

THE NEWSLETTER

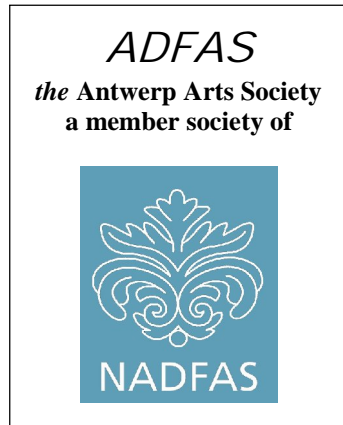
Issue No.5 – May/June 2007

An Introduction

Dear Members,

Yet another ADFAS season draws to a close – our 15th, and for those of us who have been around since the beginning it is hard now to remember a time without ADFAS. I have been looking through our programme over the years and it is amazing to see the subjects we have covered – from Antwerp and Amsterdam to the Cretan palace of Zakro by way of Mozart, Rembrandt, China, Jane Austen, the art of gardening and furniture repair, the Hindus and the Moghuls, Philip II, pop art, the Japanese tea ceremony, German Expressionism, architects, painters, musicians, collectors ... and yet there is still something new to discover each season. These last few months have been no exception, and of course there is the added pleasure of hearing new speakers and rediscovering old ones.

Now we are all looking forward to a well-earned holiday, particularly your hard-working committee. Very hard-working; I have been asking other Mainland Europe societies how many committee members they have – 15 is the largest number, and here in Antwerp we have been running ADFAS with only six. Although your Society has been functioning well this past season, we do need more people on the committee, to spread the workload a little, to bring in new ideas and fresh energy. Sadly we have lost two committee members this season: Tony Busselen joined us in October but had to leave almost immediately due to health problems, and our secretary Georgina Murphy has told us that for personal reasons she will be unable to remain on the committee next season. Thank you, Georgina, for two years of hard work well executed, we will miss you at our meetings – but continue to see you and Michael in the audience at each lecture.



Thus we start next year with five committee members – more than enough room for several more! If you are interested in finding out more of what is involved, call anyone whose names and contact details are on the last page of this Newsletter, we will be happy to provide you with information.

I must close with a big THANK YOU to all those who have worked so hard this last season: in addition to Georgina, there is Edgard, who keeps both our finances and the projector in an impeccable state; Gilberte, who helps to look after our lecturers but also runs the only Volunteers group among the NADFAS European societies; Grishma, without whose help we wouldn't have obtained sponsorship for the last lecture of the season; Maureen, who greets us all cheerfully at the door at each lecture and keeps the membership details in order; Martine Baines who has had many of the lecturers to stay, meeting them and feeding them as well, and Zoë Moller who has also hosted one of our lecturers; John Lawrence, Michael Smith and Jane McKay who have contributed to the Newsletter during the year (as have all the committee members), also every one of you who asks questions after a talk ... the list goes on. Thank you all.

We next meet either during the September outing to the Permeke and Delvaux museums on 15 September or at the AGM and lecture on 8 October. Maureen will be in touch shortly

asking you to renew your membership, and there will be the September newsletter to remind you of coming talks and events. Enjoy your summer!

Angela Dodds

OPENING 2007-2008 season

Saturday 15 SEPTEMBER 2007

**Guided tour of
the CONSTANT PERMEKE
MUSEUM in Jabbeke
&
the PAUL DELVAUX MUSEUM in
St-Idesbald-Koksijde**

- 9.00 Departure from the parking at the Vogelzanglaan, close to the corner of the G. De Grellelaan (Crowne Plaza Hotel)
- 10.15 Constant Permeke Museum: guided tour (1½ hours)
- 12.15 Transfer to the Paul Delvaux Museum
- 13.00 Lunch at the Restaurant "Het Vlierhof" (Delvaux Museum)
- 15.30 Guided tour of the Paul Delvaux Museum (1½ hours)

Return Antwerp between 19.00 and 20.00 hours.

We will go by car and fill the cars at departure. If you are willing to drive, please let me know. For non-drivers I suggest a contribution of **€5 per person to be paid to your chauffeur.**

Entries and guided tours in both museums: **Total €15 per person, to be paid before Friday 7 September 2007** at the latest to:

Gilberte Du Bois,
de Roest d'Alkemadelaan 13, bus 36,
2600 Berchem

Account: 610-4666600-21

Mention: ADFAS Outing 15/9/2007

LUNCH and drinks: pay on the spot.

