



TENNANT LECTURE SERIES

Tuesday 29th January

7.30pm for 8.00pm, CAWTHORNE LECTURE THEATRE

JOHN BETJEMAN

A TALK JONATHAN SMITH AND PETER CARPENTER

Peter Carpenter and Jonathan Smith, who were both Heads of English at Tonbridge, will discuss the life and work of John Betjeman. The discussion will consider the forces that shaped the man; the defining experiences of his life; his private dramas, his loves, tragedies and crises. This will underpin an exploration of his poetry. How good a poet is he? How important is his work and how many of his poems have endured in our collective memory? Why is a poet whose Collected Poems sold over two million copies frequently disregarded and patronised by literary critics? Is Betjeman just too readable? Not 'difficult' enough for those who advocated and followed a modernist example? Where does and should he stand in our assessment of English 20th Century poetry? Peter is a poet, essayist and critic; Jonathan primarily a novelist and playwright. Two of Jonathan's radio plays about Betjeman were broadcast on Radio 4 at the end of 2017. The evening will be laced with readings of his poems.

Tuesday 12th February

7.30pm for 8.00pm, CAWTHORNE LECTURE THEATRE

'THE SHETLAND BUS'

A TALK BY GILLY HALCROW

Gilly Halcrow is returning by popular demand, after her stunning lecture last year about the Special Operations Executive. This talk will honour the brave men and women SOE agents who served this country in World War II. It is the story of the brave Norwegian sailors in their fishing boats who kept links open between occupied Norway and Britain, taking agents in with supplies for the resistance and transporting escaping refugees out. Not only did they have to face sub-Arctic storms in the North Sea and North East Atlantic, but they also had to deal with the might of the Nazi war machine who were out searching for them. This is a moving account of what affectionately became known as 'The Shetland Bus'. Gilly has asked for her lecture fee to be donated to the Lt. Dougie Dalzell MC Memorial Trust.

Thursday 28th February

7.30pm for 8.00pm, CAWTHORNE LECTURE THEATRE

FLYING THE FLAG IN THE LAND OF A THOUSAND HILLS

A TALK BY WILLIAM GELLING (OT)

William Gelling has just returned to the UK after four years as the UK's High Commissioner to Rwanda and Burundi, representing the UK in a country scarred by the 1994 genocide which now has one of the world's fastest economic growth rates, and a President with a controversial approach to managing politics and society. Before that William Gelling was William Hague's Private Secretary and had postings in Iraq, Pakistan and India. He will discuss how Rwanda has pulled itself out of tragedy to economic success, in contrast with Burundi, the world's poorest country, only 200 miles away, and tell us about what life is like flying the flag for the UK in Africa.

Tuesday 12th March

7.30pm for 8.00pm, CAWTHORNE LECTURE THEATRE

THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE ART

A TALK BY IAN SWANKIE

In the last few years the amount paid for the three most expensive artworks would be enough to buy 5,000 brand new Bentley Continentals, or to pay the annual salaries of more than 25,000 nurses. This lecture is about the top end of the art market and is an excuse to examine some beautiful and varied art. So, we'll see some wonderful paintings including works by Picasso, Cezanne, Leonardo, Rembrandt, Modigliani, Klimt, Bacon and Pollock, all held together by the common thread of their extraordinary commercial value. We will also look at the buyers and sellers, the stories behind the works and the reasons why they have been changing hands recently. Finally, Ian Swankie will try to answer the question "Are they really worth all of these hundreds of millions of pounds?" Ian is a Londoner with a passion for art and architecture. He is an official guide at Tate Modern, Tate Britain, and St Paul's Cathedral, as well as being an accredited lecturer for The Arts Society and a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Art Scholars.

Co-ordinator: Carolyn Lawson carolyn.lawson@tonbridge-school.org

All talks are free and no booking required