

THE NEWSLETTER

Issue No.4 – March/April 2007

An Introduction

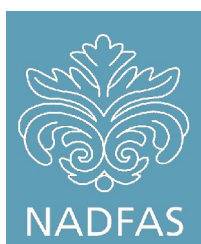
Dear Members,

It is my turn as Membership Secretary of ADFAS to write this introduction to the Newsletter, about some of the administrative aspects of our Society.

NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies), of which ADFAS is a member, will hold its AGM in London in May. I shall be attending that Meeting as representative of the ADFAS Committee. NADFAS works towards promoting and preserving the arts primarily through lectures and visits organized by individual societies throughout the world, as well as encouraging voluntary work to maintain historic buildings; recording churches and their contents; working towards developing the arts for the young; and maintaining lecture programmes for society members. Each society pays an affiliation fee to NADFAS. Remember: as members of ADFAS, you are able to enjoy the benefits of NADFAS membership, which entails concessions (these are given in the NADFAS Reviews, four times a year); and you can attend national events, lectures and study courses in the UK.

So what happens at the AGM? Briefly, it involves the election of Trustees (who as a body manage the affairs of NADFAS); discussion of reports on: finance, volunteers' work, helping young students, and other administrative matters. The Chairman, who is elected for a period of two years, spends a great deal of his or her time visiting societies in the UK and abroad, and the report will reflect that as well as views on the achievements of NADFAS. Societies also have the opportunity to put forward their views to NADFAS, at question time. This year we will also hear from the new President of NADFAS, Christopher

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



Lloyd, who intends to take an active presidential role.

It is most interesting to meet with other representatives of Mainland Europe groups, those of the UK, and other countries. Amongst ourselves, we compare experiences, problems, and not least the lectures which vary greatly from one society to another. Antwerp, Brussels and The Hague usually share the same Lecturer and so cut down on costs.

We have two more lectures to enjoy before the end of the Season, but Angela has long planned the new Season for 2007/2008. I think when you receive this new Programme you will agree that it is an interesting range of subjects. Do not forget we always welcome new Committee members. Do think about it for next Season when we have our AGM in October. Please contact a Committee member, if you wish for further details about the Committee, or on any part of the above information.

Maureen Smith

FORTHCOMING EVENTS and other news

Reminder: there are still a couple of places available on the visit to the **Netherlandish Diptych** exhibition at the KMSKA on 31 March. If you are interested, ring Gilberte Du Bois on 03/230 98 72 (**after 21 March**).

One of our sister groups in Antwerp, ABCA (Antwerp British Community Association), is holding a **Quiz Night** on Wednesday 28 March, and has invited ADFAS to take part. Anyone who would like to be on the team (of 4) to represent ADFAS at the Quiz should get in touch with Angela Dodds on 03/230 39 36.

The following arrived a few days ago in the ADFAS e-mail Inbox, from Philip Chearnley-O'Sullivan, Lieut-Col. USA (Ret):

"There has long been a rumor in my family that an ancestor, Margret Curle, along with Barbara Maubray, principle ladies in waiting to Mary Queen of Scots, took Mary's heart to be buried in St. Andrews Cathedral, Antwerp. I did see a painting of Mary Queen of Scots when I visited the Cathedral in 1959. I believe it was hanging on one of the columns. Does local custom also assert that Mary's heart is buried in the Cathedral?"

If anyone knows anything about this, please get in touch with Angela who will give you Colonel Chearnley-O'Sullivan's contact details.

Our meeting place:

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

The April and May lectures

Monday 2 April 2007
HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR
FURNITURE
Lecturer: Christopher Chanter

Beautiful furniture is a joy to look at, to touch and to use, but it brings with it great responsibilities: it needs caring for, and the older a piece of furniture is, as a general rule the more attention it needs. It is also an unfortunate fact that our modern, comfortable, damp and draught proof homes are the very worst places in which to keep old furniture. But fear not, you don't have to call in the experts; there is a great deal you can do yourself to care for, clean and protect your furniture.



Georgian style end table in mahogany

The potential causes of damage are temperature and relative humidity, light and ultra-violet radiation, pests and, not surprisingly, damage by use. So what can we do? Try to maintain a stable environment (temperature and humidity) and avoid placing furniture near sources of heat such as radiators as the surrounding air will be very dry. Similarly, try to avoid placing valuable furniture in direct sunlight or use blinds to reduce the effects of strong daylight.

Clean any simple polished surfaces and brass fittings by giving them a light dusting with a clean, dry duster (not a feather duster – which can cause scratches); be careful around damaged areas as those pieces are often loose and easily dislodged. Be very careful too, when moving furniture, not to scratch, dent or drop it.

