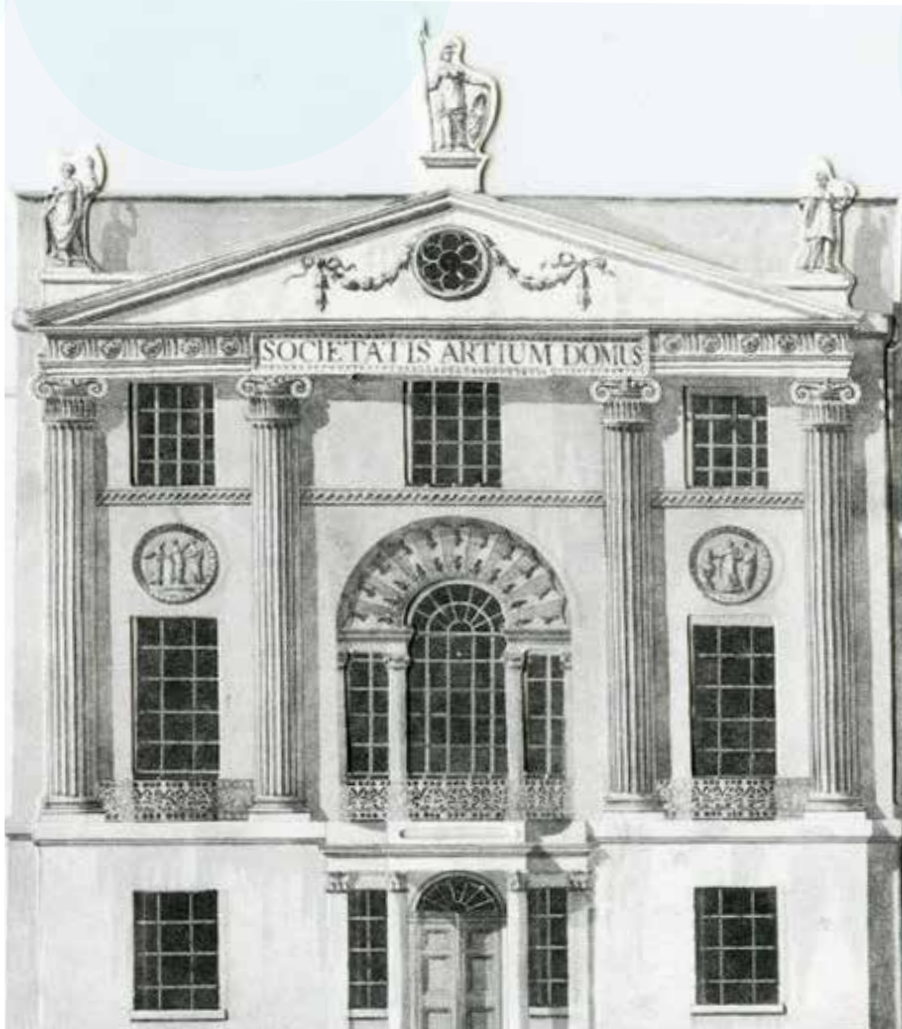


**Welcome to the**



**Royal Society of  
Arts, Manufactures  
and Commerce**  
Schedule & House Tour

# Open House Schedule

Please find key day events:

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>11:00</b>         | <b>Doors Open</b>  |
| <b>12:00 - 16:00</b> | <b>RSA House Tours - 12:00, 13:00, 14:00 &amp; 15:00</b><br>Join us for a detailed walkthrough of the house.<br>Please meet in reception.  |
| <b>14:00</b>         | <b>Relax in the DSA and watch a past RSA Event</b><br>Take a seat in our underground, cobbled auditorium.<br>Sit back, relax, and catch a glimpse of past RSA<br>Events with some popcorn. |
| <b>16:00</b>         | <b>Doors close</b>   |

## All other activities:

### The Great Room

#### **Explore the Archive**

Meet our archive team and look through the incredible historic artefacts from the past 270 years.

### Benjamin Franklin Room

#### **Find my Past**

Discover your ancestry and see where your past takes you.

Findmypast is a UK-based online genealogy service owned, since 2007, by British company DC Thomson. The website hosts billions of searchable records of census, directory and historical record information.

#### **Find out about our Fellowship**

Meet our fantastic Fellowship Team and find out more about the Fellowship today!

