

BLACKWATER

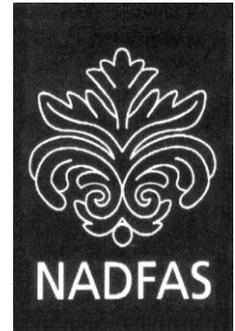
Decorative & Fine Arts Society

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 18

Summer 2014

www.blackwaterdfas.org.uk



Editorial



The Power Station by John Osborne

The summer editorial has often in the past been inspired by the President's address to the AGM of NADFAS. This year was no exception. Christopher Lloyd reminded us that membership of our Society unites us in a "love of beauty and an appreciation of works of art". He then discussed how the printed book and print making produced "an intimacy between the author and the owner of the book". Thinking about this concept put me in mind to considering how we obtain affordable art for our homes – from coffee table books to prints and works of art from local artists or our own amateur efforts. Very few aspire to be true collectors like for example Kenneth Clark or the Saatchis. I illustrate this article with a photograph of one of the paintings in our collection by one of our members, John Osborne.

But we can look to collect the available books – be they in a gallery or museum linked to an exhibition

perhaps or second –hand through booksellers – my particular favourite here was the post-war paperbacks "The Penguin Modern British Painters" including Moore, Grant, Spencer etc. And Christopher Lloyd closed his address by reminding us that "Art transforms life" and to that I would add humanises our Society. This year ended Christopher's tenure as President and I hope next year we shall hear similar inspiration from the new NADFAS President – Loyd Grossman .

Bill Allen

Responses to this editorial or letters of any description will be received for publication. Send to Bill Allen at wralen@dsl.pipex.com or phone 01621 891589.

Nobody has submitted a book review for this edition so a reminder to members of the opportunity to submit their own review of a book they would like to draw to our attention. Please send to me at wralen@dsl.pipex.com

Chairman's Column Summer 2014

Well here we are, and here I am almost at the end of my first year as Chairman of BDFAS. A Society member asked me recently if I was enjoying the job. The NADFAS training team actively want Society Chairmen to enjoy their job! The answer to the question is, yes. I do enjoy being the Chairman: I like meeting and greeting people at the monthly lectures. I also enjoy meeting the lecturers. I love the "buzz" when the hall starts to fill: the audio team are busy getting everything right and there is a sense of expectation in the air, but most of all I like the feeling of being part of the strong effective team who work so hard each month to bring us to this point.

The downside to all this is the administration! I don't like sitting in front of my computer writing yet another report! Luckily I receive excellent administrative support from Sylvia Frost who is Vice Chairman and also a very efficient Society Secretary. As I said in another report, it has been quite an eventful year, which has brought changes to the jobs of individual Committee members. Mary Ranson has coped so well with the very difficult job of Treasurer. She has been to NADFAS House for computerised accounts training and is taking everything a step at a time and doing very well. Sheila Bates took over responsibility for the promotion of Young Arts. Stephanie Jones who joined the committee last year assists her. They are working very well together and are about to have some extra training at NADFAS House. Sheila and I attended the "40 Years of Volunteering" at Kensington Town Hall last November and Sheila was inspired by an "Art Cart" she saw there. It is a portable storage and work area that can be used by young children for drawing and painting. Sheila and Stephanie are now negotiating the placing of one of these "Carts" at the Museum of Power at Langford for the use of visiting schoolchildren. This is part of the work we do under the "mutual obligations" agreement we have with NADFAS for the encouragement of arts education for young people.

Sheila is also responsible for our Society's Heritage Volunteers and her great achievement this year is negotiating, and being awarded, a grant from the Patricia Fay Memorial Fund for the funding of training for ongoing work in book conservation at the Thomas Plume Library in Maldon. The award is for training in the preparation of "book shoes": this is a fairly new method of protecting the spines of old books during storage. The NADFAS grant was for £490 and after discussion the BDFAS Committee decided to add £100. The Friends of the Plume Library have also added a sum to this. Materials will be purchased, and work will soon begin. A team are still working at the Essex Record Office and some of us will soon be working on a map project. We also have a long serving team working at the Maldon Museum, and we all come under Sheila's umbrella. . Well-done Sheila!

