November 2006

NADFAS

Dear Members

It really doesn’t seem long since the excitement of the new millennium and here we are almost into 2007. Your Programme has been fixed for several months with one exception that the eagle eyed will notice. Unfortunately, our speaker for May has cancelled all her lectures next year because of family illness. We’re delighted to welcome instead Launce Gribbin who will speak on Strawberry Hill: the house and its place in the Gothic Revival. Strawberry Hill is the house Horace Walpole (son of our first Prime Minister) built for himself at Twickenham. He converted a modest villa into his own version of a Gothic fantasy. In 1757 Walpole established a private press at Strawberry Hill, printing fine editions of the classics and some of his own works including ‘The Castle of Otranto’, a ‘Gothic’ novel. As the building is used by St Mary’s College, tours only take place on Sundays during the summer months.

The West Surrey Area which we’re part of, now has its own web site which is www.nadfas-west surreyarea.org.uk. Those of you who are keen to attend more events than we offer may well find something to your liking advertised there, which is undersubscribed elsewhere. I guess that increasingly, events that are undersubscribed will be featured on the Area Web site. That’s certainly one of the main aims and Laurence Shafe has added a link from our web site - see page 4. Click on Useful Links & then note NADFAS.

Pamela Scott

Our Visits this year

Where did we go in 2006? We had a brilliant day with Alan Read walking from Tate Modern past 33 churches having an ‘element’ of Wren & ending at St. Paul’s Cathedral. The sun shone yet again for our visit to the unique Henry Moore Foundation. After a three year wait we were invited to Highgrove. For the lucky ones in the draw for the 25 places we had such a good day. Our final visit was to the little known Government Art Collection preceded by tea at the National Portrait Gallery. On the way home on the coach, there is always animated conversation.

Doreen Macaulay

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CityArts
- An initiative aimed at London based 25-45 year olds with an interest in the Arts
- Participants meet three times a year for a lecture by an expert in that field
- The £15 fee includes wine and canapés
- Further information is on the main web site www.nadfas.org.uk. Look under News & Events
- Do you have a son or daughter?
Our Young Arts project

Our Young Arts Project for 2006 involved the Hersham Teaching Centre which is a Key Stage 4 Unit catering for pupils in years 10 and 11, i.e. 14-16 year olds. All the pupils have been excluded from main stream school and come to the Centre with no prospect of reintegration.

The aim of the Centre is to help these young people fulfil their potential and build on their confidence and social skills so that when they leave, they will be ready to go on to work or College. Art at Hersham T.C. is one of their strengths and pupils are encouraged to opt for Art as a GCSE subject.

At our July lecture, the children’s artwork was on display and Members were impressed to see the art, the sculpture and cushions that had been designed and made by them, showing real creativity.

This is the first time the Centre had taken work outside for exhibition. The pupils were delighted and amazed to see their work displayed. The staff hope to build on this and use it as added encouragement for the future. Bringing their artwork into the Community and the attendant newspaper coverage has given the Staff and pupils a real boost.

Walton and Hersham DFAS have given the Hersham Teaching Centre a donation of £250 to buy a portable display screen which the Centre believes will be of great help in exhibiting the pupils’ work in the Community.

Adrienne Lumb

Behind the Scenes—the Audio Visual Team

I head up the 3 or 4 members of the Audio visual team, who on Lecture days, meet at the Bricklayers Arms for a light (!) lunch. It’s a fun meeting. At 1.15pm we arrive in the hall to assemble the screen, set up the projector and the audio system. We aim to have the system running so that when the lecturer arrives, the slides can be put in the projector and the lapel mikes fine tuned. We then have a chance to socialise or cope with any problem.

Our Society owns two slide projectors but we’re conscious that the digital revolution is here to stay. However, many of the lecturers are slow to convert. The trend is likely to be that the lecturers will bring their own equipment so this will just leave us to see to the screen and sound.

After four and a half years of choosing and working with the equipment and of being responsible, I feel ready to pass on the reins to someone else within the next year or so.

Please contact me for further information.

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Special Interest Days in 2006

Our two Special Interest Days this year have been very popular. For those of you who haven’t yet been to such a day, we hold them at Riverhouse in Walton. The idea is that instead of a formal lecture for 200 people, the 40 or so people who attend, have two or three lectures with time during the coffee and lunch breaks to speak to the lecturer. We saw some beautiful slides in ‘The Musee d’Orsay and French Impressionism’ presented by Margaret Davis while those who attended ‘Mozart and His World’ presented by Peter Medhurst, were treated to several short pieces played on a keyboard in harpsichord mode, while longer extracts were played on the Riverhouse Steinway. These days are a pleasurable way of making new acquaintances.

Sheila Braham
Church Recording

For over thirty years, groups of NADFAS members have been recording the contents of churches, describing items accurately and researching the history of these if possible. A past Bishop of London said ‘A NADFAS Church Record ensures that the identities of skilful and imaginative craftsmen are preserved for future generations, and is significant not only to church members and scholars but to the community at large.’ It was decided that we would like to take part in this worthwhile venture and in April we started recording the small church of St.

Mary Magdalene in Littleton. We were fortunate that the Claremont Group, who have experience in recording, were happy to join and guide us.