### **The Bar**

#### **Cocktail Bar**

Unwind in our atmospheric bar and enjoy a beverage.

### **The Vaults**

#### **Art Exhibition with Art Friend**

Check out some stunning artwork on display with a live DJ! Art Friend are intentionally inclusive, everyone is welcome. No pretentious jargon or stuffy gallery vibes here.

### **Tavern Room**

#### **Playful Green Planet nature activity**

Learn more about the work at the RSA and get artistic with our creative nature session.

### **Queen Elizabeth II Room**

#### **Our Interventions**

Learn more about our Design for Life mission through our interventions and the work we are doing to make real impact.

### **Prince Philip Room**

#### **RSA Events**

Say hello to our events team and have a look through our events programme.

### **Coffee House**

Make the most of our offer on all hot and cold beverages. All £2.70 to celebrate our 270th birthday!

### **Library and The Steps**

Sign up today! Relax with a coffee and enjoy a book or ask our Librarian for a tour.

### **RSA Past Events**

Watch clips from our fantastic events over the years. Grab a coffee and pastry and take a seat on the steps.

### **Throughout the House**

#### **Join the RSA Treasure Hunt**

Use the clues to complete our RSA Treasure hunt. Collect the treasure hunt from John Adam reception. Don't forget to submit your answers for a chance to win a prize!

See next page for House Tour Guide.



# RSA House

## A brief Introduction

This year we celebrate 250 years at RSA House. RSA House is made up of five original properties (nos. 2, 4, 6 & 8 [John Street] now John Adam Street and no.18 Adam Street). The Society's original house, (no.8) completed in 1774 was specifically designed by Robert Adam, and comprised the Entrance Hall, Repository (now the Benjamin Franklin Room) and The Great Room. The adjoining buildings, originally residential properties were leased, and the freeholds of 2-4 John Adam Street and 18 Adam Street were purchased in 1977.

The House is on several levels and is made up of many rooms. As it can be difficult to navigate, we ask you to follow the itinerary set out in this Guide. There are direction signs around RSA House to help you make your way around.

In 1866 the Society initiated a Memorial Tablet scheme, placing terracotta plaques on London properties where famous people resided or had formerly resided. This scheme later became known as the Blue Plaque Scheme, currently facilitated by English Heritage. The facsimile blue plaques on display around the House commemorate this initiative and celebrate our history.

## Start of Tour

### 1. Entrance Hall (John Adam St Reception)

The Entrance Hall was given its present dimensions in 1922 by architect Arthur Bolton. The columns echo those used by Robert Adam for the entrance porch. They mark the divisions between the old entrance hall and the Register's parlour and the staircase hall. The Adam chimneypiece is original but was relocated from one of the rear first floor rooms in the 1922 refurbishment.

The floor is a mechanically produced Tesserae floor made by a process devised by Richard Prosser and laid in 1846, and the plaster relief above the chimneypiece is 'Priam's appeal for the body of Hector' c.1770 and was re-sited from the staircase wall in No. 4.

↓ ALONG TO END OF CORRIDOR INTO

### 2. Prince Albert Room

Prince Albert was the Society's President (1843-61) and initiated with the Society the

Great Exhibition (1851) which was administered by the Royal Commission.

Albert secured Royal chartered status for the Society in 1847, the Society did not adopt its 'Royal' prefix until 1908.

Following Prince Albert's untimely death in 1861 the Society's Council resolved as part of its memorial that an Albert Medal should be awarded annually for distinguished merit in promoting Arts, Manufactures or Commerce.

↓ THROUGHTO

### 3. Mary Moser Room

Mary Moser was the only daughter of the Swiss artist George Michael Moser. Mary was awarded her first of two medals by the Society for flower drawings aged just 14. One of her flower pieces was shown in the first public exhibition of contemporary British painters and sculptors held in the Great Room of the Society's then premises (Denmark Court) in 1760. This piece is now on show at the Tate Britain in their ongoing Exhibition "Now You See Us" – Women Artists in Britain 1520-1920.

In 1768, she was invited to join the group of artists and architects who formed the Royal Academy of Arts. She was the youngest Founder member at just 24 and one of only two females, the other being Angelica Kauffman.

The wall panels list the names of the Royal Designers for Industry (RDIs). The faculty was formed in 1938 as the association of RDIs and aimed to 'further excellence in... industrial design' Regarded as the highest honour in the UK, distinguished international designers are awarded the 'Honorary Royal Designer for Industry' (HonRDI).