Jennifer Allen, our new Membership Secretary, has also been working hard: we are all constantly discussing ways of saving money for the Society. The cost of postage is the topic we are thinking about at present, and we are making changes in the way we distribute the twice-yearly Newsletter. There will also be changes in the way we deal with the renewal of your subscriptions: this is all to save postage. The cost of lecturer's fees has also risen considerably, and the Programme Secretary tries very hard to provide good quality lectures at a good price. Not always easy as the distance travelled by the lecturer has to be considered. The Visits Team is also experiencing the effects of people being more careful with their cash. They have decided to cut down slightly on the number of programmed visits and offer some "pop up" visits to exhibitions when they occur and if there is enough up-take.

Grace Waite's Church Recording team are still working on Langford Church and Alec Fraser has taken some beautiful photos of the church artefacts and windows. Grace would be very happy to have extra people on the team: they all really enjoy the work and would like to see some new faces. Mary Reeve and the team are doing an excellent job with the coffee each month, and Mary has agreed to continue for another year. I really want to say thank you to Marjorie Ferguson for very patiently taking notes for us at our Committee meetings, and for keeping me "on the straight and narrow" during my first year. Finally congratulations to Bill Allen, who is now the NADFAS Essex Area Chairman.

Thank you to all of you for attending the lectures and enjoying coming to BDFAS. This is what the Committee want to achieve. Enjoy the summer break. See you all in October.

Sue Roache

VISITS OCT – DEC 2014

Thursday 16 October

London Glassblowing Studio (Peter Layton) and refurbished William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow

Monday 15 December

Christmas Lunch at The Bull, Great Totham

2015

Wednesday 15 April

A Walk around some of London's famous Livery Halls with a Blue Badge Guide followed by a visit to the Carpenter's Hall

Monday 27th April

Extended Visit to The Castles, Gardens & History of North Wales

Thursday 11th June

Clandon Park & Hatchlands Park (both NT properties)

Visit to Edinburgh and the Scottish Borders - May 2014



Abbotsford

Our first pleasant surprise when we gathered in Wickham Bishops at an unearthly hour on a Wednesday morning in May was that Lodge's had provided a Mercedes coach that was only a month old, embarking on its first long journey driven by Andy, who was to prove an excellent driver throughout our trip. The weather was fine and remained so for the majority of our visit to Scotland. Heading north we had a lunch break at the beautiful RHS garden at Harlow Carr, near Harrogate. We very much enjoyed our stop especially the show of rhododendrons in a woodland setting then onwards to Peebles for the Hydropathic Hotel, an impressive Edwardian building, that was to be our comfortable home for the next 4 nights.

Next day we were off to the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh where Pam and I viewed the Titian Diana paintings on display in a special Golden age of Venetian art exhibition before moving on to the Scottish Collection and a small display devoted to Edward Lear in Greece.

We then went on to view the Royal Yacht Britannia, now permanently moored on the dockside at Leith for an informative audiotour. Apart from the ever interesting Royal connection, Britannia is becoming a time capsule of 1950's and 60's design. On our third morning we were joined by Mike Furlong, a Blue Badge guide, who introduced us to the beauties of the Border country as we proceeded to follow the meandering course of the river Tweed. It had been an excellent season for the golden patches of gorse on the surrounding hillsides. Mike pointed out the series of Peel towers, built around 1420, where the local population could take shelter from the raids from the North and the South of the Border Rievers, bent on cattle and sheep rustling. He also pointed out the new 30 mile railway from Edinburgh, following the much

loved Waverley route to Carlisle closed by Dr Beeching. It is hoped that this will be launched in 2015 relieving the narrow roads of much traffic and increasing local property values. The line will terminate at Tweedbank which is where we were heading to visit Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, who alone was responsible of introducing 'biscuit tin Scottishness' being the major mover behind the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822, the first visit by a reigning English monarch since 1650. George, a short plump man arrived swathed in tartan, wearing a kilt that was too short and pink stockings, unattractive to the ladies hence - 'Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie...' never the less the visit was a great success and the tartan cloth trade benefited greatly from that day on!

