**Chairman’s Report - John Smith**

This is my second report as Chairman, and I would like to thank all our members who enthusiastically enjoy and take part in the many activities the Society organises.

Together with Claremont DFAS, we are involved in Church Recording, led by Val Goodhart-Riley. They are currently engaged in recording St Paul’s Church, East Molesey.

I would particularly like to thank the Committee for all their hard work. To Catherine Carter, the Vice Chairman, for supporting me, to Sue Hughes who enthusiastically took on the challenging role of Society Secretary, and to James Moore, the Treasurer, whose help and guidance I greatly appreciate.

The lectures that the Programme Secretary, Anna Foster, organised varied in subject from “Gilbert and Sullivan” to “A Child of Six could do it. A Cartoonist’s View of the Modern World”. Next year’s Programme of Lectures is available and planning for 2018 progresses. Visits Secretary, Val Woolford, organised fantastic outings to, amongst others, “The British Library and Wellcome Foundation”. Pat Crisp organised very successful Special Interest days, including one on “Tribal Rugs”, which, alas, was poorly attended.

As with all events, long-term planning is essential, and sometimes challenging and changing at late stages. Members’ support for events is therefore greatly appreciated.

Tony Collins, and his “Tea Team”, together with Lindy Wilson and her Audio Visual crew, ensure that Lectures work effectively. The dedication of Margaret Sale and Diane Ball with membership and renewals (including the Newsletter, Programme card and sticky labels) enables the Society to function effectively and efficiently.

Halina Heyworth organised the very successful tour to Dresden in May. We hope to venture to Yorkshire in 2017. “Young Arts” is also organised by Halina, and your Society is funding “Art Bursaries” for seven children at the Riverhouse Barn. In addition, we have provided funding for “Art in Mind” at the Lightbox in Woking, and the “Mount Felix” tapestry at the Riverhouse Barn.

Lastly, can I pay thanks to all the other volunteers who give of their own time to the Society.

We look forward to another exciting year in 2017.

**Membership Report**

Last year, you may remember, your 2016 membership card was sent to you directly from NADFAS House, sponsored by The Folio Society. This experiment is not being repeated! This year you will find your 2017 NADFAS membership card in this mailing, together with the Newsletter, Programme Card showing details of next year’s Lectures, Visits and Special Interest Days, and sticky labels for your diary.

During the past year we were fortunate to have enjoyed many varied lectures, Visits and SIDds. Please share news of our Society’s activities with your family and friends and let them know that we welcome guests to our lectures - with notice if possible. We are always pleased to answer enquiries about membership and our programme.

I thank Diane for her support and all those who help on the ‘front desk’. Why not volunteer to help in this way - it’s a really good way of catching up with everyone

**Margaret Sale**

**Church Recording**

We finished and presented the record of St Peter’s Church in West Molesey to the Church and also prior to this we brought it to a lecture and presented it to the members. All copies have now been sent to NADFAS House who will send them on to the appropriate places such as the V & A museum. A certificate of congratulations has been received from NADFAS and will appear on our the notice board. Recording at St Paul’s East Molesey is going well and as usual we do enjoy it.

**Val Goodhart-Riley**
Report from the Treasurer

Annual membership fees covered monthly lecture costs of speakers’ fees and hall hire, but will not continue to do so as rising costs rise and a smaller membership reduces income. To do everything we currently do, such as support of Young Arts and Church Recording, the Committee proposed a £5 increase in fees to £40. This is the first increase since WHDFAS was formed 15 years ago. Visits and Special Interest Days were well supported, and entirely self-funding. We had no backup if our aging projector or computer failed, so we used some of our reserves to buy newer equipment. If you pay income tax, but are not registered for Gift Aid, I would encourage you to get a form from me. Gift Aid applies to that part of your membership fee paid to NADFAS, and they share their rebate with us. If you are already registered, you do not need to do so again. Lastly my thanks to Peter Hare for reviewing the Annual Accounts on our behalf.

James Moore

Special Interest Days

We have had an interesting year; last September we had a lively lecture from Andy McConnell taking us through 5000 years of glass and telling us about his interesting career and involvement in glass. In December our Christmas Supper got us in the mood for Christmas with an entertaining lecture “Oh Yes It Is” by Jane Tapley when we explored the history of pantomime.

In March 2016 Brian MacDonald told us about his life in Iran and Afghanistan amongst the nomadic tribes learning about the history and meanings of weaving the beautiful rugs and carpets. He bought along rugs from his own collection and gave assessment of members’ own rugs.

I hope you will join us in the coming year, as you can see from the new programme we have an interesting time ahead. If you have any suggestions or particular interests please let us know.

Pat Crisp

Teas

As we have now finished another year I would like to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely the teams of refreshment helpers for their wonderful efforts in providing the tea and biscuits which round off the lecture afternoons.

Without their help, members would depart at the end of the talk and miss the chance to meet and have a good chat and a nice cuppa to round off the afternoon. It is not an arduous task and judging from the laughter and banter coming from the kitchen, quite enjoyable. It could be an ideal chance for newer members to enrol their circle of friends in the Association.

I’m happy to confirm that in spite of rumours to the contrary, there are vacancies in this department and I can conduct informal interviews on a monthly basis on a Thursday afternoon or by telephone at my home!!

So thanks again to our tea makers and servers without your presence the afternoon would be that much poorer.

Tony Collins

Audio Visual

This year has been rather troublesome with a mixture of lecturers bringing corrupted files of their lectures to ‘difficult to detect’ software problems. We have recently checked out the equipment and look forward to a better year in 2017.

