



REIGATE DECORATIVE AND FINE ARTS SOCIETY

Committee Report January 2009

Chairman's Report *Heather Gardner*

The celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the start of Nadfas provided a fascinating trip down memory lane. The enjoyable members' tea party in June brought home to us the enormous growth in the number of Nadfas societies, from a few in Buckinghamshire to nearly 400 world-wide.

All new members from last February will receive an invitation to our annual coffee morning on 11th February, to meet members of the Committee and to hear about the activities of Reigate Dfas.

Last year five Committee members retired and we were without a Treasurer. We are indebted to Anne Pemberton (past Chairman and Area Chairman) for stepping into the role for a year, and grateful to all the new members of the Committee for quickly making themselves part of the team. Anne will remain as a co-opted Committee

member where her know-ledge of Reigate Dfas will be invaluable as we approach our 25th anniversary.

Our community work continues with our Heritage Volunteers and Church Recorders. We have finished our project at the Cranston Library and several of our members have been made Associates of the Cranston Library. Our support for Young Arts, with our representative Penelope Horsfall, has contributed £125 towards a 6th form exhibition at Betchworth Village Hall and a £500 grant to Oakwood School, Horley.

The Committee continues to explore the use of digital equipment with day courses, demonstrations and much discussion. It is hoped that this process will not last much longer!

Finally, I wish to thank members for their support and encouragement and the

Committee for their dedication to the smooth running of the Reigate Dfas.

Treasurer's Report

Anne Pemberton

NADFAS Trustee Board has increased the Affiliation Fee for the year 2009 by 25p to £10.75, applicable from 1st January. Your Committee has decided to keep the subscription fee at £30 for the year. We have funds invested in a High Interest Deposit bond that will allow us to buy digital equipment as necessary, and give us the ability to put funds towards our celebratory 25th Anniversary Lunch in 2010.

Visits and Special Interest Days have just about covered their costs in the year 2008. An excellent programme of visits has been

arranged for the coming year by Frank Power. All members are urged to take advantage of this programme.

We made a charitable donation of £500 to Oakwood School in Horley, which covered materials for an art project and a visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum. A donation of £250 was made to the restoration fund for St Andrew's Church, Gatton. A further cheque was sent to Patrick Moule for the specialist help he gave during the Church Recording.

Grateful thanks go to Desmond Gwynne for preparing the accounts.

Programme Secretary's Report

Vivien Armstrong

Our aim is to create a programme that is sufficiently varied to please most of the members, most of the time. Juggling fine art, architectural studies and some historical excursions, we try to plan carefully.

Popular lectures in 2008 included an excellent survey by Francis Woodman on the medieval constructions that just might fall down, and a fascinating talk on towns and temples of classical Turkey. Perhaps Egyptian jewellery was of special interest to women, and this was balanced by an examination of the trail and repatriation of stolen art with practical advice from a former policeman on home security.

Next year's programme features "Follies" by Celia Fisher and a return visit of one of our most popular lecturers, Frank Woodgate, who will illustrate American Realism in the 1920s and '30s. We also look forward to a talk on The Moghuls of India, Modern Design in the '50s and Antony Penrose enlightening us on his family's connections with Lee Miller and Picasso.

We hope that this does not sound like a recipe for intellectual indigestion, and that you have enjoyed our past programme and look forward to our next. Please let us know if you have any suggestions – sometimes the most interesting discoveries are gleaned from the lecturers' list after a personal recommendation from a member.

Visits Secretary's Report

Heather Gardner and Frank Power

Visits were planned by the Chairman when she was Visits Secretary in 2007, and then taken over by Frank Power, who has also planned the visits for 2009.

In 2008 we offered a range of delightful venues on pleasantly warm days. In April, 65 of us looked for evidence of the early lives of the great and the good in the panelled form rooms of Eton College, later moving down the road to Windsor Great Park to lunch at the spacious restaurant in Savill Gardens, England's finest woodland garden. Deep in wooded and pastoral Oxfordshire, unspoilt Rousham Gardens captivated our June visitors with one of the finest examples of the Early English Landscape style, and nearby Ditchley Park

impressed with its interior decoration, stucco ceilings, portraits by famous names and racy stories of the more recent residents. Our programme of seven outings concluded with a trip to Highgate in October. As we gathered outside Kenwood House to leave at the end of the day, our party mingled with the crowds enjoying the low sun, looking out over Hampstead Heath to those unrivalled views of the City, and some reflected whether indeed earth had not anything to show more fair.

Since the cost of coach hire has risen we do not always break even financially, but with your support we hope to continue with a varied programme that will appeal to many members.

Study Tour Report 2008

Jean Storer

In October thirty-six of us set off on a visit to Chester and Liverpool, European City of Culture 2008. We were well looked after on the journey by Harding's Coaches and en route we visited Shugborough, a National Trust property in Staffordshire, with its complete set of Victorian farm buildings, and the house, grounds and gardens to explore. Heritage Travel had arranged for us to stay in the centre of Chester, an ideal position for our guided walking tour of the city. Chester, with its Roman remains and medieval shops provided a sharp contrast to the vibrancy of the redeveloped Liverpool. Just outside Chester we were able to visit Sunlight Village, one of the earliest

villages built for workers in the factory of the Lever brothers, innovative makers of soap, and we also saw the Lady Lever Gallery housing their collection of treasures. Our tour included three very different galleries, with the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, and on our last day the Lowry Gallery at Salford Quay. The modern development of the former docks to create the Lowry Centre was an unexpected bonus. We came away with stimulating images from across the centuries and, for many, a determination to return and reflect further on the vision of those who had created such a feast of decorative and fine arts.

Day of Special Interest

Jean Storer and Heather Gardner

A double bill, Good Works in Bad Times, was enjoyed by 48 members, with a conducted tour of The Foundling Museum in Brunswick Square telling the story of London's first children's charity. Insights into the social

history of the 18th century were given by the poignant exhibits in the museum and by the story of John Wesley's work as the founder of Methodism during the tour of his house, chapel and graveyard in City Road during the afternoon.

Church Recorders' Report

Janet Dick

St Andrew's Church at Gatton has been closed from September to the end of 2008 to enable major restoration work to be undertaken. Our Church Recorders' woodwork team were allowed into the church to view the

wood panels that had been removed from the walls and to discuss the work with the expert restorers. They were able to determine that the Nave

panelling system was as originally fitted in Aarschott cathedral, Belgium. The team

had previously thought that some of the infill in the panels had been the work of the craftsmen used by Lord Monson. However, the restorers were able to

confirm that some of these joinery techniques would not have been used in Victorian England.

Heritage Volunteers' Report

Jean Power

Our Heritage Volunteers have continued their regular Tuesday afternoon work at the Reigate Priory Museum, under the guidance of Eileen Wood, the Curator. As well as looking after the clothing collection, on Heritage weekends our volunteers have done guiding and stewarding and have prepared and dressed models for displays. Prince Edward met some of us when he came to open the Park and to see the murals and the museum.

Recently we received a grant that paid for special protective envelopes for the

interesting collection of local photographs. Resulting from an appeal to our members we have a few more volunteers working in a rota two afternoons a week on the photographs.

The current exhibition, Victorian Childhood, will close soon and a new one may be planned for the spring.

Sincere thanks go to all Heritage volunteers, who give their time and support so willingly. Without this it would be difficult for the Museum to function.