

THE NEWSLETTER

Issue No.3 – January/February 2004

Trudy's Chairwords

I hope you have all enjoyed a pleasant and stress free Christmas holiday. For those of us with extended family commitments, the pre-Christmas planning and anticipation continues to seem never ending, then suddenly it's all over, the house empties and calm is restored. And so to our new diaries

You will have noticed that the January 2004 ADFAS lecture was held one week later than usual. The January lecture usually has the lowest attendance of the season and, as this is also the case at the DFAS societies in The Hague and Brussels, we agreed to book a later date this year, in the hope that more members and friends would have returned from holiday breaks abroad. We also engaged one of NADFAS' liveliest and most interesting speakers, James Malpas.

Just before this newsletter went to press we received confirmation of a sponsored venue for our 1st March lecture, *Art & Architecture in Armenia & Georgia*. With the support of the Consulate of Armenia in Antwerp, Dexia Bank has generously offered us the use of the Osterrieth Huis on the Meir. ADFAS has had the good fortune to enjoy this beautiful location on several occasions and it always makes the event rather special. Sponsorship is difficult to obtain for such a small society and we are fortunate already to have generous support towards the cost of this lecture from Diamond Tenders (Belgium) NV, a company that has sponsored ADFAS events in the past. Also, we must not forget the generosity of several ADFAS members who sponsor the society by covering the costs of the Programme leaflets, printing of monthly posters and the paper for our Newsletter. These are much appreciated, as is sponsoring of the website, its maintenance and costs – thank you all.

Thank you too to the committee members for continuing to work hard

throughout 2003. I am sure they will join me in wishing all our members and guests a very happy, healthy and peaceful 2004. Please continue to enjoy and support ADFAS, we are already planning next season!

Trudy Debice

Visits, Outing & Study Day

Saturday February 21st with Key Minnebo: 10.30am. We meet outside the Bourla Schouwburg at approx. 10.15am. We take a walk through the Latin Quarter of Antwerpen: a lively neighbourhood with theatres, botanical gardens, the oldest hospital in Belgium, art, markets & virgins. Cost will be about €4/person. Name lists for bookings will be on the noticeboard at January & February ADFAS Lectures. Please see Maureen Smith or call 03 238 29 51.

Saturday March 20th with Ann Van Houtte at the Rubenshuis: 10.30am, meet beforehand at 10.15am. Cost per person given later. This exhibition is called "Rubens as a collector" and we will view the paintings of those artists he admired such as Titiaan, Tintoretto and Veronese, and also Holbein, and Elsheimer. He had a large collection by Adriaan Brouwer and was a great admirer of Brueghel the Elder. His house also contains sculptures of note and, apart from works of art, there are collections of antique objects, coins and medals. Rubens had status as a wealthy citizen and noted businessman. This exhibition is part of 2004's "rediscovery of Rubens". There is a minimum of 15 people for groups.

Saturday April 24th with Key Minnebo: 10.30am: A walk covering the area of the Meir and surrounding streets. Architecture, monasteries, the

bourgeoisie class, artists and traders will be the subject of this walk. Cost about the same as for the February walk. We meet by the Teniers statue by Inno at 10.15am.

Watch this space for information on a visit in May (to the KMSK) and our annual Outing in June (a trip to Cologne).

Maureen Smith

ADFAS and NADFAS

You will have seen the logo below on the second membership card you received recently, the first one of course being for your very own ADFAS – the Antwerp Decorative and Fine Arts Society.



ADFAS is not alone; we are part of a world-wide association of similar societies which began in England in 1968. This association, which co-ordinates lecturers and publishes the *NADFAS Review*, is the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS). NADFAS compiles the Directory of Lecturers and tries to ensure that quality of content and presentation is maintained.

We here in Antwerp benefit from all of this, including the possibility of joining one of the Tour NADFAS range of art history tours and cruises, led by expert lecturers, as well as becoming a Heritage Volunteer and knowing that we are helping to preserve our local heritage for future generations.

Angela Dodds

Venue for the March lecture:

The Osterrieth Huis on the Meir (Meir 18)

Comments on lectures and outings by ADFAS members

Please send us your comments and we will publish them. Thank you.

Peter Gibson on The Christmas Story in Stained Glass (December 2003)

A very charismatic speaker, somewhat old fashioned but with an immense expertise on the subject. His lecture was very well structured, his speaking very clear and from the reactions afterwards, I think most of us thoroughly enjoyed his lecture. First of all I was struck by the fact that stained glass is worn out every 100/150 years and if it is not releaded, it just falls apart. While releading and/or restoring stained glass, Mr Gibson has been able to see details from nearby at eyelevel and it is then that he takes his pictures, not only of the complete work, but also of many rare and wonderful details.

