



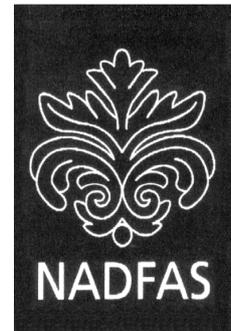
BLACKWATER

1971 Decorative & Fine Arts Society 2011

NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

One of the great positives of being a member of BDFAS and our umbrella organisation NADFAS is the visits programme. All Societies have a programme of visits to nearby centres and we at Blackwater are lucky that we can access within a two hour coach ride so many Houses, Galleries and Museums. I was struck by the opening remarks the President, Christopher Lloyd, made at the 2011 AGM of NADFAS in Edinburgh this May. He used the example of how the UK supports and sustains "The Arts". Bruegel's "The Procession to Calvary" is a recent example of co-ordinated action to purchase a great work of Art for the nation. The masterpiece by Pieter Bruegel the Younger will remain on public display in the Yorkshire mansion where it has hung for centuries after it was saved through an appeal that raised £2.7m in three months.

Christopher went on to compare the world of Christ as depicted in the painting, with the current world full of atrocity in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and don't forget recently the Balkans. Where does NADFAS stand he asked? And he replied to his rhetorical question by



saying that we are not standing by, but developing a social conscience and working hard in the volunteering aspects of NADFAS's work. And some 92000 members of our member Societies have the opportunity to participate in Heritage Volunteering, Church Recording and Young Arts.

My caveat as I outlined in my last editorial is that NADFAS doesn't actively lobby for the Decorative Arts. Christopher when I posed this thought to him in response said that we act in parallel with the Arts Fund and equivalents to be a strong arm of volunteering work for the arts. And later in the AGM we were given strong examples of this effective progress. But to return to my opening on Visits, Christopher Lloyds's magnificent new book "In Search

of a Masterpiece" illustrates graphically how privileged we are to be able to visit such a rich and diverse selection of Art Galleries in the UK. Art will continue to flourish and perhaps it is us in no small part by working unsung on projects, Heritage Volunteering

Stewarding and visiting the sites that confirms to Government the value of this heritage we must protect. In his preface to his book Christopher quotes Marcel Proust "Time Regained", vol VII of Remembrance of Things Past, 1927.

"Thanks to art, instead of seeing one world only, our own, we see that world multiply itself and we have at our disposal as many worlds as there are original artists, worlds more different one from the other than those which revolve in infinite space"

Responses to this editorial or letters of any description will be received for publication. Send to Bill Allen at wrallen@dsl.pipex.com

Please note: the views expressed are those of the author and not of BDFAS as a whole.

BDFAS Visit to Waddesdon Manor

At 8.15am on Thursday December 9th I found myself slipping and sliding across the car-park in front of St Bartholomew's church at Wickham Bishops, eagerly anticipating my first trip out with BDFAS. The coach rolled up in good time and skilfully negotiated the snowy lanes of rural Essex to transport 39 members of the society to Waddesdon Manor where we were expected for Christmas lunch and a tour of the house. We made our way through the busy highways to Buckinghamshire and a few miles past Aylesbury we turned into the lovely grounds of Waddesdon Manor and caught our first glimpse of the beautiful French Renaissance-style chateau, built for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild between 1874 and 1889 to display his vast collection of art treasures.



Waddesdon Manor

It was a bitterly cold day and the frost still lay on the trees and shrubs beside the driveway, adding to the fairylike appearance of the turreted house. We climbed out of our coach and had a brief time to admire the exterior of the chateau and find the gift shop before we were ushered inside the Manor Restaurant for our 3-course Christmas lunch. The restaurant room was formerly a kitchen and it had a huge oven range along the entire length of one wall. The kitchen cupboards above the range were so tall and high up that we wondered how the servants managed to reach them. The tables were tastefully decorated with Christmas decorations and crackers. We were soon wearing paper hats and trying on plastic jewellery. After the delicious meal there was just enough time to take a short walk in the grounds or re-visit the gift shop before we began the Christmas Trail which consisted of a tour of the East Wing.

