

Dame Laura Knight Society



## Winter Newsletter

December 2023

As winter settles in and most plants succumb to dormancy, there is high activity in the DLKS and at Worcester Art Gallery. We lead with exciting news!

### Dame Laura Knight: I Paint Today

**Dame Laura Knight exhibition 'I Paint Today' opens at Worcester Art Gallery on Saturday January 13<sup>th</sup> 2024.** And furthermore, the first 30 members to contact Heather Whatley on [hwhatley90@gmail.com](mailto:hwhatley90@gmail.com) will have free entry to the Private View on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 9.30am before the exhibition opens to the general public at 10am.



*Sundown, c.1955 (oil on canvas), Knight, Laura (1877-1970) / Wolverhampton Art Gallery, West Midlands, UK / © Wolverhampton Art Gallery / © Estate of Dame Laura Knight. All rights reserved 2023 / Bridgeman Images*

The exhibition celebrates the life and work of Dame Laura Knight and her love of the Worcestershire countryside. There are several pieces generously loaned by members of the Society, some pieces on loan from national and regional galleries and private owners and, of course, paintings which are part of Worcester Art Gallery's own permanent collection, including the three recent acquisitions.

As you will recall, two major works by Laura Knight – Lake Windermere from Orrest Head and Beulah No.2 – were acquired earlier this year with the support of benefactor Professor Rolf Olson. More recently, one of Laura Knight's beautiful etchings 'Carting Corn' set in the Malvern Hills, came up for auction and with a donation from the DLKS, the Gallery secured a successful bid.

We are delighted the DLKS has been able to play an important role in planning for the exhibition and we thank Heather Whatley and Marian Chester for all their efforts with this. More from Heather on strengthening the links with Worcester Gallery on page 5 but first, important Society dates for your diaries:

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

- **January 13<sup>th</sup> - June 30<sup>th</sup> 2024** | Paint Today. Laura Knight exhibition at Worcester Gallery. Tuesday to Saturday 10am – 4pm Sunday 10am – 3pm

Tickets £6 Advance booking [www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk](http://www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk) or pay at the desk

- **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024** 10am Laura Knight's Colwall. A **walk** around Colwall Village taking in some of the sites connected with Laura Knight and her paintings, followed by lunch at the Colwall Park Hotel. The walk is led by Society member and village resident, Alan Seddon
- **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024** **Talk** by local historian Jill Salmons on Laura Knight and the Ballet Russes Colwall Village Hall 3pm
- **20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> May DLKS holiday** to Newcastle and the North-East. All single occupancy fully booked. One double/twin remaining.
- **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2024** **Talk** by Philip Attwood, formerly Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, on sculptor and medallist Mary Gillick, lifelong friend of Laura Knight and great aunt of Society member Kathy Smith Colwall Village Hall 3pm

Booking details for all the above events will be sent nearer the time.

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Moving on to news about the **Society's archive**. Here is an up-date from committee member Virginia Seddon who, together with her husband Alan, has spent a great deal of time cataloguing and organising the archive material. We are most grateful for their meticulous efforts and, recently, for the part they have played in securing a new home for the archive.

### [The Dame Laura Knight Special Collection](#)

In August this year we entered into a five year contract with Worcester Museum and Art Gallery (WMAG) to house our archive of books, letters, documents, photographs and general ephemera. Most of the spadework for this wonderful result was achieved by Heather and Marian as they collaborated with WMAG curators who were on a mission to assemble a prestigious exhibition of Dame Laura's work from January to July 2024.

It follows a lengthy but fruitless attempt to store our archive in Malvern Library.

The Dame Laura Knight Society is now pleased to offer access to these materials to any one engaged in academic research or simply with an interest or curiosity in Dame Laura's history, links and connections throughout her illustrious career.

Viewing of the Special Collection has to be by prior arrangement with us as the WMAG staff is not involved and the room housing the collection has to be booked in advance.