Christopher Chanter will show us how all this can be achieved, and how, with a little bit of effort, we too can safeguard our precious furniture from damage and neglect and keep it looking beautiful for the next generation.

AMD

Monday 7 May 2007
THE MUGHALS OF INDIA
Lecturer: Ann Peerless

When the British took final control of India after the Indian Mutiny in 1857, most of the country was still part of the Mughal empire. The greatest of the invaders who conquered the Indian subcontinent over the centuries, the Mughals moved down into northern India from Afghanistan in the early 16th century and remained supreme rulers until the 18th century. Thereafter the Mughal dynasty slowly declined; the last Mughal emperor was deposed by the British in 1857, dying in exile in Rangoon, Burma, in 1862.

The first Mughal emperor, Babur, was a descendant of the Mongol warlord Tamburlaine and possibly also of Genghiz Khan. He wrote of the area he had conquered:

"Hindustan is a place of little charm. There is no beauty in its people, no graceful social intercourse, no poetic talent or understanding, no etiquette, nobility or manliness. The arts and crafts have no harmony or symmetry. There are no good horses, meat, grapes, melons or other fruit. There is no ice, cold water, good food or bread in the markets. There are no baths and no madrasas. There are no candles, torches or candlesticks."



The Emperor Humayun's Tomb in Delhi

However, this was not enough to turn Babur away, and he and his descendants succeeded in creating a fruitful blending of Indian, Iranian and Central Asian artistic, intellectual and literary traditions. The Mughals enjoyed the finer things in life, created beautifully designed artefacts, and appreciated and took pleasure in cultural activities; this we can still see today in the architecture, paintings and other objects they left behind. The Taj Mahal in Agra is of course the most famous example, but in many places across northern India there are buildings almost as fine, gardens as

beautiful and a way of life that still celebrates the grace and harmony that Babur so missed when he first saw India.

AMD

Our April lecturer

CHRISTOPHER CHANTER

Christopher Chanter has led NADFAS lectures, study days and workshops and is the author of articles on restoration as well as being a consultant on restoration to the Georgian Group. He was the Chairman of Historic Buildings Committee, Somerset Archaeology and Natural History Society 1999-2004 and is currently correspondent to the Council of British Archaeology.

Our May lecturer

ANN PEERLESS

Ann Peerless lectures for the V&A and the British Museum, as well as being a guest lecturer for NADFAS and Swan Hellenic in India and Vietnam. She was previously Course Director and Tutor for the University of Kent School of Continuing Education and Senior Lecturer in Art, Coloma College. She has a wide experience in adult education, schools and Holloway (Women's) Prison. Ann has been commissioned by the Government of India and Air India for design work and photographic exhibitions, and has travelled and researched in India, Taiwan, China and parts of SE Asia.

Ann Peerless last talked to us in 1999 on *The Wonder of Hindu India*.

Newsletter distribution

At the moment most of you receive your Newsletter by ordinary post. Would you prefer to receive it by e-mail? You won't have it on the creamy paper we all enjoy, but you will have the illustrations in colour, as well as being able to read it as soon as it is published (and you would save trees and postage). If this sounds interesting, contact Angela on angela.dodds@skynet.be.

Other items of interest

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

Alicia Salter on Daniel Libeskind (February 2006)

Alicia Salter, who was extremely enthusiastic, started with a brief introduction of Daniel Libeskind who was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1946, and became an American citizen in 1965. She then took us through his projects one after another, and clearly explained how his concepts were developed from the time of the commencement of a building up to its completion. Libeskind's keen knowledge of the history of various locations translated very well into his works, making them tell the story, as it were.

His work at The Imperial War Museum, in Manchester, England, was opened to the public in July 2002. The design concept is that of the Globe broken into three fragments, showing the devastating effect of War on the history of the world. The three fragments, or "shards", are structurally interlocked to represent world conflict on land, water and in the air.

In 1989, Libeskind won a competition for the Jewish Museum in Berlin, which opened in Sept. 2001 to wide public acclaim. The design is based on historic events connected to different locations with strong Jewish culture in Berlin. It depicts a desecrated (deconstructed) Star of David. Libeskind has also used concepts of void and emptiness – expressing the disappearance of Jewish culture in the city. The entire project, including its landscaping- the garden of exile- proves that the designer has made an effort to give each visitor a feeling of disorientation – to symbolize what had happened to the Jewish community.

We finally reached the peak of his professional career with the World Trade Centre Competition. Out of 400-odd contenders for the project, just six were short-listed; and from these six, Libeskind won the project. He had designed a 1776-foot high spire which would reflect the image of the torch of the Statue of Liberty. This was the epitome of the project, and undoubtedly accounted for his success. It was unfortunate that the lease holder of the ground where it was to become a monument did not accept this design; as a result, only the Spire will be allowed to stand.

