

# THE NEWSLETTER

Issue No.4 – March/April 2004

## *Trudy's Chairwords*

As hoped, the beautiful setting of the Osterrieth Huis attracted extra visitors to the March lecture and it was good to see the Armenian community well represented at this talk on the Jewels of the Caucasus. With thirty-three ADFAS members present and almost as many guests, the committee felt that the extra organisation involved was certainly worthwhile. Thank you again to the Consulate of Armenia for encouraging support for the event and to the several sponsors who helped make it financially viable.

Incredibly, there are only two more ADFAS lectures this season. However, there are a number of ADFAS guided visits between now and mid-June. Maureen Smith is working hard to ensure the success of such activities, which require a great deal of forward planning - and some forward commitment on members' part too. A proposed day visit to Cologne on June 12th will need 12 – 15 participants to make it viable and Maureen needs to have feedback from anyone interested, plus a commitment to pay in advance, before she can continue with the detailed organisation of such a visit. Please have a look at the details below and let Maureen know if you would like to go to Cologne.

Finally, two meetings that are important for the well-being of ADFAS and other NADFAS societies, take place in London this month - the Mainland Europe Area Meeting and the NADFAS Directory Meeting. Gilberte Du Bois and I will be representing ADFAS at both.

Trudy Debrice

## *Visits, Outing & Study Day*

### **Saturday April 24th: There is More to the Meir than Shops.**

A walk with Key Minnebo covering the area along the Meir and surrounding streets, studying the architecture, monasteries, the bourgeoisie, artists and traders. We meet by the Teniers Statue, Meir (by Inno), at 10.15hrs so that the walk can begin at 10.30hrs prompt. Cost will be €5.50 per person. Please call Maureen Smith on 0478 344 094 or 03 238 29 51 - please leave messages if necessary. Booking - and payment - must be no later than APRIL 5th LECTURE.

### **Saturday May 15th: The Invention of the Landscape - Flemish Landscape Painting from Patinir to Rubens.**

The landscape painters Jan Breughel, Paul Bril, Joos de Momper the Younger, Bonaventura Peeters the Elder and the Younger, have a very special place in the collection of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts. Yet the importance of landscape painting before, during and after the age of Rubens is all too often ignored. This exhibition will not only focus on the great Flemish landscape artists in the time of Rubens, but also on surprisingly evolutionary moments. Thoroughly recommended! We will have an English-speaking guide. Cost per person € 11.00. We will meet outside the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunst at 9.45hrs for the visit at 10.00hrs. Booking - and payment - NO LATER THAN APRIL 5th LECTURE, or call above numbers for reservations and payment by Bank Transfer.

### **Proposal for a Study/Outing Day in Cologne: Suggested date Saturday 12th June.**

Low cost early booking fares are available - but to benefit from these we first need to know how many members would be interested in such a visit? Booking for group travel by train is obviously essential (the quickest way to get there). It will involve leaving Antwerp Central station early in the morning - 7.10am - to catch the Thalys from Brussels to Cologne, arrival in Cologne about 11.00hrs. At the end of the day we would leave Cologne at 18.00hrs for final arrival in Antwerp at 21.30hrs. WE MUST know numbers well before the day. We need at least a group of 10 people. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested: NO LATER THAN APRIL 5th LECTURE or call above numbers and let Maureen Smith know. Cost per person for train & museum entrances would be about €50 (meals extra). We could visit the Cathedral if wished but there are also aspects of German art waiting for us to discover in the museums situated between the Cathedral and the river Rhine. A detailed plan of the day - including a good lunch - will be presented as soon as there's a 'go ahead' for this visit.

NB: remember that payments due for the April 24th & May 15th events must be made on April 5th. Payment for Cologne will depend on whether the visit can be planned and would be needed certainly no later than the May Lecture. Remember too, that booking means non-reimbursable payment (if you cannot turn up for an event you can always send a substitute but we cannot reimburse as we have to commit up front to organisations the majority of whom have a policy of no reimbursement). Please do note these telephone numbers: 0478 344 094 or 03 238 29 51 (which has an ansafone).

*Maureen Smith*

## Comments on lectures and outings by ADFAS members

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

*Jeremy Barlow on Meeting  
Chopin: Parisian Artistic Life in  
1847-8  
(February 2004)*

This lecture revolved around the diaries of a young Scottish woman, Fanny Erskine, who was a relative of the lecturer, Jeremy Barlow. Fanny recorded in great detail her time in Paris, describing the dinners and concerts which she attended, who was there, and her meeting with Fryderyk [Frédéric] Chopin, whose pupil she became. Her diaries formed the basis for the lecture.

In the diaries, Fanny referred to Chopin as a Pole for while he was of mixed French-Polish parentage, he was born, raised and educated in Warsaw.