This year the theme of the trail was all things French, in memory of James Rothschild who made his fortune in France. We entered under a Christmas Arc de Triomphe and in the Oval Hall we encountered an Eiffel Tower. Each room contained a huge Christmas tree, beautifully decorated with gold or silver baubles and in one case a group of tiny

easels, palettes and paintbrushes to remind us of famous French artists. In the East Gallery the decorations paid tribute to the great French operatic composers, Berlioz, Saint-Saens and Bizet. On the East stairs we were reminded of the ill-fated Marie-Antoinette by seeing one of the costumes worn by Kirsten Dunst when she played the Queen in the 2006 film. The Red Ante Room contains Marie-Antoinette's personal writing desk, made in 1782. Many of the rooms had dining tables laid out as if for the grandest of dinners. In one room the light fitting was designed to represent an explosion of white crockery. I don't know how they did it but I couldn't help wondering at the cleverness of the positioning of half plates and cups to create such a stunning effect. The Pantry Corridor brought to life everyone's favourite French schoolgirl Madeline and beside the lift shaft stood an enormous Barbar the elephant in his best robes. The Billiard Room contained the Can-can dresses and feathered head-dresses which reminded us of Le Moulin Rouge, France's most famous cabaret club. In the Bachelors' Wing Bedrooms and Blue Boudoir we were treated to the story of Cinderella, complete with a mouse coachman, an ugly sister in the bath and Cinderella herself as a poor kitchen maid and later at the Ball. The trail ended in the Kitchen Corridor which evoked a Parisienne street scene, full of shops and restaurants.

I have not visited Waddesdon Manor for more than 30 years and this tour has whetted my appetite to return to it in the summer to see one of the finest collections of Sevres porcelain, Savonnerie carpets, Beauvais tapestries and furniture, as well as important portraits by Gainsborough and Reynolds.

In the grounds of the Manor there was a Reindeer trail. These creatures were constructed from twigs and contained fairy lights to illuminate the steep path down to the stable block. Some of our party found time to visit the Christmas Food Market held in the grounds and everyone had time to take a stroll along the paths and admire the trees bearing Christmas lights. We left Waddesdon Manor at twilight and our marvellous coach-driver gave us a smooth ride back to Wickham Bishops and the treacherous car-park.

I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to all those members who had a hand in organising this trip and especially to Hilary Bebb who looked after us so well on the day.

Carol Bolton

Reminder

Don't forget to book the trips to Smallhythe and Bordeaux. If you are interested in coming contact us as soon as possible, so we know numbers before the summer break.

Visit to Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich and Otley Hall on Friday 4th March

We had a lovely day out with a visit to Christchurch Mansion arranged for the morning and Otley Hall in the afternoon. Though it was a cold start the sun was shining by the time we reached Ipswich and we were able to enjoy walking in the grounds of both places.

Christchurch Mansion is a redbrick Tudor house set amid lovely parkland close to the centre of Ipswich. On arrival we were provided with coffee and were then warmly welcomed by our guides. After a brief history of the building we were divided into four groups for a tour of the museum. Apart from a delightful party of schoolchildren we more or less had the place to ourselves. Christchurch was originally the site of the 12th century Augustinian priory which was disbanded by Henry VIII and the estate was seized for the crown. In 1545 the estate was purchased by the Withypoll family and it was Edmund Withypoll who built this house where the priory had stood. In the 18th century the property was purchased by Claude Fonnereau, a London merchant of Huguenot descent who extended and enhanced the building creating a fine family home. In 1892 the mansion was purchased by Felix Cobbold who gave it to the city of Ipswich and Christchurch has been maintained as a museum since 1896. The museum contains an extensive display of furniture and other household furnishings rescued from the old timber framed houses that were demolished during the building of the road system. There is also a large collection of art by well-known Suffolk painters such as Thomas Gainsborough, John Constable and Alfred Munnings.

We were able to have a very nice lunch in the Museum café before we rejoined the coach for the drive to Otley Hall.



Otley Hall

At Otley Hall we were again warmly welcomed and ushered into the delightful wood panelled sitting room and invited to sit on all the available chairs. Otley Hall is privately owned by Ian and Catherine Beaumont and family. Ian Beaumont personally welcomed us and we were then introduced to the

two guides who would take us in two groups on a tour of their house and garden. Otley Hall is a Grade I listed historic house originally owned by the Gosnold family. Bartholomew Gosnold (1571-1607) voyaged to the New World, where in 1602 he discovered Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard, which he named after his infant daughter. In 1607 he returned to found Jamestown in Virginia, the first permanent English speaking settlement in America. We were told that William Shakespeare's final play, *The Tempest* was inspired by reports of the voyage and that Shakespeare could well have visited Otley Hall where plays were regularly performed.