The new feature in this room along with the Prince Albert space for 2024 is the return of a Bar to the RSA in partnership with Idylls drinks celebrating rewilding and sustainably foraged wild ingredients.

↓ ALONG TO END OF ROOM INTO

### 4. Tavern Room

This room was originally the Coffee Room of the Adelphi Tavern, As the Adelphi Hotel, it featured in Charles Dickens' 'Pickwick Papers', Dickens was a member of the Society and was elected in 1849.

The chimneypiece and doorways were salvaged from the Adam's interior at Bowood House when a wing was demolished in 1955-56, then installed on the purchase of this property in 1957.

The room was extended in 1979-80 to include the former entrance hall of 2 John Adam Street. The ornamental plaster ceiling was restored in 1990, having suffered damage from damp and nearby bomb blasts in 1944.

## ↓ CROSS CHEQUERBOARD HALL UPSTAIRS TO 1ST FLOOR

\*To view iconic Adam staircase design, look up and down stairwell

### 5. Prince Philip Room

Originally the dining room of the Adelphi Tavern, 18 Adam Street. The leasehold of this house was acquired in 1957 and the room was used as an exhibition room, then a committee room before being converted into the RSA library in 1980.

In 2002 structural repairs involved cleaning and conservation of the ceilings, plasterwork and panels in this and the adjoining Queen Elizabeth II Room.

The gouache ceiling panels show 'Pan celebrating the feast of Bacchus', by the school of Antonio Zucchi and his wife Angelica Kauffman. The chimneypiece is from Bowood House and the carved door-casing is from Fineshade Abbey. The life size bronze bust of Prince Philip is by the sculptor Raphael Maklout is dated 1989. The portrait on the wall of Prince Philip, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh is by Stuart Pearson Wright in 2003. The portrait was commissioned by the Royal Society of Arts to mark the 50th anniversary of Prince Philip's Presidency (1952-2011). He was the longest standing President of the RSA.