Apparently Chopin preferred to extemporise as did other musicians at that time. The lecturer drew attention to Chopin's "long lines of music" (bel canto) which he illustrated by playing a recording of one of Chopin's nocturnes. We also heard a recording by Jenny Lind (a famous and remarkable singer who was the star pupil of Manuel Garcia) singing this so-called "river of notes". We learned how Chopin tried to imitate the style of Bellini and to illustrate this, we listened to an excerpt from an opera by Bellini, sung by Maria Callas. This was a magic moment!

The excellent slides with which Jeremy Barlow illustrated the lecture included one of the house in the avenue des Poissonnières where Chopin lived for a short while. Most amusing was a cartoon of "English people appreciating art".

Fanny Erskine also recorded meeting Rossini whom she described as "a very fat fellow".

Chopin was also interested in music written for the organ and we were shown slides of some famous organs including the remarkable one in the church of Ste Marie-Madeleine in Paris. A certain Mr Swaber, an organ fanatic, took Fanny Erskine all over Europe to see various famous organs. (The journeys in between must have been very interesting.)

Chopin's most prolific period for composing occurred whilst he was having an affair with the novelist

George Sands. Under her maternal and loving care, his fragile health (he suffered from tuberculosis) improved.

For those interested in early photography, of special interest was an 1848 photograph of "The Barricades" in Paris. It was during those troubled times that Chopin toured in England and Scotland and at a final meeting between Fanny and Chopin in Scotland, Chopin gave her a signed copy of a little Polish song about the spring.

The lecture concluded with a slide of the beautiful painting of Fanny Erskine by George Richmond.

Isabel Terrell

*Clare Ford-Wille on Art &  
Architecture in Armenia and Georgia  
(March 2004)*

An interesting subject in the beautiful Osterrieth House with the patronage of the Consul of Armenia in Antwerp, was something I was looking forward to. The lecturer introduced Georgia and Armenia as two Christian Republics situated between non-Christian countries. I next expected a brief historical introduction, but Mrs Ford-Wille only mentioned that both countries had been invaded by many countries ending with the long Turkish invasion before Georgia and Armenia became independent. She then started on her beautiful slideshow.

We saw many old Georgian churches and monasteries in extremely beautiful mountainous environments. The oldest ones, dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, are in stone, sometimes with 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century additions, and they all have marvellous fresco's. In some there are little panels decorated with unusual but refined sculptures in Byzantine style. It is only much later that we find evidence of Persian influences in art and architecture. I was amazed to hear of a woman saint: St.Nino, who converted the King of Georgia. The lecturer also pointed out that Georgia was the home of the Golden Fleece and its legend. Moving on to the capital Tbilisi, we were shown some antique and more modern art objects from the National Museum.

Armenia, a country that used to be much larger than it is today, has of course its great symbol: Mount Ararat (5165 m) where Noah's ark was washed ashore. But it also has one of the largest Alpine lakes in the world (about 2000 m above sea level): Lake Sevan. As well as these natural elements, Mrs Ford-Wille also showed slides from Garni, a 1<sup>st</sup> century temple in pure Hellenistic style, 7<sup>th</sup> century churches (St.Hripsime - another female saint! - and the round church in Zwartnots, consecrated by the Emperor Constantin), the monastery complex of Noravank (13<sup>th</sup> century), etc. The last part of the lecture was dedicated to brightly coloured 7<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts, the Cilicia's 13<sup>th</sup> century Canon table and a few paintings by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Armenian artists.

Again a good touristy lecture, but personally I would have liked more historical, artistic and architectural depth.

Thanks to the sponsors and congratulations to Trudy Debec, our chairwoman, for making it possible to have the lecture in this marvellous venue.

GDB

### *Stop Press*

#### Exhibition & Lecture at Eugeen Van Mieghem Museum

Batrijslaan 8, Linkerover

Wolseley Fine Arts (London) presents

#### *Master Drawings of the 20th century*

Opening Reception: 2-6 pm on Saturday 20 March

Open thereafter on Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays from 2-6 pm until 18 April

All works for sale.

#### **Lecture:**

**A talk in English on the artists featured - Rupert Otten of Wolseley Fine Arts.**

**Sunday 21 March 11.00**

Reservations: 03/211 03 30

**Monday 5 April 2004**  
**THE SKETCHES OF CHARLES**  
**RENNIE MACKINTOSH**  
**Lecturer: Elaine Grogan**

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928), architect, designer and artist, is celebrated around the world today as one of the most significant talents to emerge in the period which spans the mid 1890s to the late 1920s. He met Margaret Macdonald, his future wife, at the Glasgow School of Art and much of what can be seen in the buildings and collections in and around Glasgow involves their artistic collaboration. What is most typical for the artist is his masterful handling of light and space and of course his well-known pieces of furniture which have themselves become icons. Mackintosh took his inspirations from Scottish tradition and blended them with the flourish of Art Nouveau and the simplicity of Japanese forms.



