

# THE NEWSLETTER

Issue No.2 – November 2006

## **An Introduction**

In place of Trudy's Chairman's Words, this time we have a short piece from our newest Committee member, Grishma Shah.

Dear Members,

It started when I was looking for an "all English club" and I was surfing the Internet to find activities for expats to do in Antwerp.

I finally found something that held my interest – and was in English!

I followed up immediately by making a call to Trudy Debece, and came along to the Rubenshof for a lecture. The lecture was certainly informative and interesting, but all the people I met were wonderful as well, and I knew instantly that I was going to be here for a long time.

Within a couple of weeks I had started working with the group of heritage volunteers at the Stadsarchief, this too was a very satisfying morning, on Thursday every week, with all the other very nice people.

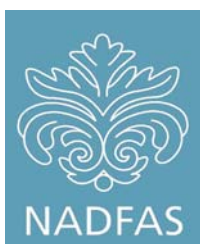
I have now become a part of the committee, and hope to work hand in hand with all of you and to grow.

Grishma

## **From your Committee**

If you were at the Annual General Meeting in October you will know that Trudy Debece has resigned from the Committee. She has served on it for many years and in many shapes, most recently as Chairman; she feels not only that she needs a rest, but also that others among the membership should come forward and play their part in running your Society.

15 years of  
**ADFAS**  
the Antwerp Arts Society  
a member society of



Thank you, Trudy, on behalf of all of us for the time, effort and dedication you have put into ADFAS, not only on the Committee but also as organiser of our Art Exhibitions. You would be sadly missed – if it were not for the fact that you will be with us at every lecture, and more importantly, as a source of knowledge and wisdom for those of us who are not quite sure what we should be doing throughout the season to keep ADFAS to a straight and narrow path.

Also at the AGM, we voted on to the Committee two new members, Grishma Shah and Tony Busselen. Unfortunately, Tony's doctor has now told him that he must rest for several months and he has reluctantly stepped down for the foreseeable future.

Finally, don't miss the exhibition at the Diamond Museum (ending on 31 December): "*Babur's Legacy, the influence of the Mughal Jewel.*" This could be a good introduction to our May lecture on the Mughals of India.

## **Society Notes**

It was announced at the November lecture that from now on, our lecture evenings will start at 7 pm. Everyone is welcome to come along to the Rubenshof from 7 pm onwards, when we will have the chance of a drink and a chat before the lecture begins.

As has become the custom recently, we are arranging a pre-lecture dinner in February. Please note the date, time and place now:

**Monday 5 February**

**6 pm**

**The Rubenshof restaurant**

Our next Newsletter (the January edition) will have full details of the menu, cost and reservation information.

Finally, very best wishes to all those we won't be seeing at the December lecture, for a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

## **Heritage Volunteer News**

We have started working at the Volkskunde Museum. We have to put pictures on glass in acid free boxes and digitalize their inventory. As the boxes have not been delivered yet, Werner Van Hoof, the curator, has asked us to put old postcards (some quite interesting) into special plastic envelopes and classify them in numeric order.

GDB

## **Our meeting place:**

### **December:**

**Alpheusdal, Filip Williotstraat 22, 2600 Berchem  
(tel: 03/286 99 99)**

### **January:**

**Café/Restaurant Rubenshof (first floor), Groenplaats 9,  
2000 Antwerpen (tel: 03/231 59 52)**

## The October and November lectures

**Monday 11 December 2006**  
**THE CUP THAT CHEERED: TEA, COFFEE AND CHOCOLATE IN THE 18th CENTURY**  
**Lecturer: Dinah Reynolds**

**NOTE: This lecture is at the Alpheusdal, Filip Williotstraat 22, 2600 Berchem, and will be preceded by a welcome drink and some Christmas cake. We look forward to seeing you from 7 pm onwards.**

"Thank God for tea!" wrote the British clergyman and essayist Reverend Sydney Smith (1771–1845), one of many to pay impassioned tribute to the world's most popular infusion. Yet, prior to its importation to Europe by Dutch traders around 1610, tea was virtually unknown to Westerners, who routinely began their day with a mug of beer or ale. Three exotic beverages – coffee, tea, and chocolate – arrived in seventeenth-century Europe at a time of burgeoning exploration and trade, and their arrival caused a near revolution in drinking habits. Celebrated by some, deplored by others, these stimulating brews gave rise to a number of important social institutions, such as the coffeehouse, the tea garden, and the ritual of afternoon tea. At first valued for their curative powers, they were soon counted among the necessities of daily life, and the utensils used in their preparation and service became essential as well.