## ↓ THROUGH TO

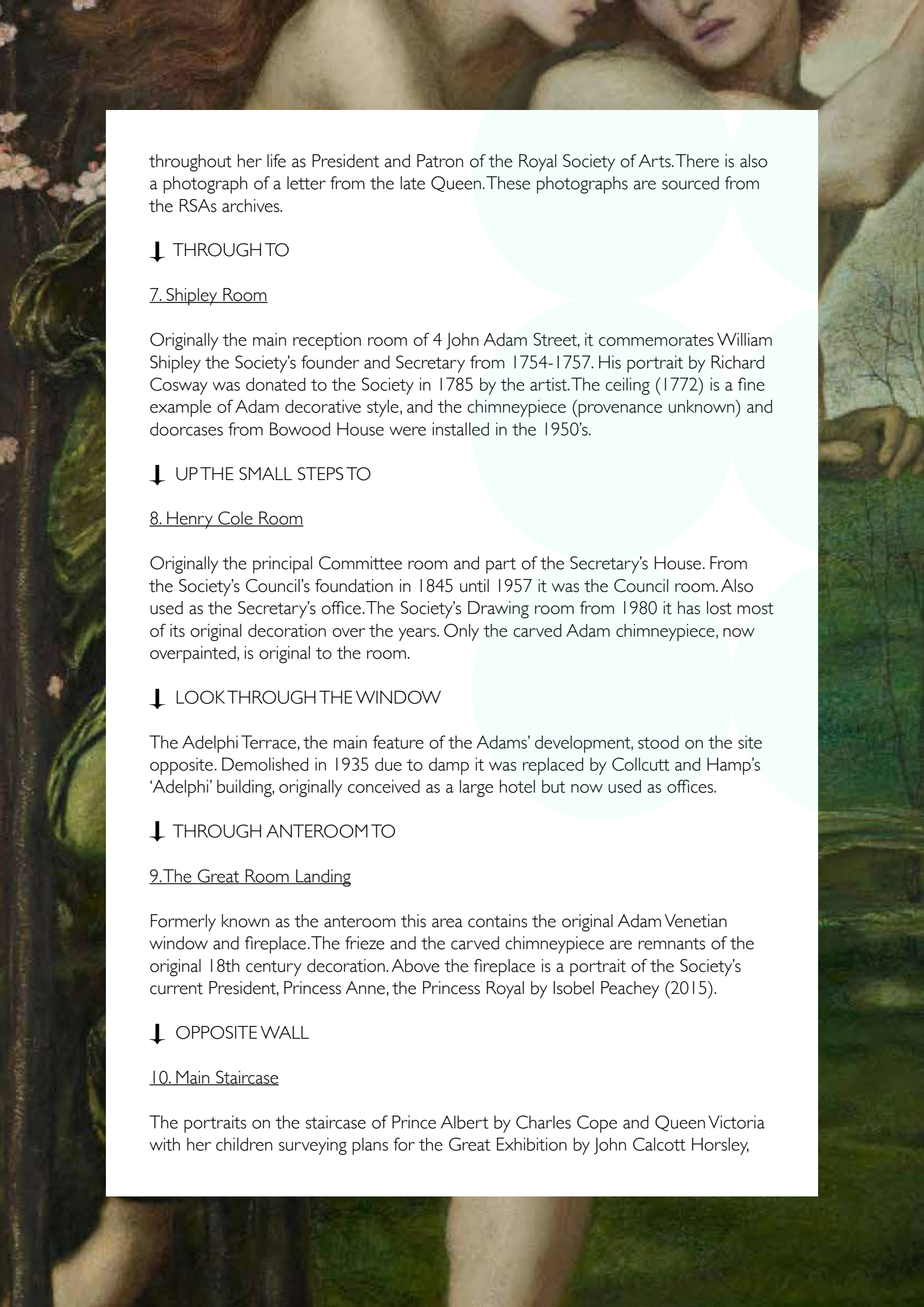
### 6. Queen Elizabeth II Room

In 2023 after the death of Queen Elizabeth II (1926–2022) the room was renamed to commemorate her long association with the Society. From 1947 when the then Princess Elizabeth became the Society's President (1947 -1952).

In 1952 on her accession, she became the first female Patron of the Society and remained so for the entirety of her reign until her death in 2022.

Originally 2 John Adam Street's main drawing room, a substantial private property the room retains its classical Adam character and dimensions. Initially this was the council chamber, and from 1971 the library. It was divided into two small offices and then into a functional committee room in 1979-80.

The fireplace and doorcase are from Bowood House. The life size bronze bust was presented to the Society by the sculptor Raphael Maklout in 1984. The photo display on the wall on the right-hand side depicts Queen Elizabeth in various stages



throughout her life as President and Patron of the Royal Society of Arts. There is also a photograph of a letter from the late Queen. These photographs are sourced from the RSAs archives.

## ↓ THROUGH TO

### 7. Shipley Room

Originally the main reception room of 4 John Adam Street, it commemorates William Shipley the Society's founder and Secretary from 1754-1757. His portrait by Richard Cosway was donated to the Society in 1785 by the artist. The ceiling (1772) is a fine example of Adam decorative style, and the chimneypiece (provenance unknown) and doorcases from Bowood House were installed in the 1950's.

## ↓ UP THE SMALL STEPS TO

### 8. Henry Cole Room

Originally the principal Committee room and part of the Secretary's House. From the Society's Council's foundation in 1845 until 1957 it was the Council room. Also used as the Secretary's office. The Society's Drawing room from 1980 it has lost most of its original decoration over the years. Only the carved Adam chimneypiece, now overpainted, is original to the room.

## ↓ LOOK THROUGH THE WINDOW

The Adelphi Terrace, the main feature of the Adams' development, stood on the site opposite. Demolished in 1935 due to damp it was replaced by Collcutt and Hamp's 'Adelphi' building, originally conceived as a large hotel but now used as offices.

## ↓ THROUGH ANTEROOM TO

### 9. The Great Room Landing

Formerly known as the anteroom this area contains the original Adam Venetian window and fireplace. The frieze and the carved chimneypiece are remnants of the original 18th century decoration. Above the fireplace is a portrait of the Society's current President, Princess Anne, the Princess Royal by Isobel Peachey (2015).

## ↓ OPPOSITE WALL

### 10. Main Staircase

The portraits on the staircase of Prince Albert by Charles Cope and Queen Victoria with her children surveying plans for the Great Exhibition by John Calcott Horsley,



were commissioned by Members of the Society as part of their Prince Albert memorial (President 1843-1861).