Though very much a family home, the house contained many unique and interesting features such as the beautifully carved wooden panels in the dining room and the wide oak floorboards in the bedrooms.

We enjoyed afternoon tea in the family kitchen and had time to wander in the grounds in the sunshine before our return journey to Wickham Bishops. The whole day was very enjoyable and interesting and we thank Rosemary Woods for her hard work in organising it all for us.

Sue Swaffin

Programme Secretary 2011

As I bow out at this year's AGM and pass the baton on to Pamela, I thank you for your comments about the lectures. I have enjoyed the work as a programme secretary. One lives a year or more ahead and this gets quite trying as one ages where am I 2011/12.....? Pamela and I recently attended the NADFAS directory meeting at Kensington Town Hall. All our speakers are selected from this directory. New speakers are given two minutes to present their talks, not a lot of time to give a full flavour of a lecture. We try to appraise the personality, voice, knowledge and tick or cross our list accordingly.

Current lecturers take the floor next, they only have one minute each to promote a new lecture. This takes up about two hours. After a quick pit stop all the programme planners run around the hall and try to book likely topics for next year. The first thing we need to know is where the lecturer lives. It's too expensive to bring people from far away. We discuss lecture fees, dates and a provisional booking is made. BS program is reviewed something for everyone? Let's hope so.

Pamela Turnbull adds:

When you play your game of bridge, poker, rummy, cribbage have you ever wondered how the design of the cards came about? In the year of the 2012 Olympics in London, what do you know about the origins and history behind the games? What about the greatest find of Roman coins ever? Where was it found and how was it discovered? Have you always thought William Shakespeare was the 'man from Stratford-Upon-Avon'? Are you sure? The

answers to these questions will be found in our programme for next year, which will also include lectures on art, music and the history and architecture of the city to be the subject of our extended overseas' visit next year.

Visit to Paul Gauguin Exhibition at Tate Modern and Geffrye Museum

Bill Allen reports: For our first trip of 2011 on January 11th, members and guests boarded the coach at Wickham Bishops to travel to Tate Modern. In the morning we visited the Gauguin Exhibition. The coach dropped us off by Southwark Bridge and we walked to the imposing Tate Modern building. Times of entry to the exhibition were strictly regulated but as the Gauguin was in its last few days, the rooms were not too busy and we had plenty of time and space to view this first major Gauguin exhibition in 50 years. Chronologically his life and paintings were displayed together with photographs and other artefacts. I was particularly interested in his Pont Aven period as the "Allen" family had regularly visited west Brittany in the '70's and '80's on holiday.

Many of the scenes he depicted of rural and town, landscape and Bretagne life – dance – daily existence were fascinating and brought back very happy memories. Very little changes in such areas. Much of the exhibition was devoted to his latter years – self identity and relationships with the local Tahitian people. All in all a very satisfying, colourful selection of his work and times.



Breton Girls Dancing, Pont-Aven

My trusty iPhone App took Jennifer and I to a suitable CAMRA hostelry and after this brief lunch, we met together to depart on the coach for the East End. After a somewhat bemused coach driver had given us a tour of Shoreditch and Dalston, we arrived at the Geffrye Museum. Set in former Almshouses of the Ironmongers Company, the beautifully re-constructed rooms explored "the home" over the last four centuries. Perhaps giving a slightly false picture of how the nation lived, nevertheless the 'middle-class' urban homes of the

different periods were carefully set up. To many of us identifying our own memories and objects of the '50's and '60's was particularly interesting. There is no doubt that the Geffrye is a hidden and little known gem in the museum scene of London. More accessible than it once was as the newly restored London Overground route stops at Hoxton just by the museum. So for members who haven't been, it is a recommended diversion before returning home from Liverpool Street on a day out. We embarked for the return trip at 4.0pm and while an accident delayed us on the A12, everyone had enjoyed a splendid day out to relieve the post Christmas gloom.

Art Deco and its influence on design



Peter Darty appraises an object

Our Study Day on the 14th February saw the welcome return of Peter Darty, B.A.. who undertook to show us how the Art Deco style developed after the flourishing of the Arts and Crafts movement, influenced by the Bauhaus in Germany and designers such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Glasgow. Following the "Exposition des Arts Decoratifs" in Paris in 1925, the movement had its heyday in the 1930's, and we were able to see how the characteristic geometrical shapes, stylised natural forms and symmetrical designs were adapted to mass production and evident not only in architecture and interior decoration, but also in household objects and jewellery.