The audio visual team are dedicated to producing the best possible and we thank them for all the work they do. None of us is getting any younger and some of the team do have health issues. Would you be prepared to join the team? Helping putting up and taking down the screen or assisting with the audio or visual setup. Please speak to one of the team.

Lindy Wilson
Programme Report

Our first lecture in 2016 was Eveline Eaton’s “Dresden Today - Art and Architecture”, opportunely replacing the original lecture as the Society's tour of Dresden was in May. Those lucky enough to be taking the trip had a good preparation whereas the rest of us were given a taste of what we would be missing. February’s lecture by Pamela Halford compared and contrasted the lives and work of two contemporary female impressionist painters - Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt. Dominic Riley’s “The Book as Art” enchanted us with the design of pop-up books and other 3-dimensional book forms. Peter Medhurst’s talk “I Am the Very Model” showed how the parody and satire in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas took inspiration from the celebrities, politicians, social mores and the class system of the day. In “Gardens in Wartime” Twigs Way focused on suburban gardens, public spaces and allotments to show how gardens and plants were used as symbols of hope, patriotism and renewal during both world wars. Our June lecture was replaced at the last minute when Barry Venning kindly stepped in and entertained us with his talk “A Child of 6 Could Do It”, looking at modern art through the eyes of cartoonists. Sarah Kelly’s lecture on Bruegel showed us his scenes of country life in the context of the turbulent history of the 16th century and highlighted some of the paintings’ details whose significance is often lost to the viewer. In September after the summer break we looked forward to Toby Faber’s “Cremona and the Golden Age of Violin-making” with illustrations and recorded music. Angela Findlay will talk on The Role of the Arts in the Cycle of Crime, Prison and Re-offending” through her experience as a professional artist and a teacher in these institutions. Our last lecture for 2016 will be Jon Cannon’s “The Secret Language of Sacred Spaces” explaining the architecture of the major faiths and how it is shaped by their rituals and beliefs.

Anna Foster

Tours and Young Arts

Forty members of our Society took part in a memorable five day Tour of Dresden, Meissen and Saxony Switzerland in May 2016. Among the highlights were the visits to Dresden’s splendid Old Masters Picture Gallery and Palace, Meissen Porcelain Manufacture, Frederic the Great’s Sanssouci Palace in Potsdam and a steamer cruise on the Elbe. World class art, music, beautiful landscape, an accomplished guide, good weather and a sense of camaraderie among the participants ensured the success of the tour, our first overseas trip after a break of several years. Next May we shall explore the historic houses and heritage of Yorkshire.

During 2016, WHDFAS has established closer co-operation with the Riverhouse Arts Centre in Walton by supporting a number of creative activities which aim to widen local children’s access to the arts. These include:

Sponsorship of Art Bursaries: Four pupils from St Lawrence Junior School in East Molesey and two from Bell Farm School in Hersham have benefited from £450 bursaries to attend art classes at the Riverhouse in the Summer Term 2016. Four of these children intend to continue these after school art activities at the Arts Centre in the Autumn 2016 and WHDFAS has allocated £450 to support them in the next school year.

Schools Snowflake Workshops: WHDFAS made a £350 contribution to the cost of running ‘snowflakes-making’ workshops aimed at younger children in local schools. The snowflakes formed part of the imaginative Snow Queen Exhibition at the Riverhouse last Christmas.

Mount Felix Community Tapestry Project: WHDFAS is contributing £300 to cover the cost of one of the 40 panels in the £14,000 Community Tapestry being coordinated by the Riverhouse. This ambitious project commemorates the centenary of the No2 New Zealand General Hospital at Mount Felix in Walton and involves schools, community and craft groups and other organisations in the area. The panel sponsored by WHDFAS is being embroidered by the textile club pupils at Rydens School.

Halina Heyworth

WHDFAS website

The Committee is once more indebted to Laurence Shafe who has looked after our website (www.whdfas.org.uk) to ensure it is up-to-date. We thank him on your behalf - and are most grateful.
In February we visited the British Library and the Wellcome Collection. We toured the spacious modern British Library where it is mandatory to send a copy of every publication, resulting in eight miles of new shelving every year adding to the thousand miles kept in several floors below the London building and in Yorkshire. Books are accessed for readers by a computerised carrying system. After lunch we toured the extraordinary varied artefacts with a medical connection, historic and modern, collected by Sir Henry Wellcome. We explored the two galleries, ‘Medicine Man’ and ‘Medicine Now’, before having a cup of tea in the excellent café.

In April we had a guided tour of the regenerated King’s Cross district behind the station. Gone were the old coal heaps, disused sidings and neglected warehouses, now there are new blocks of flats among restored buildings, two concert halls, Art college, schools, cafes and restaurants and a central square beside the Regent’s canal which winds through the development. The station itself has been remodelled along with St Pancras. After lunch our coach took us to Camden Market where we boarded a canal boat for a trip to Little Venice where we had tea and picked up our coach to come home. A fascinating day.

In July we went to Borde Hill to tour the House, built in 1598, and the award winning gardens, renowned for the large collection of rare shrubs and champion trees arranged in garden rooms and woodland. We were also able to enjoy the extensive sculpture exhibition displayed around the gardens, a splendid outdoor gallery.

In October the trip involved exploring the regeneration of the City of London after the 1666 Great Fire, and visiting The Bevis Marks Synagogue, the Hawksmoor masterpiece, Christ Church, Spitalfields and All Hallows near the Tower of London.

Val Woolford

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.

Membership Card

You should receive the small NADFAS Membership card with 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.

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 Committee meetings and see for yourself! Please talk to a member of the Committee if you are interested. If you have any friends or acquaintances who may be interested in joining the Society please invite them to a lecture so they can see for themselves. Our Waiting List currently has plenty of room for new members!

The Committee