The wall panels either side of Prince Albert's portrait list winners of the Society's Albert Medal instituted in 1863 and first awarded to Sir Rowland Hill (1864) for the introduction of the Penny Post.

On the opposite wall are listed the Benjamin Franklin medal winners. Instituted in 1956, 200 years after Franklin became a member, it was originally awarded to those who have forwarded the cause of Anglo-American understanding in the fields of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Franklin was invited to become a Corresponding Member of the Society of Arts (as it was then known) by William Shipley in 1756.

The other panels display the names of Chairmen of the Council (our governing body until 2003), Secretaries, Directors, Executive Directors, CEO's and Presidents.

The staircase originally continued up to a second floor and was altered during Arthur Bolton's 1922 redevelopment.

The mosaic that replaced the original Portland stone stairs and landing was laid by James Powell and sons in 1874. This was hidden under carpet until it was revealed and repaired as part of the 2012 refurbishment.

The light installed during the 2012 refurbishment was designed by Sebastien Noel at Troika, a London design group.

## ↓ THOUGHTO

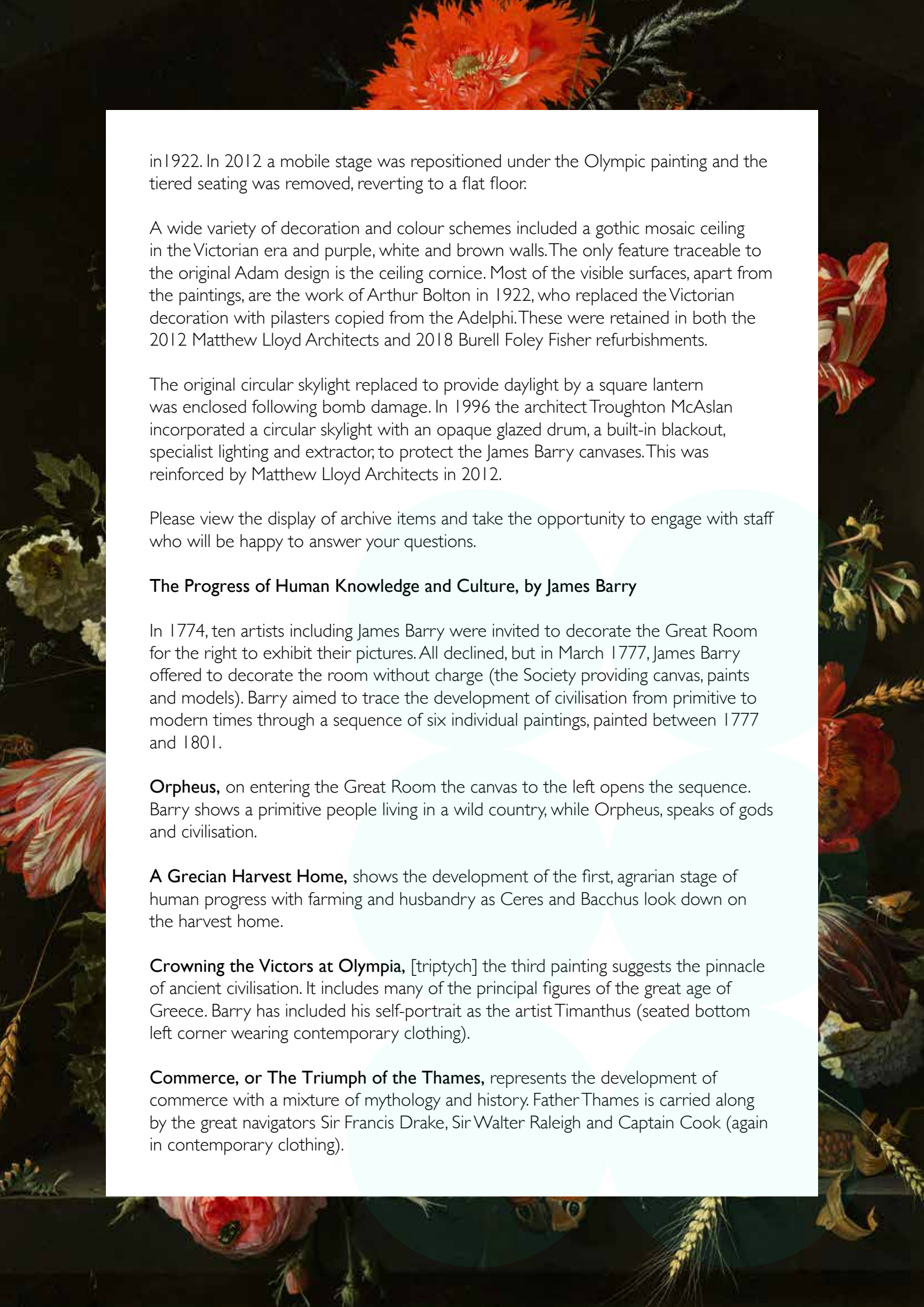
### 11. Great Room

Designed as an assembly room for members' discussions and debates and the presentation of awards and prizes. In its first 100 years, the Society ran its Premium Award Scheme encouraging invention, innovation and improvement in six key areas: Agriculture, Manufactures, Mechanics, Chemistry, Colonies and Trade and the Polite Arts.

By the middle of the 19th century, the scheme evolved into a programme of lectures and dissemination of valuable information through published Journals.

On entering the room to the right is a portrait of our first President. Lord Folkestone by Thomas Gainsborough (1770) and to the left our second, Lord Romney by Joshua Reynolds (1776).

Alterations in seating arrangements have reflected changes of function. Until 1863 the podium was below Barry's Olympic Greece triptych. The floor was flat with seating in an arc facing the podium. Right facing tiered, permanent seating was added



in 1922. In 2012 a mobile stage was repositioned under the Olympic painting and the tiered seating was removed, reverting to a flat floor:

A wide variety of decoration and colour schemes included a gothic mosaic ceiling in the Victorian era and purple, white and brown walls. The only feature traceable to the original Adam design is the ceiling cornice. Most of the visible surfaces, apart from the paintings, are the work of Arthur Bolton in 1922, who replaced the Victorian decoration with pilasters copied from the Adelphi. These were retained in both the 2012 Matthew Lloyd Architects and 2018 Burrell Foley Fisher refurbishments.

