



WALTON AND HERSHAM
DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY

Newsletter 2014

Chairman's Report - Laurence Shafe

I would like to thank all the members of the committee and other volunteers who have enabled us to benefit from such an exciting programme this year. I am particularly proud of our support for disabled children and the pavilion we have funded at Painshill Park. We also have a long-running programme to record all the churches in our area organised and run by Val Goodhart-Riley. Each church takes two to three years and we are currently working on St Peter's Church, West Molesey. Our work is part of a nationwide programme to record every church in the country and to date 1,690 have been recorded. If you are interested, please contact Val for more information.

This year we donated £1,500 to Painshill Park to enable them to build a large wooden structure that shelters children from the rain. This enables them to sit outside in any weather and engage in art-related projects, such as making charcoal and drawing pictures of the park, sculpting from clay in the park and making musical instruments from materials found in the park.

Next year's programme is now available and the new programme secretary, Anna Foster, is already putting together a lecture programme for 2016. Our 2015 programme includes art inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy* and his love for Beatrice, garden design from the picturesque to Paxton, the history of castle building with some fine examples you can visit, the little-known, fairy-tale region of Karelia, the hidden symbolism of Renaissance art and how

artists have made extraordinary art from everyday objects.

Valerie Woolford has arranged popular trips to Hatfield House, the Freemasons' Hall and John Soane Museum, and Hogarth's House and Osterley Park. Pat Gamba arranged very successful special interest days on Edwin Lutyens and the extraordinary life of Sir Joseph Paxton and this Christmas we will have the history of stained glass. I am delighted that James Moore agreed to take over as treasurer and in the last few months he has carried out the role with great enthusiasm and dedication.

Particular thanks are due to David Taylor and Halina Heyworth. David has been treasurer for the last five years and I would like to thank him for his hard work and diligence. Halina has volunteered to reintroduce a major art tour each year. This is an enormous amount of effort and I hope you will all be supporting Halina's first art tour to Liverpool and the surrounding area. We are starting in the UK to break us in gently and, in subsequent years, we will be venturing overseas.

Finally, it is a sad time for me as after over nine years on the committee, first as programme secretary, then vice-chairman and, for the last three years as chairman, I am stepping down. I have enjoyed my time on the committee but it is now time to hand over to new blood. I would like to wish John Smith every success as the new chairman and I am sure he will enjoy it as much as I have.

Membership Report

This year we were able to offer places to most of last year's Waiting List, and we have enjoyed meeting these new members at lectures and at February's 'coffee/tea and biscuits' meeting. To those now patiently waiting on the Waiting List, we will soon be processing the subscription replies, and should then be in a position to offer full membership to those at the top of that List.

It is always a pleasure to welcome members and guests at lectures. We are very happy to encourage members to bring friends and acquaintances - after all, these are potential future members - but please

remember that it is really helpful if you give advance notice.

If you are a UK taxpayer, I do hope that you have considered Gift Aiding your subscription - this year our Gift Aid money went towards saving Van Dyck's Self-portrait.

I am fortunate to have great support from my fellow Membership Secretary, Diane, and from all those who help me on the 'front desk'. I hope you have enjoyed our programme as much as I have, and we look forward to seeing you all next year!

Margaret Sale

Report from the Treasurer



Our relatively large and stable membership participates in both Visits and Special Interest Days, ensuring we can run a diverse programme of events without using reserves.

The same steady income also enables the Society to continue its support of Young Arts and Church Recording. Part of the annual subscription we all pay goes to NADFAS. This payment attracts Gift Aid and NADFAS shares the rebate they receive with us. Each year we put this refund towards saving works of art for the nation, or similar projects. To date we have

received, in total, just under £1,700 from NADFAS. If you pay UK income tax, but have not yet filled in a WHDFAS Gift Aid form, you can get a form from me. If you have already completed a form you do not need to do so again.

I would particularly like to thank David Taylor for his time and patience in explaining the nuances of WHDFAS accounting, and Barry Wilkinson for reviewing the final accounts. Between them, David and Barry made the handover an almost painless experience.

James Moore

Programme Report



This year's eclectic choice of lectures took us from the splendour of England's Tudor palaces to the silk-filled Bangkok home of a mysterious American art collector.

