

Arty-Facts Group Meeting Jan 2025 Review

Have you ever noticed, as you walked around Hunstanton, interesting and unusual features on some of the houses? Checkerboard design, round windows, strange-shaped chimneys? Are you able to look at a painting and spot the artist's clues as to the meaning of the picture as well as the culture and norms of the time in which it was painted? These are questions we received answers to at the January meeting of the Arty-Facts group when Mavis Windibank and Margi Blunden gave us two engaging presentations, and generated our biggest turn-out ever. One of the fascinations is to learn how the speaker's interest was sparked by their chosen topic, whether through an art history course, or by a desire to learn more about the town in which we live.

On your next walk, notice the homes designed in the Arts and Crafts style around Boston and Lincoln Squares and Austen Street by the architect Herbert George Ibberson, 1866-1935. The carstone and knapped flint features, archways with tiles inset, and battered chimneys – where the sides are larger at the base – are thanks to Ibberson who was a keen proponent of the movement that valued traditional craftsmanship, natural, local materials, and the philosophy that harmony and quality were more valuable than quantity at a time when industrial revolution was veering away from these ideals. More about Ibberson can be found in Hunstanton's Heritage Centre.

Also, take a look at the painting titled Christ in the House of his Parents, aka Christ in the Carpenter's Workshop, created by John Everett Millais in 1850. Highly controversial at the time and slammed by critics including Charles Dickens, the realistic scene shows Jesus and several ordinary characters in a humble workshop. Who are the other people? What has happened to Jesus? Why is the dove there? How were this location and the people modelled? Would you have guessed that the unshorn heads of sheep were brought in from a local butchers in order to paint them correctly? The Arty-Facts group learned the answers to these questions and why the painting helped to make the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood well-known.

Talks by more of our members will be scheduled later in the year.

Carolyn McDermid