The original circular skylight replaced to provide daylight by a square lantern was enclosed following bomb damage. In 1996 the architect Troughton McAslan incorporated a circular skylight with an opaque glazed drum, a built-in blackout, specialist lighting and extractor, to protect the James Barry canvases. This was reinforced by Matthew Lloyd Architects in 2012.

Please view the display of archive items and take the opportunity to engage with staff who will be happy to answer your questions.

### **The Progress of Human Knowledge and Culture, by James Barry**

In 1774, ten artists including James Barry were invited to decorate the Great Room for the right to exhibit their pictures. All declined, but in March 1777, James Barry offered to decorate the room without charge (the Society providing canvas, paints and models). Barry aimed to trace the development of civilisation from primitive to modern times through a sequence of six individual paintings, painted between 1777 and 1801.

**Orpheus**, on entering the Great Room the canvas to the left opens the sequence. Barry shows a primitive people living in a wild country, while Orpheus, speaks of gods and civilisation.

**A Grecian Harvest Home**, shows the development of the first, agrarian stage of human progress with farming and husbandry as Ceres and Bacchus look down on the harvest home.

**Crowning the Victors at Olympia**, [triptych] the third painting suggests the pinnacle of ancient civilisation. It includes many of the principal figures of the great age of Greece. Barry has included his self-portrait as the artist Timanthus (seated bottom left corner wearing contemporary clothing).

**Commerce, or The Triumph of the Thames**, represents the development of commerce with a mixture of mythology and history. Father Thames is carried along by the great navigators Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh and Captain Cook (again in contemporary clothing).

**The Distribution of Premiums in the Society of Arts**, shows many of the people involved in the early years of the Society that includes the founder William Shipley seated at the left edge holding his 'Plan' for the Society. Also includes Lords Folkestone and Romney, the first two Presidents of the Society, the Prince of Wales and Dr Samuel Johnson. In the centre and highlighted by Barry are early female members, Mrs Montagu the bluestocking and female prize-winners, as women could become members from day one, unlike other organisations.

**Elysium, or the State of Final Retribution**, is the final painting where Barry highlights the great and the good men who were cultivators and benefactors of mankind. Famous faces include Archimedes, Newton, Columbus, Socrates, Aristotle, Alfred the Great, Charles I, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Hogarth, Rubens, Reynolds, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. The bottom right corner shows 'Tartarus', where evil characters receive eternal punishment, Barry did not name names but groups i.e. misers.