MAXIMUM: 20 participants !!!

Exhibitions and Reviews

Other happenings

The monthly Lambermontmartre Open Air Art Exhibition is back in town; held every last Sunday of the month from 27 May up to and including 30 September, it will be open from noon until 5 pm at and around the Lambermontplaats, near the Fine Arts Museum.

For further information, go to www.lambermontmartre.be.

* * *

Travelling to London this summer? Then you should visit the latest exhibition at the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace. *The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection* provides a unique chance to see the artistic legacy of the Stuart kings, Charles I and his son, Charles II. Described by Peter Paul Rubens as 'the greatest amateur of paintings among the princes of the world', Charles I built up a collection of Italian masters to rival any in Europe. Dispersed after his execution, much was reclaimed or bought back by Charles II following the Restoration of the Monarchy.

The exhibition is open daily until 20 January 2008, and information is available from (+44) (0)20 7766 7301.

Christopher Chanter on Looking after your Furniture (April 2006)

Christopher Chanter is certainly well placed to lecture us on how to conserve antique furniture as for many years he has lectured, held workshops and study days, and personally restored furniture in many stately homes and country houses.

He began by reminding us of the menace of central heating which comes not only from change of temperature but more so from changes in the relative humidity. To avoid furniture cracking he advises us to try to retain the residual water in furniture by boiling kettles, leaving jars of water and plants around the room. Central heating also dries old glue which consequently loosens veneers and glued joints. He advised that wherever possible one should use natural glue to repair the wood although in some cases a polymer, water based PVA glue

which is white but dries clear may be applied.

Generally a good dusting and an occasional polish with natural bees wax polish is enough to keep furniture in good order.

However, if the furniture is very dirty, the grime must be removed from the piece before polishing. One can remove old dirt by using a very fine wire wool (as fluffy as a pullover) with cleaning fluid made up of 1 part (pt) methylated spirits, 1 pt boiled linseed oil and 1 pt turpentine. Once the item is cleaned use a good polish (with bees wax) to feed the wood. Never French polish before the piece is cleaned as French polish seals in the dirt.

He warned us of the damaging effects of sunlight on furniture and carpets which are virtually impossible to reverse, but the use of a dark wax can bring back some of the wood's original colour.

Christopher concluded his lecture by showing us a variety of interesting pieces that he had restored, in particular an intricately open fretted inlaid French cabinet that was once used to transport fighting cocks.

Many of us took advantage of purchasing some pots of Stones furniture cream and cleaner. We left ADFAS armed with enthusiasm and good intentions ready to tackle the needs of our neglected furniture.

Jane MacKay

Ann Peerless on the Moghals of India (May 2007)

This lecture about the larger than life Moghul Emperors who ushered in an Indian Golden Age was presented to us by a most knowledgeable speaker. She took us through the rise to power of the Moghul emperor Babur; his successors included the emperors Humayan, Akbar, Jehangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb.

Babur, a descendant of both Timur (or Tamerlaine) and Genghis Khan, marched into the Punjab from his capital at Kabul, Afghanistan, and defeated the Sultan of Delhi in 1527. In 1540, however, the Moghul empire came to a temporary end when Sher

Shah defeated Babur's son Humayan. When Humayan won his way back into India in 1555, he brought with him two Persian artists. Indian artists learnt from these Persian masters, and from this blend of traditions emerged the very distinctive Moghul school of painting. Full-bodied and realistic compared to the more fanciful and decorative Persian school, it developed in the workshops which Akbar established in the 1570s.

Akbar, Humayan's son, built a new palace at Fatehpur Sikri. It resembled a small town, with courtyards and exotic free-standing buildings. Beams and lintels and even floorboards were cut from red sandstone and elaborately carved, as if the material were oak rather than stone. Akbar, the greatest of the Moghuls, not only had the military ability required of a ruler in that time, but was also a man of culture and wisdom. He realized that the number of Hindus in India was too great to simply subjugate them. Instead he integrated them (and their art and culture) into his empire.

