



CASE STUDY / RUNNING A STUDY DAY

BY THE ARTS SOCIETY CHARNWOOD
September 2021

Introduction

The Arts Society Charnwood is based in Quorn, Leicestershire, near Loughborough. We hold a single Study Day each Autumn in a nearby village pub, The Griffin Inn Swithland.

Our last face-to-face Study Day was in October 2019 pre pandemic. We held a successful Virtual Study Day in October 2020 using Zoom. The Pandemic restrictions were relaxing so we decided to have a face-to-face Study Day in 2021 to demonstrate to our members that we were indeed now “open for business”.

We engaged Lars Tharp, the well-known ceramics expert who lives in Leicester. This proved to be an inspired choice.

Promotion

We advertised the meeting by email to our members with the Booking Form as an attachment, and sent a hard copy to the handful who were not online; individual Board members also emailed their own circles of friends. We took a ½ page advert in local magazines in their publications and on Facebook pages. 70 was our absolute maximum number. We had 60 attendees.

The Griffin Inn

The Griffin Inn is picturesque with plenty of parking outside. They have a fully separate function room with a private bar. At the time of the event they were not open to the Public on

Tuesdays due to Staff shortages but they opened the venue just for us to honour their commitment.

The venue has a large 70” television which they use for weddings and occasional football match viewing. We were able to link our own and Lars’ laptop. At Lars’ request, we also brought a small tripod mounted camera so that he could hold up pots close to it to show the details of patterns and makers’ marks on the large screen.



Covid Precautions

We watched, fingers crossed as the multiple Covid Restrictions were gradually relaxed during August and September so that, on the day, the Griffin’s Policy for masks, vaccination certificate and test results was that they should all be optional. We did book everyone in at the door and kept a record of their contact details.

Insurance

The Griffin is insured but we do insure the speaker against involuntary non-appearance (e.g. car crash, sudden illness). The Arts Society facilitates this process, but we pay for it. One cannot insure against Covid nor against failing to sell enough tickets.

Plan of the Day

- 9.15am Griffin staff and TASC organisers arrived and started setting up
- 9.40am Lars arrived
- 10am doors open to the public
- 10.30am Lecture 1
- 11.30-12 Noon Coffee break
- 12 Noon – 13:00 Lecture 2
- 1-2pm Lunch
- 2-3pm Hybrid lecture / Lars reviews members' own pots
- 3pm Tea & home-made cakes

Preliminary Meetings

We had two meetings with the Inn staff during the preceding week. We walked round the venue, deciding on the positioning of the chairs and the buffet (so that both sides could be used simultaneously). We had tables at the front for the television, Lars' pots and our members' pots and other ceramics.

We arranged for the bar to be open at the morning coffee break so that members could order and pay for lunchtime drinks in advance. There was a reserved table for the speaker.

Lars Tharp's Presentation

Lars used a series of continuous automated slides, close-ups, rings and arrows that he talked to, being able to pause or advance them as required. This was very effective and much appreciated. They threw the extent and depth of his knowledge and commitment into high relief.

The Day Itself

The weather was dry and sunny which added a lot to the general joy. Everyone arrived on time (to my considerable relief). The equipment all functioned perfectly.

I started with my usual Welcome, and Housekeeping Advice and Lars settled in very comfortably on the stool (called David after Dave Allan!) he had brought with him.

All the talks overran to some extent, but the Griffin took this in its stride, and the staff did not seem in the slightest phased.

At lunchtime many members used the seating in the garden (and had to be cajoled back for the afternoon session!).

Our members brought so many pots and ceramics that Lars only “publicly reviewed a selection of them, but he stayed behind to give 1-to-1 assessment on those he had not covered.

The buffet lunch was excellent as were the home-made cakes produced by some of our members at tea-time.

It was a great day (but once a year is definitely enough for me!)



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CONTACT

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