

Martin Heard “Not Tonight Josephine”



The Empress Joséphine Bonaparte (1763-1814) is best known in this country as the first wife and consort of Napoleon, and is thus overshadowed by one of the most important figures in European Modern history.

However, she is a highly significant figure in her own right in the world of post-Revolutionary and Napoleonic France for her skilful behind the scenes political influence, and more importantly for her extensive patronage of the arts and fashion. In many ways she was the key promoter of the ‘Empire Style’ in painting, interior decoration, furniture, and fashion.

She was also internationally recognised for her interest in, and knowledge of, horticulture, which she developed at her personal residence, the Château de Malmaison near Paris. It was there that she kept her large, high-quality collection of old masters, contemporary art and antique sculpture, and where the lake of the parkland was graced by the first black swans from Australia in Europe.

Martin Heard studied History of Art at Manchester University and afterwards spent three years in the editorial department of a fine art publishing company.

His later career took detour into the world of information technology, during which time he had the opportunity to work and live for several years in both continental Europe and North America.



Having 'retired' from this field of endeavour he now devotes his time to researching mainly English eighteenth and late nineteenth century French art and architecture. He lectures widely with a number of lecture titles that are offered as a study or special interest day programme.