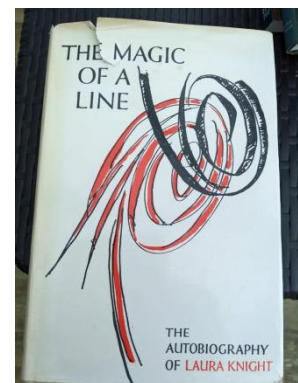
The administration, supervision and maintenance of this facility is carried out by Alan and myself and we are happy to receive any enquiries via the Dame Laura Website as follows :

[damelauraknightsociety.co.uk/contact/](http://damelauraknightsociety.co.uk/contact/)

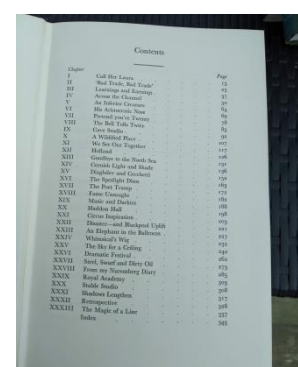
Enquiry marked FAO Virginia Seddon

We are currently working on and improving the website to enhance the description of the archive contents.

Virginia Seddon



Every book cover and its index has been photographed and this will be added to the Society online archive on the website



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As mentioned in 'Forthcoming Events' on page 2, Alan Seddon is leading a **walk around Colwall Village on 10<sup>th</sup> April** and will talk about places associated with Laura Knight. Here is a little gem he came across in his research for the walk:

I recently trawled through the Colwall Village Society's archive hoping to find lots of information about the many years Laura and Harold Knight spent in the village. Much to my disappointment and surprise there was very little. However there was **one gem** published in their **June 2006 Newsletter** as follows:

***Dame Laura Knight (1877-1970), one of Britain's most eminent women artists, was represented by a number of paintings in a recent sale at Philip Serrell of Malvern. One was a view from Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern, during a rainstorm. It fetched £40,000. A watercolour view from the hills towards Ledbury and Hay Bluff realised more than £2,000. Dame Laura lived in Colwall some time, painting local farming scenes. Some years ago when the present chairman of the Village Society first bought his house in Colwall, he happened to mention it to the Lady Mayor of Ealing in West London. 'Oh, I spent my honeymoon there,' she said, 'at the Park Hotel, and we were served breakfast by the artist Laura Knight.'***

Our archive has very little in the way of tales and reminiscences about Laura and Harold's time in the Malvern Hills and it would be fascinating to compile a portfolio of them. If you, or any friends, neighbours, or relatives have any such memories I would be happy to receive them. Time is moving on and we need to capture this information before it is forever lost. Please **email me at [alanhseadon@gmail.com](mailto:alanhseadon@gmail.com)**

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We are immensely grateful to Heather Whatley for her commitment to strengthening the links between the Society and Worcester Gallery and here is more information about the way the Society has been involved in preparing for the forthcoming exhibition:

## Opening of the Exhibition 'I PAINT TODAY' Worcester Museum and Gallery 13th January 2024

A great start to our new year will be the opening of the first LK exhibition at Worcester MAG for 12 years.

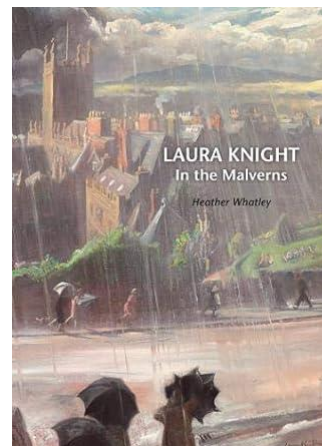
As you can imagine Curators' preparations have been going 'full pelt' for some time and we have been actively involved. Some members have generously loaned their paintings to add to the unique collection on display. Included is a newly acquired etching of 'Carting Corn' to which the Society made a large contribution.

Walk leaders have contributed to the creation of a **Laura Knight trail** showing places of interest for tourists/ visitors, on sale at the Gallery shop and at Malvern Tourist Information Centre from 13th January 2024.

Marian Chester and myself have been working on **an archives presentation** for a dtbf March and I have been asked to give **bite size talks** about DLK and her links with Malvern on March 12<sup>th</sup> and June 11<sup>th</sup>.

It's truly another exciting year for DLK and fortunate that WMAG is now able store our archives and to purchase more of her work. It must be recognition at last of her significance to the art of our county backed by willingness of the Local Authority to develop the Gallery as a dynamic centre expressing local needs.