*Tea and coffee service, ca. 1800*  
*Attributed to Christian Wiltberger (1766–1851) (American)*  
Website: [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

The lecture ends in the late eighteenth century when tea, coffee and chocolate had become accepted aspects of social life.

GDB

**Monday 8 January 2007**  
**THE RAKE'S PROGRESS: STRAVINSKY, HOGARTH AND HOCKNEY**  
**Lecturer: Janet Canetty-Clarke**

Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky was a Russian-born composer (1882–1971) Although he wrote primitivist, neo-classical and serial works, he is best known for the earlier compositions produced while he still lived in Russia (he later emigrated to the United States).

His opera, *The Rake's Progress*, was inspired by the eight paintings and engravings which form the work *A Rake's Progress*, by William Hogarth. The libretto was written by W.H.Auden and Chester Kallman.



*Sketch of Stravinsky by Pablo Picasso (1920)*

**William Hogarth** (1697–1764) was a major English painter, engraver, pictorial satirist and editorial cartoonist who has been credited as a pioneer in western sequential art. Much of his work, though at times vicious, poked fun at contemporary politics and customs. In 1731, he completed the earliest of the series of moral works (*A Harlot's Progress*) which first gave him his position as a great and original genius. It was followed in 1735 by the sequel *A Rake's Progress* showing in eight pictures the reckless life of Tom Rakewell, the son of a rich merchant, who wastes all his money on luxurious living, whoring and gambling, and ultimately finishes his life in Bedlam. Currently there is a Hogarth exhibition at the Louvre until 8 January 2007, which travels to Tate Britain in February, followed by Madrid in May.

**David Hockney**, born in Bradford in 1937, is an English artist, based in

California. An important contributor to the British Pop Art of the 1960s, he is considered one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century. He has also made prints, portraits of friends, and stage designs for the Royal Court Theatre, Glyndebourne, La Scala and the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. He currently has a major exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in London which runs until 21 January 2007.

### Recommended reading:

*Igor Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress* by Paul Griffiths, published by Cambridge Opera Handbooks, Cambridge University Press.

*Hogarth* by David Bindman, published by Thames and Hudson, London.

GDB

### Our December lecturer

#### DINAH REYNOLDS

Dinah Reynolds has worked at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford since 1976, specialising in ceramics, and has written about the Worcester Porcelain there. She has been a guide/lecturer at the Bodleian Library and Christ Church Picture Gallery, and is a National Trust lecturer. She is also an ex-DFAS chairman and is currently a president. Dinah is very much looking forward to visiting Antwerp again.

### Our January lecturer

#### JANET CANETTY-CLARKE

Janet Canetty-Clarke is very familiar to ADFAS, having lectured here on three previous occasions. She is a lecturer in Music at Sussex University and gives individual lectures for Cambridge and London Universities, as well as being a guest conductor for the Frauen-Kammerorchester van Österreich in Vienna. Janet made the ADFAS lecture tour of Australia in 1994 and 2001, and a similar tour of South African in 1997. She is looking forward to another visit to Antwerp, Brussels and The Hague.

## Other items of interest

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

### *Nicole Douek on Life and Art in Ancient Egypt (October 2006)*

The remains of the ancient craftsmen's village of Deir el-Medina are still visible today. Inhabited during the 18th dynasty, between about 3100 BC and 1500 BC, the houses were small and streets narrow, but the people who lived there were free Egyptians, not slaves. They were well looked after by their employers, the Pharaohs; they were skilled artisans who painted frescoes on the walls of their houses as well as in their tombs. Most of them could read books and write letters and they enjoyed their leisure time. We



*Painting of cat found at Deir el-Medina*

know about them because the dry desert air has preserved much of what they left behind, a great deal of which was found not only in and around their homes, but in the rubbish pit near the village. A hole some 50 metres deep, this was the receptacle of all that they no longer needed, but which is so valuable to Egyptologists today. It included mundane items such as laundry lists, poems, pieces of linen, as well as some wonderful little drawings executed on pieces of stone, much more like cartoons than the stiff, formalised paintings seen in the Pharaohs' tombs. These drawings are amazingly lifelike, full of movement – a dancer, a blind harpist, a cat, people playing games; the artists who produced them obviously enjoyed life in a way which we can still understand today, some four thousand years later.

Nicole Douek's relaxed and enthusiastic way of talking on a subject about which she obviously knows a great deal kept her audience enthralled, and my only complaint was that her lecture did not last twice as long.