Early in the year, at a memorable lecture by Rev Dr Christopher Herbert, we admired the beauty and stillness of the art of Rogier Van der Weyden, and at the height of summer we were entertained by Libby Horner with a talk celebrating the views and sounds of the British coastline. The secrets and myths surrounding Freemasonry were revealed to us in an engaging way by Pauline Chakmakjian, and Lois Oliver guided us through the story of Orpheus and Eurydice in an erudite lecture richly illustrated with paintings and music.

We learnt much from Alexandra Drysdale about the use of colour blue in art - from the rare and

expensive lapis lazuli of the Wilton Diptych to today's widely accessible synthetic blue paints. While Lars Tharp's September lecture focussed on the genius and humour of Hogarth, Nicholas Watkin's October talk concentrates on the dramatic art of Caravaggio. This year's programme will end with a look at the British landscape through the eyes of Gainsborough, Hockney, Constable and Stanley Spencer.

We aim to cover a wide range of art subjects and interests, and the lecture programme for 2015 reflects this. However, if we keep missing your favourite artist, architect or composer, please let us know and we'll try to include them in our future programmes. I would like to wish Anna Foster every success as your new Programme Secretary and I know she has an exciting line-up of lectures for 2016!

Halina Heyworth

Teas



I have a band of happy souls who help me with the teas
They never moan or get upset, they're only there to please.
But some may think that we're a clique and no one else can join us
Just think again and volunteer, it's much more fun than PROBUS.
My thanks to those who help each month
And dish out all the biscuits
Who pour the teas and dry the cups
Your name upon our list would show
that you're prepared to risk it.
We're not Starbucks or Costa
Earl Grey is quite beyond us
But good old English Breakfast tea
Is served by all our rosta.

Tony Collins

Church Recording

The recording of the Church of St. Peter, West Molesey, is almost finished, and the lengthy process of checking and compilation has started. Recording has been aided by experts in stained glass, heraldry, the bells and the tower clock. We haven't decided on our next church but will let you know when we do.

This year's Church Crawl takes us to Lower Kingswood, Chaldon and Bletchingley.

Do let us know if you would like to join us.

Val Goodhart-Riley

Visits 2014



Hatfield House

In April we visited Hatfield House, one of the ten Treasure Houses of England. After a slow journey we arrived late but happily the management rearranged our day, allowing us time to enjoy our visit comfortably. We had excellent, informative guides to the Jacobean house and its history, and access to all the gardens, for which John Tradescant had travelled Europe to collect plant specimens.

In July we visited Freemasons' Hall in Holborn and the Sir John Soane's Museum. At Freemasons' headquarters we had an excellent guided tour and were shown the vast ornate halls and corridors, and were introduced, almost, to the mysteries of the freemasonry movement and its moral lessons and ceremonies based on the building of Solomon's Temple.

In the afternoon we divided into two groups to squeeze into Sir John Soane's quirky house beside Lincoln's Inn Fields, overflowing with eccentric fascination. Soane had bequeathed his home to the nation to be kept as he had left it. His design included the ingenious use of mirrors and windows to display his extraordinary collection of ancient and classical architectural fragments. Recent restoration is almost

complete and we were able to see the main living rooms, and also the Crypt with the sarcophagus, the library and the amazing Picture Room where over 100 pictures are displayed on hinged screens - Soane's 'movable planes'. The paintings included works by Canaletto and Hogarth.

In October we will visit William Hogarth's House in West London, once his country retreat. The house, a more domestic home celebrating his life and work, was fully restored and opened to the public in 2011. Then we explore Osterley Park and House, the only stately home in London. It was created in the late 18th century from a Tudor mansion by the bankers, Francis and Robert Child who employed the architect Robert Adam.

Val Woolford

Audio Visual

As always, the members of the audio - visual team have worked hard to ensure that the show goes on. They turn up an hour in advance every month to set up the computer, audio equipment and the screen. Some of the lecturers are becoming more proficient in their use of technology using sound and videos in their presentations but everyone has risen to the challenges.

Our only new acquisition this year was a green laser pointer which members have found to be more easily seen from a distance. If anyone would like to join our friendly team, do come and speak to one of us.