Abbotsford was built between 1817 and 1825 and featured Scott's study, his working library of some 9000 volumes and his collection of arms and armour. It was here that he wrote many of his novels under pressure from creditors brought about by the cost of building this magnificent house on the banks of the Tweed and by the financial collapse of his publishers. A magnificent new visitor's centre has recently been opened where a full account of Scott's life and times is given. Our party was then driven to Melrose, an attractive small Border's town for a lunch break where some of the party visited the Abbey, the site of the burial of Robert the Bruce's heart.

The next visit was to the nearby Mellerstain House, designed by William Adams in 1721, with two mirror image wings and a central linking block that was completed by his son, Robert Adams. William was responsible for the design of the surrounding landscape with its distant towered folly and Robert for the beautifully balanced interior design of the principal

rooms with exquisite plasterwork, decorated ceilings and with the original silk wall paper covering the walls. The original colour schemes had been conserved and maintained and were a joy to behold!

On Saturday we made the longish trip to Drumlanrig Castle in Dumfriesshire. This large building belonging to the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, who also own Boughton Hall in Northamptonshire recently visited by the Society, was the ancestral home of the Douglas family. Although castledated this building was more a storehouse of Renaissance and later period art objects than a military stronghold. Portraits of the family dating from the fifteenth century up to 1957 predominate but there are some other subjects including the world famous picture of an old woman reading by Rembrandt. Bonny Prince Charlie was reluctantly housed here on his retreat from his raid on England. There are many fine carvings some by Grinling Gibbons, tapestries and furniture throughout the house.



Traquair

We retraced our steps passed Peebles to the remarkable building; Traquair, Scotland's oldest inhabited building dating from 1107. Twenty seven monarchs have been entertained here including Mary Queen of Scots. There are secret rooms, staircases and passageways where Catholic priests could take refuge at times of religious terror. The return to Essex was broken at the ultramodern development at Salford Quays to visit the Lowry gallery where we were given guided tours by two young enthusiastic guides, Angie and Richard, whose knowledge of the works and personality of Lawrence Stephen Lowry 1887-1976 was remarkable.



A splendid tour organised with meticulous planning and great charm by Rosemary Woods in conjunction with Tailored Travel was enjoyed by all the participants. There is plenty of material of interest in the part of Scotland that we explored and BDFAS will surely go there again but will this be a home trip or an abroad one we shall have to wait until September to see!

Paddy Lacey

The Hidden Jewels of the Cheapside Hoard – 19 March

Our visit to the Museum of London on 19th March began with a lecture by the curator of the exhibition Hazel Forsyth who explained what the Hoard was, how it was found and illustrated the jewellery. The Hoard was found in 1912 down below a cellar of a house in Cheapside that had belonged to the Goldsmiths but was being demolished for a new building. That house had been built after the fire of London in 1666. In boxes and parcels were found an incredible 500 items of the finest jewellery from before 1666. These were largely acquired by the Museum of London but had never been shown to the public in their entirety.

Why were they there? Nobody knows. No one returned after the fire to claim them and we don't know if they were buried at the time of the fire or before. Was it the result of civil war or plague? Who owned this fortune? We don't know. It was the road of the jeweller's shops, 55 by the end of the 16thC so was it the fortune of one man or many?



What were all these beautiful stones and settings for? They were a statement of wealth and power. As we entered the exhibition there were two striking paintings, one of Elizabeth I covered in jewels with a quote from Francis Bacon "The Queen imagined that the people who are much influenced by externals would be diverted by the glitter of her jewels from noticing the decay of her personal attractions". The other a beautiful unknown lady in black and white costume with a 19" waist to "die for" dripping with valuable stones all down her front, arms and even her head. Here was a lady or husband saying "look how rich I am". No doubt many items were ready to be sold as single stones or multiple stones in beautiful Medieval and Elizabethan settings as single gifts to beautify the wearer.