But the subject of Elaine Grogan's lecture is Mackintosh's sketches. He sketched constantly and a number of his sketchbooks survive. Essentially private, these works provide a unique glimpse of one of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century's most important designers. We follow in his footsteps on various sketching tours, sharing his study and enjoyment of buildings and flowers - in his native Scotland, in Italy and in Belgium. We see what he considered important enough to record and, occasionally, later use in his own designs. In this way these early sketches allow privileged access to significant moments in Mackintosh's development and a clearer understanding of his genius.

GDB

**Monday 10 May 2004**  
**CERAMICS OF THE ISLAMIC**  
**WORLD**  
**Lecturer: Sarah Searight**

The lecture begins with an introduction to Islamic art in general, essentially a two-dimensional decorative art, and develops the theme through the brilliantly colourful and extremely skilful medium of ceramics, from 8<sup>th</sup> century Mesopotamian/Iraqi wares to 16<sup>th</sup> century Iznik wares from Ottoman Turkey. The Islamic potter introduced the world to blue and white decoration on pottery and to lustre, a technique which has travelled all over the world ever since its first appearance in 9<sup>th</sup> century Iraq.



**Bowl, 9th Century, Abbasid period (750-1258) Iraq**

Tin-glazed and stained earthenware; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1963 - Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

This ceramic bowl, boldly decorated in cobalt blue against a parchment-like white slip, is one of the first examples to incorporate calligraphy as its main element of decoration. The Arabic word "*ghibta*" (happiness) is repeated on two lines in the centre and creates a balanced composition when combined with the half-circles decorating the rim. Lusterware is the most astonishing form of ceramic produced in the Middle Ages. First developed by the Arabs in Iraq in the 9th century, the technology spread to the rest of the Mediterranean world following the Arab expansion. Lustre in general refers to a metal-like decoration that attempts to simulate a gold layer.

The term "Islamic ceramics" is very general and includes both Persian and Chinese influences, the result of the spread of Islam into Asia. But the incomparability and taste of Egyptian ceramics in the Fatimid era has never been surpassed. Pottery was one of the most important industries of the day, and the fragments of glazed and

elaborately decorated earthenware that have been found in abundance at Fustat -- the first Arab capital near what is now Old Cairo -- show its evolution.



Lustre Bowl, Iraq, 9th century - Earthenware, overglaze polychrome lustre painted source - The Nasli M. Heeramanek Collection, gift of Joan Palevsky - Los Angeles County Museum of Art

GDB

**Our lecturers**

**ELAINE GROGAN**

Born in Cork, Ireland, Elaine has degrees in English and History and the History of Art. She and her family have lived in such diverse places as Nigeria, the USA and Portugal but are currently resident in Brussels. However, Elaine regularly returns to Ireland to lecture on Mackintosh.

In recent years Elaine has made a particular study of the early career of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Amongst her publications on this subject is a study of Mackintosh's Antwerp sketches, published in the CRM Society Journal. In her work Elaine explores the idea that surviving sketchbooks are windows that allow privileged access to significant moments in the artist's intellectual and emotional development.

**SARAH SEARIGHT, MA**

An historian and journalist, Sarah Searight has specialised for many years on the Middle East and has published many books and articles on this subject. Her more recent interest is in the art history of the Islamic World. Sarah guides study tours to the region and gives lectures on Islamic Art at the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

In 1998 ADFAS enjoyed Sarah's lecture *Visions of Paradise - Decorative Art in the Islamic World*.

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

20 March 2004	Visit to the Rubenshuis: <i>Rubens as a collector</i> (with English-speaking guide)	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 April lecture from Maureen Smith
27 April 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)	
10 May 2004	ADFAS lecture <i>Ceramics of the Islamic World</i> Lecturer: Sarah Searight	Rubenshof, 1st floor      7.30 pm
15 May 2004	Flemish Landscape Paintings from Patinir to Rubens (with English-speaking guide)	Information at the April lecture from Maureen Smith
12 June 2004	Study Day in Cologne, Germany	Information at the April lecture from Maureen Smith
4 October 2004	AGM, followed by ADFAS Lecture <i>Venice and Her Music</i> Lecturer: Janet Canetty-Clark	Rubenshof, 1st floor      7.30 pm
8 November 2004	ADFAS Lecture <i>Vermeer: Restoration and Conservation of Paintings – The Girl with the Pearl Earring</i> Lecturer: Jurgen Wadum	Rubenshof, 1st floor      7.30 pm

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With thanks to this month's contributors:  
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