\*A comprehensive analysis of the paintings is available in 'The Great Room Murals'.

↓ LEAVE BY REAR DOORWAY ONTO STAIRCASE LANDING

### 12. Atrium Staircase

This area was originally an open courtyard to the rear of the House, disconnected from the original house. It was converted into a glazed atrium during the 1988 -1990 development by Green Lloyd Architects who introduced the staircase to connect the Great Room and first floor rooms with the vaults and the Durham House Street entrance. The award-winning contemporary staircase features a light steel structure with treads of unpolished oak that highlights the unaltered rear elevation of the property.

↓ CONTINUE TO BOTTOM OF STAIRS

### 13. Suthers Court

The Society took possession of the vaults in 1982, and as there was no vertical connection between them and the main House, they were sub-let to tenants for warehousing.

The original York slabs were retained, and structural brickwork was sandblasted. An 'Ancient lights' sign refers to the right of the Society to daylight by restricting the erection of adjoining buildings too close to existing windows.

The 'contemporary' portrait of the Queen is by Justin Mortimer, the 1991 BP Portrait Award winner. The late Queen selected him to paint her portrait after seeing his portfolio, which included portraits of David Bowie and Harold Pinter. Mortimer was commissioned by the RSA to commemorate 50 years of royal patronage.

↓ GO DOWN STAIRCASE TO

#### 14. The Vaults 1 - 4

When the Society took possession of the Vaults in 1982 there was no vertical connection with the main House. Between 1988-90 this staircase cut out of a narrow vault for the descent into the four vaults at floor level -3.

The vaults ran from under the Society's House and the Royal Terrace at the level of the Thames, much closer to the river before the construction of the Victoria Embankment. They were designed as a base for the Adams' terraces of private residences and were intended for warehouse storage.

↓ TURN RIGHT INTO VAULT 1

Between 1988-90 the vaults were comprehensively redeveloped as a conference facility. Vault 1 would become the Fellow's dining room, later a restaurant in 1992 until 2018 when the restaurant was replaced by an extended Coffee House on -1.

For many years wine was brought up the river in casks and bottled in cellars. This vault was used as a wine cellar by Sichel & Sons, and you can still see the bin numbers on the left wall. Currently the space is used today for exhibitions from an array of artists.

↓ EXIT INTO VAULTS 2-4

The area has a raised modular floor of oak timbers. The spaces are lit from the floor, from uprights suspended in the ceilings and low voltage spotlights. Brickwork has been sandblasted and sealed to create an intimate space, which is used today for conferences, meetings, press launches and weddings.

↓ RETURN UP THE STAIRS, TURN INTO THE DURHAM STREET AUDITORIUM

#### 15. Durham Street Auditorium

When the Adam Brothers built the Society's House on the site of Old Durham House, they had to consider the public right of way running from the Strand to the River Thames.

In the Mid-19th century horses were used to drag coal wagons up this steep passage to the Strand with some vaults used as stables. Cows were also kept here to provide fresh supplies of milk to the area. The right of way was abolished by act of Parliament in the 1920s. The roadway was converted by Green Lloyd into a fully equipped auditorium seating 60. The original road and stone setts have been preserved and these can be seen from the walkway to the rear.

## ↓ LEAVE BY THE OTHER DOOR

### 16. Library

The previous RSA Library was situated in a purpose-converted, air-conditioned space on levels -1 and -2, designed by architect Brian Paver. The 2018 redevelopment of floors -1 and -2 extended the library in -2 into many of the smaller rooms and the re-designed Long Gallery where the main Library had previously been located. These facilities offer improved space for Fellows and visitors networking.

The library holds a contemporary collection of books and journals relevant to our work and history, with an emphasis on material that relates to our Design for Life mission.

## ↓ EXIT THROUGH DOORWAY

### 17. Long Gallery

The Long Gallery was created as part of the Burrell Foley Fisher (2018) redevelopment and incorporates the previous library reading room into an extended space for reflection and collaboration. The 'RSA 1754 – 2018' three panel mural is 43 feet in length and was created by Andrew Park and Suzanne Mills. With a light touch, it is a witty interpretation of the Society's history through its activities and people.

## ↓ TURN LEFT THROUGH DOORWAY AND DOWN STEPS

### 18. The Steps, Dr Cross and Dame Caroline Haslett Room

A mini amphitheater space available to book for small-scale presentations or collaboration sessions.