St Mary Magdalene was founded in 1135 by the Benedictine monks of Chertsey Abbey and has a wealth of history for us to record. Our Group meets twice a month from about 10am to 2pm; we work in pairs or more, recording the section we are involved with. The sections cover memorials, metalwork, stonework, woodwork, textiles, painting, library, windows and miscellaneous items.

We are amateurs, just keen to learn, get involved and have an interesting and enjoyable time. We have already learnt a lot about things we would probably never have come across.

The recording will take about three years, but with so many interesting artefacts coming to light it might take longer!

Val Goodhart-Riley

Heritage Volunteers: Garden History Guide at Hampton Court Palace Gardens

In the 1530s Henry VIII began creating at Hampton Court the most resplendent Tudor gardens in England. Following Henry’s death they were simplified. Between 1689 and 1702 the gardens were transformed by William and Mary into another horticultural extravaganza including a Privy Garden which has been fully restored.

In May, having completed my training, I became a volunteer Garden History Guide at the Palace and have since enjoyed taking visiting groups around the gardens. Tours only take place during the summer months, at 14.30h each weekday. Included in the tours are the ‘behind the scenes’ horticultural glasshouses, which are not normally open to visitors.

Mostly, groups number 20 or so - many from abroad. For a garden tour visitors need either a Palace ticket, £12.30 (£10.00) or a Gardens only ticket: £4.00 (£3.00 )

It is a rewarding role which complements my other voluntary garden history work, at Painshill.

Barry Hylton Davies

Afternoon Tea

Refreshments – we’re always on the look out for 3 members a month, to help with serving tea and tidying away after. Do approach any member of the committee.

Payments

Cheque books –
Please pay for Visits and Special Interest Days by individual cheque. At most, we’re prepared to take a cheque for yourself and 2 member friends. It gets very complicated if one of the group drops out and above all, the Treasurer and auditor aren’t happy with cash payments.

Overseas Tours

We had hoped to arrange an overseas tour next year but we wanted to be confident about our tour leader.

In early summer 2008 we shall visit Florence and Caren Saville-Sneath (our guide in 2005) will lead us to St Petersburg in September 08.
More from our Heritage Volunteers

In the Spring, the Tudor Kitchens at Hampton Court had a make-over and five of our members helped out with cleaning the old equipment before it was put into storage. One member was Sally Dick, our Founding Chairman, and here’s part of her report.

‘Everything from the fires, the spits, the fire dogs, the stools and the bowls, the enormous cooking pots and the ladies have all been dusted with soft brushes, and the dust sucked gently into vacuum cleaners. The nozzles of the vacuum hoses were even covered by gauze to prevent anything inappropriate being sucked up. Each piece had to be wiped over with a special wax polish, as recommended by the British Museum, and polished with a soft cloth. Finally, each article was numbered, wrapped carefully, and labelled in order to be put into storage.

Each pewter plate and flagon was cleaned with cotton wool and surgical spirit, dried with a soft cloth, and then coated with the special wax and polished. I was amazed by the sheer weight and size of these pewter items, and indeed the vast numbers of them. The kitchens could prepare food for up to 2000 each day.

The conservators were delightful and thoughtful and surprisingly young, and I was touched by how grateful they were to us for helping.

Zoe Brennan, our Visits Secretary is also a volunteer at Hampton Court Palace. As well as helping in the Tudor Kitchens, she acted as a Steward at the Open House weekend last September. Apartment 39 which had been the Housekeeper’s lodgings and then the home of Princess Fredericka of Hanover was open to the public that weekend.

Visits in 2007

We feel that some of our visits need a little explanation.

When we visit Richmond Theatre to see Eugene Onegin by Tchaikovsky performed by Riverside Opera, we shall not provide transport because it makes the ticket price disproportionately high; I’m sorry that this may exclude some of you. However, when we take names for tickets in January, we shall have a list of those offering space in their car. By the same token, this visit is open to members and their friends, all at the group rate. The opera will be a traditional production.

Some of you know that Pamela Scott has been a volunteer guide at the Foundling Museum since it opened in Brunswick Square over 2 years ago. When we visit, she will lead the tour. The Foundling Hospital first took in babies in the 1740s and we hear that story but the Museum also has a splendid collection of paintings donated to the Hospital by friends of Hogarth who saw the newly built ‘exhibition space’ in the Foundling Hospital as a good place to display their work. The afternoon visit will be to the Banqueting House in Whitehall built by Inigo Jones with magnificent ceiling paintings by Rubens. It is all that is left of the great Palace of Whitehall which was destroyed by fire in 1698. It is also the site of the only royal execution in England’s history. We shall travel by coach.

Eltham Palace is the epitome of 1930s chic. It was owned by the Courtauld family and built in the latest fashion reminding contemporaries of ocean liners. While in 1930s mood, suddenly, through a Chinese sliding screen you find yourself in the medieval Great Hall. Given good weather we hope to enjoy the gardens. We shall of course travel by coach.

After the popularity of the London Walk last year, we’ve invited Alan Read to lead another one. This year’s topic is Legal London; we shall be taken by coach — and it’s lovely to have it to bring us home after all that walking.