What was amazing was the variety from chains up to 4m long, bracelets, pendants, belts, cap fittings, pins, rings, brooches, earrings, scent bottles, cameos, crosses, watches to individual stones sewn onto costumes. The extent of the trade in valuable stones was incredible. Garnets from Sri Lanka; Amethysts

from India, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Bohemia and Brazil; Rubies from Burma and India; Turquoise from Persia; Amber from the Baltic; Onyx from Greece and Arabia; and Emeralds from Columbia. Delightful were Amethyst and Emerald grape bunches, an Emerald working watch with see through Emerald face, a cameo from B.C. Alexandria in Egypt, a cameo the size of your little finger of an Aesop fable, the dog with meat looking at his reflection in the water. The show epitomised by a brooch of a Salamander, symbol of the resurrection, a mix of Diamonds from the old world and Emeralds from the new.

After all that beauty and admiration of the craftsmanship we left with the thought "How on earth did all those 500 jewels get buried and remain unclaimed" the only hoard of its kind and date in the world.

Dennis Eraut

Have some Fun Volunteering with Maldon Museum

Many moons ago, whilst dozing through the BADFAS "commercials", I heard the name Maldon District Museum mentioned and pricked up my ears. The plea was for volunteers to help with various museum activities, and being a Maldon gal, I thought I might fit the bill. Penny Cook, the Museum's Accessions Officer at that time, invited me along for a taster session at the Museum office and store in the St. Cedds building by the Council Offices. I have found out recently that I was described in advance to my co-volunteers as "noisy and rather OTT, but good fun". They do say that listeners rarely hear good of themselves! Anyway, as I was on my best behaviour, the first visit went well and I then spent a whole year of Monday afternoons, padding and covering hangers with undyed calico, so that our costume collection could be stored in the approved manner. Immediately upon completion of this tedious activity, as often happens in the Museum world, the "approved manner" was changed and it was decreed that, in future, all costume must be flat packed in archival quality, acid-free boxes, so it was back to the drawing board (and we still have the results of my labours stored in a drawer at St. Cedds).

Eventually, as two Accessions Officers came and went, and it became a case of Hobson's Choice, I took on the responsibility of administering the Museum collection, and although I have never actually been officially appointed Accessions Officer, I have been carrying on with it for about 12 years now. I guess my experience as an Admin Manager with McDonnell Douglas, the giant American aviation company, together with four years in communications in the Navy plus a lifelong passion for art and antiques have all served me well, as I have had to employ all these skills with the Museum, at various times. I now have the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon, and I have perfected the art of turning down unwanted artefacts. I now have about a dozen reasons on tap as to why we aren't able to accept yet another sewing machine, foot last or Markham's mineral bottle. I have also learned how to deal respectfully with body parts – we have two skulls in our collection which the Museum world decrees must be correctly stored and labelled.

I have taken the opportunity to attend courses on Museum administration, conservation of collections, and a year's course on antiques recognition and evaluation. I have also become adept at grant applications and liaising with local government officials, so you can see, apart from the first year, there has never been a dull moment and I have really enjoyed my volunteering. Why not come along and join us? We are always in need of extra help (and I promise not to be "noisy and OTT" – well, maybe not all the time).

Judy Betteridge

Accessions Team - Maldon District Museum

Concert at the Savoy Chapel

I noticed in the autumn edition of the NADFAS magazine that a concert was taking place at The Queen's Savoy Chapel given by the Brandenburg Singers as part of their 2014 Festival, and they would be performing Vivaldi's *Gloria*, a particular favourite of mine. I immediately ordered two tickets and on 12th March met my sister at the Strand Palace Hotel for a light lunch before crossing the road and entering a delightful little chapel for a programme of music by choir and organ. It began with Haydn's *Te Deum*, followed by Albinoni's *Adagio* unusually performed as a choral work. The first half concluded with Howard Goodall's arrangement of *The Lord is My Shepherd*, familiar to Vicar of Dibley fans!

Vivaldi's *Gloria* was performed during the second half. The singing was superb though I would have preferred an orchestra rather than organ accompaniment.