In a period of elegance, when there was an increasing interest in travel, not only did hotels, cinemas and houses of the well-to-do reflect the Art Deco style, but also ocean liners and posters advertising all forms of transport and travel destinations. Fashions in clothing and jewellery followed the same trends.

While few of us could aspire to collecting the sort of jewellery favoured by the Duchess of Windsor, members of the Society brought a variety of objects for Peter to appraise during the afternoon session, which aroused extra interest. It was generally agreed that it was a very successful day, complemented by an excellent light lunch. We look forward to our next Day of Special Interest on Dickens.

Audrey Clark

BDFAS TRIP TO MADRID

We first met at Stansted on Monday March 28th. The arrangements all went according to plan and we arrived at Madrid Airport at 11-45am. At this stage we were introduced to our Tour Manager Paul Richardson who immediately put everyone at their ease and was quite obviously going to be a most informative and helpful guide with a delightful sense of humour. We then set off on an orientation tour of Madrid city.

We eventually checked into the Hotel Agumar and met for a buffet supper altogether and much conversation which seemed to continue for the rest of the trip.

Next morning our first visit was to Museo – Thyssen – Bornemisza which is part of the Prado Golden Triangle. Our guide Pilar explained that the opening of the Museo in 1992 marked the fulfilment of Baron Heinrich Thyssen – Bornemisza and his son to reconcile their passion for fine art with their desire to make their collection available to all art lovers. The collection starts from 1278 and works through a whole genre of artists up to 1968. Pilar wanted us to notice the skilled use of various light sources so that we would be ready to view *Las Meninas* by Velazquez which we were to see at the Prado later in the week. A truly wonderful collection.

That afternoon was free time and many of us explored Madrid. It is a beautiful city with very wide clean streets with many different species of trees everywhere. There are also the Botanic Gardens and the Retiro Park which was near our hotel. A lovely place to sit and relax and watch the world go by.

Next morning we had an early start for Avila, a fairy tale city, surrounded by 88 turrets and 9 gateways along its medieval walls, enclosing palaces and churches. It also seemed to be a city of storks nests and lion statues. It was possible to walk along the walls to enjoy breathtaking views but as we couldn't find the entrance we had a welcome coffee instead! The work on the walls was started in 1090 and it is the largest fully illuminated monument in the world. We then continued to the World Heritage Site of Segovia. Situated north of Madrid with twisting alleyways and many Romanesque Churches and of course the famous Aqueduct probably built circa AD 50 which stretches from the walls of the old town to the edges of Sierra Guadaramma. It is considered to be one of the greatest surviving monuments of Roman engineering and was magnificent indeed.

Our next destination was Toledo which is known as the City of the three cultures because Christians, Arabs and Jews lived together here for centuries. We were taken to a viewing point to see the City across the river in all its splendour.

Our guide for the day was Luis whose impassioned delivery of his knowledge of Toledo was a joy to hear. He was also very proud that he had taken Charles, Prince of Wales on the same tour! We visited the magnificent 13th century Cathedral and were shown many El Greco paintings in the Sacristy. Some of them were actually painted in situ. The Cathedral was richly resplendent although some of us did facetiously think about the words of the song "Where did you get that hat" We then moved on to the Church of Santo Tome which contains El Greco's *The Burial of Count Orgaz* again painted in situ. We were informed that this

painting is considered to be one of the most important works in the world.

Then to a Jewish Synagogue which was so simple in contrast but a moving experience to see it.

The weather was warm and sunny, tapas and sangria for lunch. A wonderful trip.

On Friday morning we were taken to the Prado. Our guide Pilar wanted to show us as many famous works as possible but the emphasis was put on El Greco, Goya and Velazquez.

Again we were told that *Las Meninas* by Velazquez is considered to be one of the most important works in the world and it was indeed voted in a poll in London in 1985 as the world's greatest painting. Then to Goya's Black Paintings Room. His probing of the darker side of human nature depicting morbid and terrifying scenes still have a shocking impact today. They stand as timeless portrayals of the conflicting forces of good and evil, life and death, light and darkness. An unforgettable morning.



Admiring the view

The afternoon was leisure time and some took the opportunity to visit the Reina Sofia and to see Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*. This work was Picasso's reaction to the bombing of the ancient Basque capital of Guernica by Franco's German Allies in April 1937. The opinion of one Art Historian is that it is a generalized image of man's inhumanity to man, part bull fight and part Massacre of the Innocents. Some of us may not agree with this assessment but the experience of standing and staring at this superlative mural is totally mind – blowing. The whole mural was executed in one month.