Heather Whatley



Heather's book 'Laura Knight in the Malverns' is available from the Gallery shop. ed.

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If you are travelling to beautiful Cornwall next year, you may be interested to know of a couple of exhibitions in the pipeline:

- **The Exceptional Harold Harvey** 1st May to 28<sup>th</sup> September 2024 Penlee House Gallery, Penzance. Staged to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the artist's birth.
- **Capturing the Light – St Ives Artists 1885 - 1914** 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 St Ives Museum. Working with David Tovey, this exhibition will focus in particular on marine paintings produced during the period when St Ives was known internationally as 'the Mecca of the seascapist'.

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## Exploding the Myths: Discovering the True Story of St Ives Art

We were delighted David Tovey delivered the Autumn in Malvern Festival lecture this year and his talk, explaining how St Ives became an important art colony, was full of fascinating insights and detail.

He began by giving a thumbnail history of St Ives art mentioning Turners visit in 1811 and Whistler in 1884 then quickly moving on to Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and the focus on modernism. However, his research has shown that there is much more to learn about the history of St Ives art colony and that the big names often associated with the town have been over played.

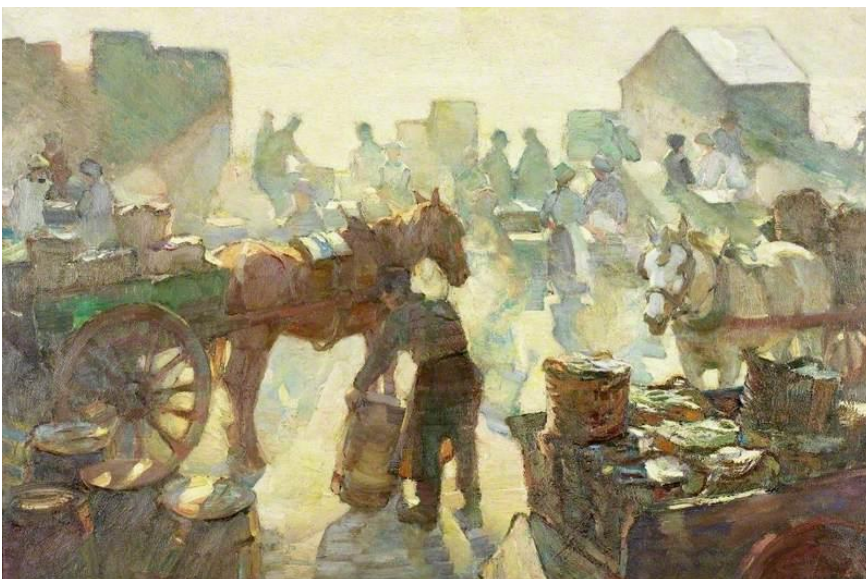


David's talk at Colwall Village Hall was well attended

David's superbly illustrated talk explained that St Ives was gradually 'discovered' by a number of artists from various countries such as the Frenchman Emile Vernier, the Americans Edward Simmons and Howard Russell Butler, as well as British artists such as Stanhope Forbes and William Titcomb (David's great grandfather).

David is passionate about this subject and is working with the curator at St Ives Museum to develop it into a centre for St Ives representational art which he feels has been long overshadowed by the modern art the town is known for.

If you are interested in finding out more about the dawn of the St Ives Colony then visit David's website <https://www.stivesart.info/> for more information. David also has two recently published volumes on the art and social history of Lamorna Valley which are superbly researched and illustrated.