During the interval we were given a very informative talk on the history of the chapel originally built in the Middle Ages within the Palace of Peter of Savoy; both were destroyed during the Peasant's Revolt in 1381. The present chapel building was constructed between 1490 and 1512 by Henry VII as a side chapel to his hospital, which was demolished in the 19th century. The Savoy Chapel has hosted various congregations, that of St. Mary-le-Strand when it had no building of its own, and the German Lutheran congregation of Westminster. It is an Anglican Church and was noted as a place where marriages without banns might occur, and was reputed in earlier years to be the only Anglican establishment to marry divorced couples. Most of its stained glass windows were destroyed during the Blitz, though a triptych stained glass window survives which depicts a procession of angelic musicians. It is dedicated to Richard D'Oyley Carte who married in the chapel in 1888 and was unveiled by Henry Irving in 1902. The chapel remains under the aegis of the monarch as party of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the garden was landscaped in honour of our present Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002 and the ceiling was restored in 1999. Further refurbishments included a new stained glass window commemorating the Diamond Jubilee which was unveiled by the Queen in 2012.

The Savoy Chapel uses the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* and the *King James Bible*. Services are held on Sundays, members of the public are welcome to attend and the chapel is open Monday to Thursday. Well worth a visit.
Margaret Galione

Pomp & Circumstance – Study Day 2014

Chloe Cockerill MBE MA was our lecturer at the annual Day of Special Interest. The subject of the day was **Royal Ceremonies from Coronations to Jubilees**. Past Coronations varied from the simple to the very ornate Coronation of Elizabeth II and an old edition of the Pathe News film reminded many of those present of that cold and rainy day in June 1953. The lecturer commented upon the various Jubilee celebrations including those of Queen Victoria, George V and George VI. She also showed excellent slides of the ceremonial robes worn on those occasions including those worn at our present Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The origins of Maundy Money were explained together with the various Orders of Chivalry including the Order of the Garter, founded by Edward III and the Annual Garter Ceremonies which are held at Windsor. We were reminded of the story of the Stone of Scone and its theft. Although it is now back in London it seems that one day it will be returned to Scotland (*the Editor adds – perhaps after Scottish Independence?*) It was explained how St George became the patron saint of England and also the origins of the story of St George and the Dragon.

The day was well organised and after a light luncheon we were given a third session packed with information and the event closed with thanks to Chloe from members & guests from BDFAS and other Essex Societies.

Marjorie Ferguson and Pauline Player



Tahiti Stoneform - an example of Peter Layton's work, (inspired by Gauguin's paintings) London Glassblowing Studio. Something to look forward to **BDFAS visit to come on Thurs October 16.**

40th Anniversary Volunteering Festival at Kensington Town Hall - November 2013

Sue and I didn't arrive for the opening ceremony, presided over by NADFAS President Elect, Loyd Grossman, due to the vagaries of Greater Anglia. The first impression of the event held in two large halls was a very lovely one! There were embroideries and Church Recorders and stalls promoting all aspects of NADFAS Volunteering. So much was going on that we couldn't hope to participate in all the demonstrations and talks. We decided we could cope with a talk before lunch given by Rhona Trodd, Young Arts Rep. for Hampshire & the Isle of Wight, who told us about her work with special needs students, enabling them to hold an exhibition at a local Art Gallery. This was just one of many projects she had initiated. Prior to retirement, she was a Vice-President for The Bank of America.

The next speaker was Felicity Crabb who started her career at The Lighthouse in Poole, Dorset, the largest arts centre outside London. After college she wanted to work rather than study and volunteered with Raleigh International which was a life changing experience. She found free-lance work in arts and events as well as volunteer roles with various organisations and projects. Eventually she became Youth Arts Development Manager for Hampshire Museums and Galleries Trust, a role that brought her into contact with NADFAS, which became an on-going relationship. She is now the Deputy Manager of the Regent Centre in Christchurch, a 1930's cinema and theatre. She is also Youth Mentor for the Tall Ships Trust and Princes Trust. Her career is a great example of the types of jobs available if you have arts based training and that teaching is not the only arts job now open to women.