I expected the lecture to be a continuous row of slides with angels, cherubs, shepherds and the Magi around the new born Messiah. But no, our speaker travelled with us: from the places in the Holy Land such as Jerusalem, Galilea, Nazareth, Bethlehem, where the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity etc. took place, to churches and museums in England (Ely, Canterbury, York etc.) or France (Ste Chapelle in Paris, the cathedral of Chartres), from which he wanted to show us a stained glass design on the Christmas Story. Mr Gibson covered the subject with slides from 13th and 16th century stained glass designs, but also more modern ones by Lewis Carroll, Burne-Jones, and the Hungarian master Erwin Beshamy.

It was an exciting lecture on a typical Western European art: painting against the light!

GDB

James Malpas on Klimt, Schiele & Kokoschka: The Vienna Secession 1898-1918 (January 2004)

Our dynamic speaker first put the subject in its context. While Impressionism is flourishing in France and Charles Rennie Mackintosh and William Morris are working in Britain, the contra-reformation art with its large scale paintings is still being produced

in Vienna, the capital of that immense Austro-Hungarian Empire. After his introduction, James Malpas sketched the start and the evolution of Gustav Klimt's work. First his very eclectic style, and later the influences of the monochrome style from Whistler, the square forms of the art nouveau architecture, the mosaics of Ravenna, the Greek and Byzantine style etc. In 1898 Klimt with the help of various architects had an exhibition space built in the style of a mausoleum: the Vienna Werkstatte, where his work was exhibited.

By 1908 the Vienna Secession had brought modernism to the general European level and Klimt started painting landscapes (with high horizons) and un-idealised, vulnerable people. 1908 was also the year that Kokoschka and Schiele came on the scene. Our speaker didn't stay long with Kokoschka, who was fascinated by Van Gogh, and very rapidly came to Egon Schiele for whom he seemed to have much sympathy. In the portraits and self-portraits by Schiele the speaker emphasised the importance of graphic work. In contrast to Klimt, who continued to paint opulent landscapes and who was involved in a lot of cultural activities during the First World War, Schiele was deeply concerned by all the social misery he encountered and he wanted to express this in his work. It was his expressionism that was the start of the rediscovery of the three artists in the latter years of the 20th century.

A very interesting lecture, with carefully selected pictures. Thank you Mr Malpas!

GDB

GenovanversanversaeviceversA – a Visit to the MoMu 15 November 2003

We were expected at the fashion museum at 9.45 am: all of us were there, except Mimi and Maureen who had dared to take the train from Ghent. The subject was “*the art and use of silk in the Renaissance and baroque period in Genova and its link with Antwerp*”. The exhibition was splendid.

Our guide was excellent, well informed, friendly, good humoured, an artist herself and British ... The start of the exhibition was strange: we took the train, a special train: it referred to the designer Angelo Figus who first came by train to Antwerp.

After that we discovered room by room the different aspects of silk fabrics (old and new) combined with Genoese portraits made by Flemish painters such as Van Dyck, Seghers and Van Lint and unusual objects. We saw that life in those days was not so boring, instead it was pleasant and colourful (at least for the rich). So we went from one room to another, our curiosity sharpened by strange combinations: panels covered by silk hidden behind doors, bicycles with a distinguished portrait of a lady, old shoes in a corner, even the blue jeans came across: it seems to be much older than we thought.



Collage by Angelo Figus

The end of the journey was a delight in red and white: strange red trees in contrast with the white environment.

We learned a lot not only from our guide but also from one of our members, Michael Smith. One conclusion: never throw away your old scarves, textiles, shoes and furniture: it could be used in a “new” exhibition.

So thanks for a wonderful morning.

Christine De Brabandere

ADFAS VOLUNTEERS

Rather unexpectedly, the project of cleaning up the puppets of the Poesje at the Depot of the Antwerp Museums has ended. Gilberte Du Bois has written an article on that project and sent it to the Heritage Volunteers in London with pictures. Let's hope that we receive a review in one of the next NADFAS magazine.

(Cont'd on next page)

**Monday 2 February 2004
MEETING CHOPIN: PARISIAN
ARTISTIC LIFE IN 1847-8
Lecturer: Jeremy Barlow**

A family story that an ancestor knew Chopin led eventually to the discovery of a diary kept by the lecturer's great great-grandmother, Fanny Erskine. She stayed with friends of Chopin in Paris and the composer himself auditioned her as a suitable singing pupil for the renowned Manuel Garcia. Fanny met Chopin on several other occasions, along with other leading figures in Parisian artistic and musical society in 1847-8. The lecture includes slides of Parisian life and art, together with music by Chopin and his contemporaries.



