home in the UK and base their global productions at Shepperton Studios backed by private sector investment is testament to the support the Government has given to the UK's screen sector.

"I am thrilled that Amazon MGM Studios and Netflix have taken possession of 17 new state of the art sound stages at Shepperton Studios making Pinewood Group, the biggest studio complex in Europe.

"This support was further demonstrated by the recent £1billion package of measures for the creative industries announced in the recent Budget. The UK is now the second largest production hub, second only to Hollywood, in the world."

A concert of English music in Epsom

Peter Lutton reviews a concert given by Epsom Choral Society of English music conducted by their Musical Director, Julian Collings. The concert took place Saturday 9th March at St Martin's Church, Epsom.

The concert opened with Elgar's The Spirit of the Lord, the atmospheric opening to his oratorio The Apostles, contains several themes heard throughout the work. There are one or two tricky moments but it is very direct in its unison passages and with its majestically long melodic line. The choir ensemble throughout was good and the climax was very effective, Elgar's word setting allowing real clarity of text. Just occasionally I felt that a little more support in the choir's breathing would have lifted the line, but this was a strong start.

John Ireland's Greater Love Hath No Man again has a strong melodic line and clear presentation of the text. The opening tenor line was well projected with a good vocal blend and it was encouraging to see a choral society with a healthy number of men, some younger – one or two of the latter watching the conductor assiduously. Only once was the ensemble not quite together but the early climax was powerful and was particularly dramatic as it subsided. The Soprano solo was excellently projected and well balanced by the Baritone. The change of tempo was smooth and the build up to the choral climax suitably staged. The arrival at the final climax was very effective, followed by a well-supported soft closing section, though I would have liked to hear more bass in the final bars. The emotional circumstances of this work's early performances (during and after WW 1) resonate today as much as ever and this presentation was in the best English tradition.

Herbert Howells' Like as the Hart is one of four small-scale anthems written in war time when he directed the reduced forces of the chapel music at St John's College, Cambridge. The tenors and basses produced a warm sound at the start and the first tutti was suitably intense. A few more consonants from the sopranos would help in the acoustics of St Martin's but the Piu Animato went well as did the climax on 'Where is now thy God?' The Tenor and Bass were better supported than the Sopranos but the latter handled very well the demanding descant which accompanies the return of the opening material. Bliss indeed was the final tutti with its ecstatic solo Soprano, followed by the atmospheric ending. A memorable performance of a great piece, an all-time favourite of your scribe.

Gerald Finzi's Lo the Full and Final Sacrifice is a work on a much greater scale. After the organ introduction (full marks to the organist, Peter Jaekel, as this is a demanding piece on any instrument) the first choral entry was excellent despite a hint of flatness at the end of the section. Again, we have a piece where the words can be heard and understood – we heard them clearly. Though the next entries were exposed, they were confident and accurate, not least the altos with the low start. While the G flat section wobbled slightly, the Soprano entry with (another) big tune was very clear and confident as indeed were the following entries, though the unison on 'Help, Lord' was less united. But these are small points; the performance conveyed the rhapsodic nature of a musical style very suited to the metaphysical poets, not least in the climax on 'Lo the Bread of Life'.

The final work, Stainer's 'The Crucifixion' of 1887 has, as the programme helpfully noted, had its ups and downs. Stainer had rebuilt the reputation of St Paul's Cathedral Choir; in 'The Crucifixion' he encouraged the grass roots of Anglican music.

This performance did full justice to this piece. The soloists gave us the lines with simple directness, as did the choir in its first entries outlining the drama of the scene in the Garden. John Findon sensitively sang the tender solo that provided relief before the final tutti section. The recitative which covered the crucifixion itself was clearly given – the soloists were consistently top-class and the solos which followed kept up the intensity, especially in 'King ever Glorious'. John Findon was very impressive at every level – I have not heard it sung better.

In the final chorus the pent-up tensions of the drama found release, in the brisk tempo and strong dynamic contrasts. There was some lack of clarity in the short 'Crucify!' shouts but we got the point. The final pages were well shaped, as well as being tender and dramatic in equal measure and having an effective ending, even though it was pianissimo.

Though we all know the end of the story, it still has the power to move, as this performance of the final recitative and semi-chorus proved. The well-known final hymn leaves us with the hope for the future even though Easter is not mentioned. It was clear that the choir had really enjoyed the whole dramatic progression; the audience certainly did.