AMD

### *Lieve Dejonghe on Leopold II (November 2006)*

Lieve Dejonghe, remember her COBRA lecture and her stepping-in when the booked lecturer fell ill, wowed us again with her style, its touches of humour spiced with a little gossip, and an eclectic set of slides that gave a feeling of rummaging through a century old box of memories. Her lecture was good dinner conversation, ranging wide over how Leopold's father (Leopold I) came to accept the Belgian throne, the dynastic, political and, especially, the social history of Leopold father & son, plus the latter's gad-about set.

Our poster told us that Leopold II, the first Belgian born king, was determined to put his nation on the map. Brussels was given a major facelift with new boulevards, museums and the impressive Palace of Justice. Neighbouring villages and countryside were developed into suburbs. Funds were provided through the "Fondation de la Couronne" by the recently acquired Congo (for a long time Leopold's personal property – not Belgium's). Sounds impressive, sounds good – until you discover the awful cost in human misery that providing the Funds entailed.

Gilberte said in her introduction that Leopold "did not have a good reputation". Lieve herself, an apologist for Leopold, acknowledged this, but concluded by asking us to "Remember him for making beautiful things possible".

In considering Caravaggio & Rembrandt, Hoving has written, and Schama has recently been seen saying, that the behavior, personality, and actions of artists have little to do with the beauty of their creations. Is this "ends justifying the means"? Yes, but acceptable if not reflected in their art and not so bad as to become totally repellent. Leopold was not an artist but a facilitator, and one who, as Lieve said in her lecture, knew the details of everything in which he was involved. What happened in his Congo beggars belief. We cannot destroy those many things that he facilitated – that would

be a crime – but we must never forget the human destruction that was the cost of that facility and risk letting it happen again – that would be criminal.

MS

### *Antwerp's Law Courts*

To everyone who was not on our visit to the Justitiepaleis: you missed some good company and our marvellous guide Key Minnebo. Her knowledge, good preparation (pictures, schemes etc framed in hard plastic), her strong and clear voice and her fluent English made our visit most interesting.

You may or may not like the building, but it has character, it is impressive and due to its construction it is also light, although perhaps not so light in the pocket of the Belgian taxpayer!

The new Law Courts are the work of 3 groups of architects led by the Richard Rogers Partnership. It took years to decide where it should be, but once the architects were chosen (1999) and subcontractors assigned (2000) work began; and the building was opened by HM King Albert II in March 2006.

Most of the public area is open to the public on weekdays. From the very impressive 'Salle des Pas Perdus' you can reach all the judicial public services. If you turn and look outside, you are looking straight down the Boulevards, an impressive view; the hall was designed to be an extension of the Boulevards and it works very well.

What impressed me most were all the environmentally friendly materials and ideas. The building is low in energy consumption, due to the newest heating and cooling systems and the way the daylight is captured and light is reflected by special mirror systems. In the basement everything used in the building is recycled. The old Palace of Justice on the Britselei will be restored and the three highest Courts (Hof van Assisen, Hoger Arbeidshof, Hof van Beroep) will be held there. All the other Courts are located in the new building: the courts at the top, the offices below them, and underground the garage and cells for the prisoners.

GDB

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

11 December 2006	<i>The Cup that Cheered: Tea, Coffee and Chocolate in the 18th Century</i> Lecturer: Dinah Reynolds	Alpheusdal	as from 7 pm
12 December 2006	ADFAS Committee Meeting (if you have anything you would like brought up at the Committee meeting, please get in touch with Georgina Murphy)		
8 January 2007	<i>The Rake's Progress: Stravinsky, Hogarth and Hockney</i> Lecturer: Janet Cannetty-Clarke	Rubenshof, 1st floor	as from 7 pm
5 February 2007	<i>Daniel Libeskind, Winner of the World Trade Center Competition</i> Lecturer: Alicia Salter Preceded by: (Further information, menu and booking details in the January Newsletter)	Rubenshof, 1st floor  Dinner	as from 7 pm  6 pm
5 March 2007	<i>How is it Made? A Closer Look at Silver</i> Lecturer: Helen Clifford	Rubenshof, 1st floor	as from 7 pm
2 April 2007	<i>How to Look after your Furniture</i> Lecturer: Christopher Chanter	Rubenshof, 1st floor	as from 7 pm
7 May 2007	<i>The Mughals of India</i> Lecturer: Ann Peerless	Rubenshof, 1st floor	as from 7 pm

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With thanks to this month's contributors:  
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