But it is perhaps a good idea to introduce this lecture with a short biography of the composer:

Fryderyk Chopin was born in 1810 in Poland, son of a French émigré father and a cultured Polish mother. He grew up in Warsaw, taking music lessons and later entering the Conservatory; by 1828 he had performed in local salons and composed several rondos, polonaises and mazurkas. In 1829-30 he gave concerts in Vienna and Warsaw, but his despair over political repression in Poland, coupled with his musical ambitions, led him to move to Paris in 1831. There, with introductions into the highest society, he quickly established himself as a private teacher and salon performer, his legendary artist's image being enhanced by frail health (he had tuberculosis), attractive looks, sensitive playing, a courteous manner and the piquancy attaching to self-exile. Of his several romantic affairs, the most talked about was that with the novelist George Sand (Aurore Dudevant). Between 1838 and 1847 their relationship, with a strong element of the maternal on her side, coincided with one of his most productive creative periods. He gave few public concerts, though his playing was much praised, and published much of his best music simultaneously in Paris, London

and Leipzig. The breach with Sand was followed by a rapid deterioration in his health. On 17 October 1849, Chopin died of pulmonary tuberculosis in Paris. His funeral at the Madeleine was attended by nearly 3000 people.

GDB

**Monday 1 March 2004
ART & ARCHITECTURE IN
ARMENIA AND GEORGIA
Lecturer: Clare Ford-Wille**

Despite a chequered history, much remains of the rich artistic life of Armenia and Georgia, from the glorious examples of gold jewellery dating from the pre-Christian era, to the little known but vibrant painting of the modern period. Armenia was the first country to adopt Christianity in 301AD and churches built during this period exhibit highly sophisticated experiments in dome construction and masonry techniques. In Georgian churches the extraordinary richness of wall painting remains. Sculptural reliefs, khatchkars (unique to Armenia) & some of the earliest manuscript illuminations, glowing with vivid colours, all feature in this lecture.

Georgia is a small country on a southern slope of the Caucasus mountains on the Black Sea side. Its capital is Tbilisi. Due to its diversified nature and rich historical past, here, at the division border of Europe and Asia, original culture has developed. It is centuries-old, as for example the ruins of Bagrati Cathedral, surrounded by mystery.

Armenia today is a small republic in the southern Caucasus. Its capital is Yerevan. It is one of the oldest countries in the world with a recorded history of about 3500 years. The famous Khatchkars are medieval Armenian cross stones, as in this example:



Our lecturers

**JEREMY BARLOW, MA ARCM
ARAM**

Having studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, Jeremy Barlow is now a lecturer, writer, broadcaster and performer. Together with his *Broadside Band*, he has recorded many CDs, mainly of 16th and 18th Century popular music. (If you are interested in discovering more about these recordings and other aspects of our speaker, then visit his website, www.broadsideband.co.uk). As might be anticipated, his lectures are always accompanied by high quality recorded music.

CLARE FORD-WILLE, BA Hons

An art historian, Clare Ford-Wille has travelled extensively and regularly leads study tours to all the main European centres of art and architecture. Much sought after as a speaker, she lectures on art history at the University of London and at the National Gallery in London, as well as lecturing throughout Europe and the U.S.A. In addition, she finds time to write articles for leading arts publications and has recently written a part of the CD Rom sound guide to the National Gallery's permanent collection.

Both of these speakers are making their first visit to ADFAS.

ADFAS VOLUNTEERS (Cont'd)

Martine Baines and Gilberte Du Bois have already met Ms Claire Baisier from Sint Andries for the next project. We will clean the beautiful reliquary-ship of St Andrew by Jos Junes from 1929 and work on it in the area, newly restored, that is to become a little museum. It is scheduled to open next September for the 475th jubilee of the church. Arrangements have been made to meet Evelien van Biezen, a specialist in the restoration of metal objects and by the end of this month we start working. Anybody happy to join? Just give a call to Martine or Gilberte (phones and e-mails on the last page of the newsletter).

DATES TO REMEMBER

2 February 2004	ADFAS lecture <i>Meeting Chopin: Parisian Artistic Life in 1847-8</i> Lecturer: Jeremy Barlow	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
11 February 2004	ADFAS Committee Meeting (if you have anything you would like brought up at the Committee meeting, please get in touch with Trudy Debice or Gilberte Du Bois)		
21 February 2004	Walk through the Latin Quarter of Antwerp (guide: Key Minnebo)	Information at the February lecture from Maureen Smith	
1 March 2004	ADFAS lecture <i>The Jewels of the Caucasus - Art & Architecture in Armenia and Georgia</i> Lecturer: Clare Ford-Wille	Osterrieth Huis, Meir 18	7.30 pm
20 March 2004	Visit to the Rubenshuis: <i>Rubens as a collector</i> (guide: Ann Van Houtte)	Information at the February and March lectures from Maureen Smith	
5 April 2004	ADFAS lecture <i>The Sketches of Charles Rennie Mackintosh</i> Lecturer: Elaine Grogan	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
24 April 2004	Walk in the Meir area (guide: Key Minnebo)	Information at the March and April lectures from Maureen Smith	
10 May 2004	ADFAS lecture <i>Ceramics of the Islamic World</i> Lecturer: Sarah Searight	Rubenshof, 1st floor	7.30 pm
May 2004	Flemish Landscape Paintings from Patinir to Rubens	Details in your next Newsletter	
June 2004	Study Day in Cologne, Germany	Details in your next Newsletter	

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With thanks to this month's contributors:
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