Charles Simpson

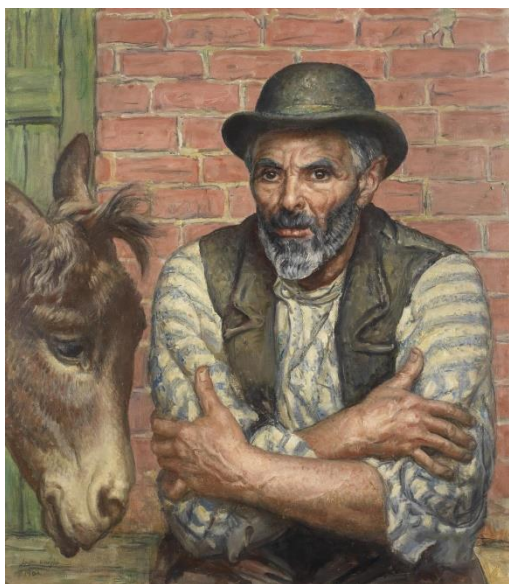
The Herring Fishing Season – from my studio window

RA 1924

Laing Gallery, Newcastle Upon Tyne

# **Sale of Works at Auction – a small sample**

## **1. Mickey and his Moke** Dame Laura Knight, RA, RWS (British, 1877-1970)



Est: £12,000 - £18,000 unsold [Bonhams](#) September 27, 2023 London,

**Exhibited** London, Upper Grosvenor Gallery, 1969, no. 2, owned by the artist.  
Nottingham, Nottingham Castle Museum, 1970, no. 37, owned by the artist.

The present lot was painted in 1962, based on sketches held by the artist from her original work *A Man from Mousehole* which was painted in 1928, exhibited at The Leicester Galleries, London (cat. no. 25) and illustrated in the artist's first autobiography, *Oil Paint and Grease Paint* (p. 369); the work was also illustrated in *The Sphere* on 17th March 1928, just prior to the exhibition, but under the title of *Stonebreaker*.

On 17th December 1929 the S.S. Manulka of the Union Steam Ship Company sank in darkness and heavy fog approximately 70 miles south of Dunedin on her way from Melbourne Australia to

Wellington New Zealand. All the passengers were saved, but most of the cargo went down with the ship, including a consignment of the artist's pictures that included *A Man from Mousehole*.

Differing in the background, both depict an almost identical scene of a Cornish farm worker sat with folded arms - subsequently identified as Mr Johns (Witt library) - together with his working beast of burden, a donkey. In the original work lost at sea, the background depicts the local Cornish landscape with a tin mine on top of a hill, whereas this picture has simply a door and brick wall as a background.



## **2. Carting Corn 1943** DAME LAURA KNIGHT RA RWS (BRITISH 1877-1970)

Est: £200 - £300 **Sold: £300**  
**to Worcester Gallery with support from DLKS**

[Chiswick Auctions](#) October 03, 2023 London,

Signed, titled and inscribed in pencil drypoint etching on wove plate 20 x 31.5cm framed ARR Reference: see

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, accession number E.521-1952, for another example of the edition.

## **3. FOR FOLEY, A COFFEE SERVICE** DAME LAURA KNIGHT DBE, RA, RWS (1877-1970)



Est: £250 - £350 **Sold: £450** [Elstob Auctioneers](#) July 15, 2023 Ripon, United Kingdom Set comprising coffee pot, cream jug, sugar bowl, five cups and six saucers, some marked first edition, black printed marks. Coffee pot 14cm high Hairline crack to the coffee pot, and the tip of the spout has been re-stuck. The remaining pieces in good condition without chips, cracks or restoration.

**4. Among the Hop Vines** Dame Laura Knight DBE RA RWS



Sothebys  
December 7th 2023  
Estimate  
30,000 - 50,000 GBP

signed *Laura Knight* lower right  
oil on canvas over black chalk  
Unframed: 64 by 76cm., 25 by 30in.  
Framed: 86 by 98cm., 34 by 38.5in.

Sold £38,100

**5. Portrait of Ettore Modigliani** Harold Knight



Est: €1,500 - €2,500 **Sold:** €5,500

[Casa d'aste ARCADIA](#) October 26, 2023 ROMA, Italy

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We are most grateful for your support as a member of the Society and very much welcome your comments on any matters concerning Laura Knight or the Society.

The best way to do this is on the 'Contact us' page on the Society website:  
[www.damelauraknightsociety.co.uk](http://www.damelauraknightsociety.co.uk)

We look forward to welcoming you to an event in the New Year. Certainly a visit to the forthcoming Laura Knight exhibition in Worcester will be a wonderful way of cheering up a dreary January.

**Very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and we wish you good health and happiness in 2024.**

Evie Knight (Chair) and the DLKS Committee