Lindy Wilson

Young Arts

Our Society helped fund an outdoor workshop in Painshill Park with a donation of £1,500 to enable children with special educational needs to engage in art projects in the open air. The shelter also creates an outdoor exhibition space for permanent and ephemeral art work created by children and young people.

The covered outdoor workshop space is adjacent to the Education Centre and enables children to access the great outdoors and take part in natural art workshops. The space, which will be decorated with work created by children, will be used by the thousands of children who attend educational activities at Painshill and will provide a permanent usable, accessible outdoor exhibition and workshop, especially for those with special education needs and mobility difficulties.

The impressive structure was built in-house by Painshill's own Landscape Team and the Education

Department plans to use the outdoor space for activities such as painting and making sculptures using natural materials.



Lindy Wilson/Halina Heyworth

Special Interest Days

In September 2013 we had a fascinating day with Peter Darty on Art Deco. His slides of 1930 hotel interiors, including the Savoy and Dorchester, were stunning. He finished the day identifying objects brought in by members. In December Philip and Rosemary Banham entertained us at our Festive Supper with "A Victorian Christmas through the Magic Lantern". In Spring 2014 Professor Clyde Binfield, head of History at Sheffield University, came to tell us about the life of Sir Edwin Lutyens. He took us from his working life with Gertrude Jekyll right through to his palatial buildings in India at the time of the Raj - one of the most iconic buildings designed by Lutyens is the British Embassy in Washington, USA finished in 1930 - still home of the British Ambassador. In September we welcomed back

Edward Saunders. His subject was Sir Joseph Paxton - from Paxton's gardening days at Chatsworth to his wonderful glasshouse designs, including Crystal Palace - and his subsequent knighthood. Our lecturer for the festive supper, Diana Lloyd, will be talking about the Christmas story through stained glass.

2015 looks to be an exciting year with Special Interest Days covering "Artistic highlights and icons of New York", an "Illustrated history of glass" and the "History of pantomime from ancient to modern times" for our Festive supper. I hope we can look forward to your support. If anyone would like to suggest a topic for a Special Interest Day, please let us know.

Pat Gamba

To Laurence Shafe - thank you !

While Chairman, I was forever watching out for Members who had recently retired and who might join the Committee. In 2005, only a few of us were computer literate and I realised what an advantage it was. On visits, I used to sit next to Members I didn't know to find out more about them and at one Special Interest Day at the Riverhouse Barn, I really struck lucky! After a tip off that 'Val Shafe's husband was doing an Art History degree at Birkbeck College', I asked if I could join them. Shortly after.... Might Laurence like to join the Committee? Fortunately that Special Interest Day had been so successful it wasn't too difficult to persuade him.

Even I, who'd been using computers since the early 1990s, was surprised when Laurence asked if he could set up a website for us. This was at a time when NADFAS House didn't think its members would want a national website. However, a year later, there I was, on the train to Cardiff for the National AGM about to collect the very first prize awarded for a Society's website. Laurence clearly enjoyed the role of Programme Secretary selecting interesting lecture programmes, which his successors have managed to continue, followed by Vice Chairman and Chairman so, from now on, Laurence, after nine years on the Committee, you can just enjoy all that NADFAS offers without the responsibility.

Pamela Scott - President

Membership Card

You will have noticed the small NADFAS Membership card in your renewal pack. It can be used at certain museums and art exhibitions to get a discount so remember to carry it with you.

Guests

We're always happy for Members to bring guests and for Waiting List members to come to lectures. Just remember to contact Margaret Sale, our Membership Secretary (or Diane Ball), and arrive with £5. For those "on-line", it is more convenient to receive notification by e-mail: margaret.sale@whdfas.org.uk or diane.ball@whdfas.org.uk. However, you can of course, still ring Margaret on: 01932 840583 or Diane on 01784 254792.

Payment for Visits and Special Interest Days

May we remind members that regrettably we are unable to accept cash and only cheques for a maximum of two people can be accepted for Visits and Special Interest Days.

As you know from our many appeals during the year, we are keen to invite new volunteers to assist the Committee. If anyone would like to help us, you would be more than welcome - why not come to one of our meetings and see for yourself! Please talk to a member of the Committee if you are interested.

The Committee