Peter Lutton

Soni of Stagecoach Epsom lands lead role

Vishal Soni student of Stagecoach Performing Arts in **Epsom** landed the lead role in the National Theatre's musical production of Roald Dahl's **The Witches**.

Vishal fought off strong competition in auditions to land the role of Luke in a rip-roaring musical version of Roald Dahl's timeless tale. In the original the boy at the centre of the story is unnamed. "Luke" follows the 1990 film version which gave the boy the name.

Performing on stage at the National Theatre for the 11-week production, Vishal shone in his remarkable portrayal of the courageous young protagonist.

The Witches is a rip-roaring musical version of Roald Dahl's timeless tale, filled with wit, daring and heart. The Witches have come up with their most evil plan yet, and the only thing standing in their way is Luke and his Gran.

Vishal has been a student of Stagecoach Performing Arts in Epsom for nine years and has an impressive resume under his belt, including standout performances in The Sound of Music at Chichester, a UK tour of Les Misérables, and The Prince of Egypt in London's West End.

His upcoming role in the 2024 film adaptation of musical, Wicked, is a testament to his unwavering passion and undeniable talent.

Commenting Rachel Crouch, Principal of Stagecoach Epsom, said: "I've always been immensely proud of Vishal. Not only has he gone from job to job, but he has done so with such a professional and humble attitude. He's an absolute star and we couldn't be prouder. Thank you also to HF Management, his fabulous agents."

The Witches run at the National Theatre has now closed. Wicked is due to be released later this year.

Vishal in the production at the National Theatre. Photo credit: Marc Brenner

All things Epsom in art work

A young artist's work was unveiled for the first time on 16th February at **The Ashley Centre** in Epsom. Created in celebration of all things Epsom, the giant mural by 21-year-old Bristol University student **Ole Murphy** is being displayed in the Ashley Centre before moving to its permanent home in the pedestrian tunnel on West Hill. The local community and representatives from Epsom Business Improvement District (BID) attended the unveiling along with the artist and his family. The artwork was unveiled outside the shopping centre's flagship store which later this year will become the largest Primark in the UK outside of London.

The mural strengthens Epsom's role as Surrey's leading destination for inspirational artworks. Its bright, bold colours celebrate many elements of Epsom's history, culture and people. Ole Murphy's piece aligns beautifully with the graphic design students from the University of the Creative Arts (UCA Epsom), who created vibrant, colourful artworks for Epsom's outdoor East Street gallery and Ashley Centre windows in 2022, to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

A year previously, the town unveiled a statue of suffragette **Emily Wilding Davison**, who died after stepping out in front of King George V's horse Anmer at the Epsom Derby in June 1913. The suffragette flag Davison was carrying when struck by the horse now hangs in the Houses of Parliament, while her statue holds a position of honour in Epsom's marketplace.

Karen Pengelly, BID Manager for Go Epsom, comments: "We are delighted to be adding Ole Murphy's vivid and colourful mural to Epsom's wealth of existing artwork, for enjoyment by all who live in and visit Epsom. Our town has such a rich history and culture, which Ole has captured beautifully in his creative and colourful design. The mural will ensure the West Hill tunnel is bursting with cheer, bringing joy to all those who walk, cycle or drive past."

Every aspect of Murphy's mural has been drawn from local life, from well-known elements such as horseracing and the discovery of Epsom Salts to more niche connections to the area.

Artist Ole Murphy comments: "I wanted the mural to represent the past and present of Epsom. Within my piece, I draw attention to the history and life that surrounds the town. Whilst Epsom is rich in historic events, I wanted to pay homage to current issues. I reference this in the sprinkling of music from the hands and the silhouetted figures that are walking down a runway. The figures represent the old and the new; their silhouettes are traditional but the red runway they are walking in foreshadows modernity in creative degrees at the university. Most importantly, I wanted my mural to be vibrant and light up the tunnel. I hope its colours run joyfully through the spirits of those who stop to observe it."

Epsom has a long history of investing in the arts – as well as a bright future. UCA Epsom announced in 2023 that it had obtained planning permission to turn two former office buildings into exciting new places for students and staff. The campus expansion speaks to how valued the role of art is in Epsom life and how intrinsically it is linked with the town's past, present and future.