Alicia's lecture was as enjoyable as it was invigorating and informative.

Grishma Shah

Helen Clifford on Silver (March 2007)

March's lecture, by Helen Clifford, well illustrated with slides, introduced us to how silver objects are made. The first known illustration of the tools and craft of Gold and Silversmiths – the two are interchangeable – dates from 1240 AD and little has changed since then, including the long apprenticeship required. Silversmithing is still very much alive and it was nice to hear Antwerp acknowledged especially as a centre for the avant-garde.

So let's set up a simple workshop to make a tureen with handles and legs. If our tureen is flat bottomed and multi-sided we start with a flat sheet of silver, score it and then bend into the desired shape – about as easy as origami. If we want a bowl shape then we start with a round flat disc. This can be spun in a lathe and moulded against a wooden pattern. Good for many repeat articles but with some limitations on shape articles. Again not as easy as it sounds. For the greatest freedom as to shape we start with a flat disc and "raise" it. Hammers, wooden block and anvil are all that are used, other than skill. Helen showed a modern jug, beautifully shaped in convex and concave curves, made in one piece from a flat disc by "raising". Seeing it without knowing of the craft would make it difficult to imagine such beauty so simply made.

The handles and feet for our tureen are intricate in design and so will be cast and soldered on, after which it needs decorating. This we can do in three ways : Embossing – pushing the metal from the inside outwards, Chasing – just the opposite, or Engraving – taking metal away from the outside. Tools? Hammers and small steel staves, often with patterned ends, for embossing and chasing, sharp tools for engraving. Helen showed breathtaking results of what these simple tools in the hands of craftsmen can achieve, to make us look in future at silver with greater respect and wonder at the craftsmanship involved.

Michael Smith

The West Window St.Boniface Anglican Church

Some of you may already know of the problems that face the West Window in Antwerp's St.Boniface Anglican Church – if you have been in church recently you will have seen the temporary work that has been carried out to cover the window. Much repair work needs to be done in the church, including gutters and the roof, but the West Window is the most urgent.

Why? Well, as in other buildings of the same period (St.Boniface dates from the early 20th century, having been dedicated in 1910, and the West Window was completed in 1918) some of the stonework, in particular that around the windows, was made of limestone. This is an inherently fragile substance which is now revealing its weaknesses. For some time now the columns between the windows have been disintegrating where the iron bars to hold the glass were inserted, and a wire frame was erected several years ago on the outside of the church to prevent damage or harm caused by pieces which had started falling off. Now the window has reached such a state that the interior has also had to be covered; this is an emergency solution until proper restoration work can begin next summer.

All is not gloom, however; two years ago the church became a listed building, and as such a great deal of the funds required for the repair of the building are available: 60% from the Flemish government, 20% from the Province of Antwerp and 10% from the City of Antwerp, leaving just 10% to be found by St.Boniface itself. Submitting plans for approval and payment of grants takes time – about three years – but unfortunately the state of the window is such that work must begin once approval is obtained but before grants have been received. However, 10% of the sum required is still a substantial sum of money, about €40,000, and St.Boniface has therefore launched an appeal for donations.

For further information, please contact Maureen Smith or Angela Dodds.

STOP PRESS SPECIAL:

We have been able to arrange a private visit to the new Felix Archives on Monday, 14 May, when the Archives are closed to the public and there are no other visitors. We meet at the Archives on the Oudeleeuwenrui number 29 at 1 pm and there will be a presentation about the building as the new home of the Antwerp City Archives, to be followed by a tour which will end with tea and coffee. This is completely free to ADFAS members, and gives us an opportunity to see some of the work that our Heritage Volunteers have been doing over the last year. If you want to join us, contact Gilberte – details below.

31 March 2007	ADFAS Outing: Visit to the exhibition Flemish Primitives: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych	KMSKA Meet at 9.45 am for 10 am tour
2 April 2007	How to Look after your Furniture Lecturer: Christopher Chanter	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
18 April 2007	ADFAS Committee Meeting (if you have anything you would like to be discussed at the Committee meeting, please get in touch with Georgina Murphy)	
7 May 2007	The Mughals of India Lecturer: Ann Peerless	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
14 May 2007	Visit to the Felix Archives	Oudeleeuwenrui 29 1 pm
8 October 2007	ADFAS AGM followed by our lecture: The World of Carpets Lecturer: Roderick Taylor	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm (AGM to start at 8 pm) Lecture at 8.15 pm
5 November 2007	Van Gogh and Gauguin Lecturer: Douglas Skeggs	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
3 December 2007	The Art of Photography: Photography as Art Lecturer: Marina Vaizey	[Venue to be announced] as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm

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Newsletter Editors: Angela Dodds & Gilberte Du Bois

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With thanks to this month's contributors:
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