Others visited the Royal Palace which is situated on a bluff overlooking Madrid. The graceful building surrounds a huge ceremonial square the size of our Horse Guards Parade.

On the last morning of our tour we travelled towards the Guadaramma range north of Madrid for the fortress monastery San Lorenzo de Escorial. (A World Heritage site of one of the most spectacular religious establishments in the world). It also houses a fine art collection and many treasures of the Hapsbergs. For some it did seem rather dark, cold and gloomy but the library of priceless manuscripts and books graced with wonderful murals by El Greco was a joy to behold.

We then rejoined our coach for the short drive to Madrid Airport for our journey home. Paul, as ever, escorting us through security and making sure that we were all safe. Our thanks to him and of course to Rosemary whose impeccable organisation ensured us such a happy and memorable trip. Also, to all those BDFAS members who welcomed us with such warmth and friendship.

June Roper and Pat Truelove

Meet the Committee No. 12, Mrs Chris Adams



Hello everyone, I have now been membership secretary for about 10 years and have been prevailed upon to let you know a bit more about myself. I was born in Manchester, where I attended the Manchester Girls Grammar School. I moved to Essex with my parents and finished my schooling at Chelmsford County High School for Girls and then went to Chelmsford College of Further Education. On leaving education I had no idea what kind of job or career I might peruse so I ended up working in an insurance office and remained in the insurance field for 20 years. I really enjoyed my final years with a Lloyds Syndicate and drove all over Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and some of South London meeting and advising commercial clients. One of my duties was to service the members of the Licensed Trade Association so calling at Public Houses all day for a living was great – the only down side was that I could not drink as I was always driving!

I got married to my husband Tony in 1971 and in 1976 we moved into our present house in Great Totham. It was a semi-derelict bungalow which we have worked on and improved over the years, particularly the garden which was half an acre of sloping field and is now, even if I say so myself, very good. Our first child, David, came along in 1982 and the second, Hannah, appearing in 1984. I am really a cat person and we have had many Siamese and Tonkinese cats over the years. Latterly the cats have gone and we now have a really mad Springer Spaniel.

I really enjoy living in Great Totham and belong to most of the local organisations. I am Chairman of the village hall Trustees and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council. I have been fortunate to make many friends in the village and cannot imagine living anywhere else.

For as long as I can remember I have been interested in Oriental art of all kinds and have developed over the past 30 years an interest in the Art Deco era. Being a member of BDFAS has stimulated an interest in all areas of the visual arts and I am beginning to appreciate many other areas in which I previously had little or no interest.

Tony has just retired and we are now enjoying our time together and taking as many holidays as we can, which means that I am unfortunately missing some of our lectures! However, I look forward to greeting you whenever I can.

Church Recording

After a successful Open Day at the Church at St Giles Langford to demonstrate what is involved in BDFAS work for Church Recording, if anyone is interested in joining us please ring me on: 01376 518906

Grace Waight

NADFAS Diaries for 2012

Diaries for 2012 will cost £6.50 if collected but much more if posted. I am therefore trying to make arrangements to have whatever we require to be collected. Therefore would any Member who requires a diary for £6.50 please let me know as soon as possible but no later than our October meeting. If necessary I can be contacted at home on: 01621 891544

Pauline Player

STOP PRESS..STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS

Planned Programme of Visits for 2012

Among the varied programme of visits planned are 4th October to Smallhythe and Godinton House. Our Christmas lunch this year will be a return to the popular Hintlesham Hall, preceded by a visit to the Gainsborough Museum at Sudbury.

In 2012 we intend to visit :

*Tate Britain for the Picasso Exhibition
and the Foundling Museum
(22nd February)*

*The Garrick Club and Masonic Museum
(21st March)*

*Tudely Church & Chiddingstone Castle
(22nd May)*

*Hughenden Manor & Chenies Manor
(18th July)*

*We are planning an extended visit to Durham
if there is sufficient interest
(30th April – 4th May)*

*And an Overseas Holiday to Vienna
(8th – 13th October)*

This is your Newsletter...

and the committee is very appreciative of the articles and photographs members have contributed.

Please keep them coming.

The next deadline for sending items to the Chairman is the 1st November.

Photographs by courtesy of Bill Allen
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