

## DECEMBER ART APPRECIATION GROUP – Report by Tony Seward

**December's** meeting had a seasonal flavour – Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 'Hunters in the Snow' and a snow scene by Monet ('The Magpie') followed by Botticelli's 'Mystic Nativity' from the National Gallery. The Bruegel, so often reproduced, gained new life from Professor Kloss's detailed analysis, while Monet's uncannily real evocation of winter light raised some debate as to why the crow's shadow doesn't seem to match the bird itself, and why the artist painted it this way.



### **The Magpie**

The 'Mystic Nativity', at first sight a joyous celebration of Christ's birth, with angels singing and dancing in the heavens, and resurrected souls embracing on earth, turns out to be something much darker. It shows the influence on Botticelli of the puritanical friar Savonarola, who sparked a religious frenzy in Florence, burning books, paintings and other 'vanities', and instilling fears of imminent apocalypse in the population.