## ↓ UP 'STEPS' STAIRS, TURN LEFT ALONG GALLERY

Once you come up the stairs you can turn left and check out the Dame Caroline Haslett Collaboration Room and the Dr Cross Room. These are both collaboration spaces in which fellows and other visitors to the RSA can gather and discuss ideas and collaborate.

Dame Caroline Haslett room, next to the Dr Cross room was named after distinguished Fellow Dame Caroline Haslett in 2022. Dame Caroline Haslett was an electrical engineer and an electrical industry administrator. She did much work to encourage and persuade engineering institutions to let women sit their examinations and for companies to employ women. Haslett was the first secretary of the Women's Engineering Society, founded in 1919, and she edited the society's journal, *Woman Engineer*, from 1919 to 1932. She founded the Electrical Association for Women in

1924, directing it until 1956. Appointed DBE in 1947, she was the only woman to be appointed a member of the British Electricity Authority upon its inception. Her wish upon dying was to be cremated via electricity, which was done at the City of London crematorium, where her ashes were scattered in its garden of remembrance. Caroline Haslett was elected a fellow in 1934, and in 1941 she became the first female member of its governing Council. She gave lectures to the Society in January 1941 on 'Women in Industry', for which she was awarded a silver medal, and in April 1947 on 'Electricity in the Home'

The next room along is the Dr Cross Room. In 2018, the room was named after Dr Neil Earl Cross (b. 1945). A scientist by training, he chose to make his career in business, particularly venture capital. He was Executive Director of one of the UK's leading equity finance houses, where he spent 27 years before retiring in 1996. He was elected RSA Council Chairman in 2001 and was a member of the RSA Advisory Council until 2007. He advocated that the Society must be relevant and reflect wider society as it is today, without moving away from the original philosophy of the founders. Dr Neil Cross was elected RSA Council Chairman in 2001 and was a member of the RSA Advisory Council until 2007. He advocated that the Society must be relevant and reflect wider society as it is today, without moving away from the original philosophy of the founders.

Turning right at the top of the Steps will take you to the Archive Room and through to the Coffee House.

### 19. Old Archive Room

Archive 'B' was originally one of the archive's strongrooms. As part of the 2018 redevelopment, this space was redesigned as an extension of the RSA Coffee House. The large strongroom door was replaced by an image on glass of one of Dickinson's prints from the Great Exhibition of 1851.

\*The QR code will offer information on all the artworks displayed in the room.

### ↓ THROUGH TO THE COFFEE HOUSE

### 20. The Coffee House and Gerard Room

In 1992 the Gerard Bar was opened in this space, offering food and drink to Fellows. Named after benefactor Ron Gerard, it was redesigned in 2008 and in 2018. Following this refurbishment, it was initially named Rawthmells Coffee House (after the first meeting place of the Society in 1754). More recently it became the Coffee House and in 2023 underwent another refurbishment.

\*Refreshments are available, so why not pop in before completing your tour?

## ↓ ONTO ATRIUM GALLERY, UP STAIRS

### 21. Benjamin Franklin Room

Until the mid-19th century this was the Repository or Model Room and was used to exhibit models of prize-winning submissions. It was later converted into a library and reading room and is now used as a meeting room and conference facility.

It was named the Benjamin Franklin Room in 1967 to mark the Society's long association with Franklin and the USA. Franklin was an active member and supported the institution in its early years during the 16 years he lived in London. He resided in Craven Street, and you can visit the only surviving Franklin property in the world today as part of London Open House.

Four columns in 1922 replaced Victorian showcases installed in 1863, a replacement for four Adam, Doric columns that supported the Great Room above.

The marble chimneypieces were originally installed in the Great Room but were relocated here during the 1920's refurbishment. The light fitting installed in 2012 was designed by Sebastien Noel based on Franklin's bi-focal lens.

The bust of Benjamin Franklin on the far wall is by Jean-Jacques Caffieri in 1777 and was presented to the Society of Arts in 1791.

## End of Tour

Thank you for exploring the RSA House, we hope you enjoyed your tour.

There is a printed tour guide available at reception, if you would like to explore the Adam brothers' Adelphi Complex and take a walk down to Benjamin Franklin House in Craven Street

Access almost 270 years of RSA records by searching the RSA archive catalogue on our website or book an appointment with the RSA Archive team to view and research items from the archive.