We managed to get round most of the stalls before we realised that there was going to be an Awards Ceremony, fortunately we were just by the Book Conservation stall and I managed to read one of the closely guarded booklets on Bookbinding and Conservation in between clapping!!! The expert did impart one vital piece of knowledge, that very old books left without sleeves or some other form of support would eventually pull away from the binding just by the action of gravity over many years. Our team at The Plume hope to make protective slip cases and boxes eventually when we have finished our first cleaning project. I would urge anyone who has the chance to take part in NADFAS events as they are always stimulating and enjoyable. We certainly had an interesting and informative day.

Sheila Bates

Meet the Committee No. 17, Mrs Stephanie Jones



I was born and bred in Essex but spent all my professional life outside of the county, only returning in retirement. I was educated at Southend High School for Girls and went to Bristol University to study Geography. I decided on a career in teaching and opted to complete my teacher training (PGCE) in

Bristol, a city I really enjoyed. My first teaching post in a girls' grammar school, was in Brighton because my husband to be was at Sussex University, studying for a Ph.D. We then moved to Reading where my husband became a lecturer at Reading University and I took up my second teaching post in Geography at a large mixed comprehensive school. From then on all my teaching posts were in comprehensive schools in the Reading area, with breaks for secondments to the Open University and to a county advisory post in Berkshire.

We took up sailing and bought our first small yacht in 1982. We sailed from The Solent to Cornwall, The Channel islands, Normandy and Brittany during the summer holidays and undertook our most ambitious cruise to Malta in 1992. Our boat was based in Malta for four years and from there we sailed to the Greek Islands. Ailing parents necessitated our boat's return to Essex and Tollesbury Marina. (My parents were then living in Coggeshall).

On early retirement we moved to Tollesbury. At last we were living by the sea again!

Apart from sailing, I had time to pursue my interests in gardening and The Arts. I joined a small, private art group based in Wickham Bishops, through which I heard about BDFAS and I joined in 2010. I became a committee member in 2013 as assistant Young Arts representative to Sheila Bates and I look forward to promoting The Arts with young people in the area.

STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS

Programme of Lectures for 2014-15

A diverse programme of lectures awaits in the new season, with the first lecture being held on Thursday, 2nd October, when **Oliver Everett** will be visiting Blackwater again to present his lecture **entitled 'King George III : the Most Cultured Monarch, Art Collector and Friend of America'**

.During the season we will have other returning lecturers, as well as some new to Blackwater and to NADFAS, all offering a unique perspective on their particular topic. The subjects to be covered will include architecture, photography, iconic paintings, and textiles, to name just a few. We will also be holding another Study Day in February, and full details of this event will be available at the October meeting, together with the opportunity to purchase tickets.

Cheese and Wine and Art and Crafts display at the June Lecture.

I must keep this report very short as we are running out of space in the Summer Newsletter. Thanks goes to Sylvia Frost for organising and supervising both of these events. The Committee once again did the catering for the cheese and wine party. A lot of work goes into planning, shopping and chopping. We certainly` tasted very fresh again this year: we are always aware that we only have a very short time to get everything laid out. The Committee is

always open to constructive suggestions about this event and your input is always welcome.

We had 40 items in the Arts and Crafts display and this included 6 new participants.

It was encouraging that so many people brought items in for everyone to look at, and we all enjoyed swapping ideas and talking about the pieces on show.

Please let us know if you have any ideas about how this event could be different: we hold this event biannually. Could it be different? Let us know!

Just a reminder that the "Matisse: The Cut-Outs" exhibition is on at Tate Modern until September and also an exhibition that could interest members who enjoy arts and crafts: "British Folk Art" at Tate Britain until September. Sue Roache.

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 is the 1st November

Photographs by courtesy Bill Allen, Alec Fraser, Denis Eraut & Stephanie Jones

Assembled and Printed by Chris Cooper - Beaver Press, Witham



Members Art & Crafts 2014