Jehangir followed Akbar, but devoted much of his reign expressing his love for Kashmir and gardens (in Islam a garden equals paradise). In Jehangir's reign, and during that of his son Shah Jahan, the Moghul imperial studio produced work of exceptional beauty.

During the reign of Shah Jahan some of the most vivid and permanent reminders of the Moghuls' glory were constructed of which the best known is the Taj Mahal. Some say that it was his passion for building that led to his downfall and that his son, Aurangzeb, deposed his father in part to put a halt to his architectural extravagances.

Aurangzeb, the last of the great Moghuls extended further the boundaries of his empire, but he was mean and a religious zealot. When he died in 1707, the empire rapidly disintegrated leaving the way open to rule by the British East India Company.

The lecturer showed marvellous slides of all these magnificent palaces, mosques, tombs, miniatures, architectural details etc. but for the audience it was not easy to follow the unfamiliar Moghul and Indian names.

GDB (with thanks to www.worldhistory.net)

Other items of interest

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

Meetings in London

Our Programme Secretary, Angela, together with Edgard our Treasurer, recently attended a **Directory Meeting** in London. Every NADFAS society sends one or two representatives to this meeting where they can meet, listen and talk to some of the many NADFAS Lecturers. That way they gain an idea of what subjects would be interesting for lectures in the coming season. Together with our sister societies in Brussels and The Hague, subjects for the next lecture season but one are discussed, and choices made shortly after Angela's return to Antwerp.

The following day there was a **Mainland Europe Meeting**, at which Angela and Edgard were also present. There are 10 Mainland Europe (ME) groups, of which Antwerp is one. The meetings are held to ensure these groups are given the opportunity to voice any concerns, financial or otherwise to NADFAS. Angela gave the ADFAS Annual Report and heard what other societies had to say about their season's lectures and their experiences generally during the previous year. Membership details are also given and advice on improving and maintaining membership should it be necessary. Any other concerns can be brought to attention, such as lecturers fees as an example. The ME Chairman, Maureen Davies, lives in Spain and liaises regularly with ME Societies and NADFAS.

Of the 10 ME groups, Antwerp is the only one that has a **Heritage Volunteers Group**. We can be justly proud, as we have a fabulous record in helping restore Antwerp's cultural heritage. Gilberte and her team have spent many years working on different projects. A Heritage Volunteers meeting is held in the UK twice a year, and as Representative for Europe Gilberte usually attends. She has recently forwarded a list of all activities organized by NADFAS Volunteers and Church Recorders to all ME Societies

The NADFAS year ends with the **AGM**, to which Michael and I went this year. We hope to report on any matters of interest in the next Newsletter.

Maureen Smith

Early-Netherlandish painters, the finest diptychs (KMSKA)

On March 31st a group of 19 ADFAS members and friends visited this exhibition. Instead of a regular guided tour, we enjoyed a very interesting, 40-minute introduction to the exhibition with details about those who commissioned the diptychs, their function, the way they were hung on walls or placed on tables, house-altars or lecterns, how they were set up at an angle, and how due to this angle some of the eyes were altered at the last minute etc. It all made for a very rewarding visit afterwards.

This unique exhibition, with some thirty diptychs, was first seen last year in the National Gallery of Art in Washington with the support of Harvard University Art Museums in Cambridge, Mass., and the KMSKA. The 15th- and 16th-century works shed light on a rich period in Flemish painting. In addition, a number of these diptychs have been reunited for the first time after many years' separation.

Diptychs are visual works consisting of two panels of the same shape and size, hinged so that they can be opened and closed. The diptych reached new heights in the early Netherlands art of painting. Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hugo van der Goes and Hans Memling painted masterpieces in this format. A diptych can be small or large; the subject is generally religious, but can also be secular (portraits of married couples, sometimes with their children). The main tableau is depicted on the inside, with the outside often painted to imitate stone or bearing the coat of arms of the person who commissioned the diptych. In the course of time, a great many of these fragile objects were destroyed or their appearance was altered through damage, neglect or changing tastes. Some diptychs are composed of parts that did not belong together originally. Many diptychs depict a Madonna on one panel and the portrait of the benefactor on the other. Other diptychs combine two religious tableaux. Most of the early Netherlands diptychs were intended for private use but some can also be seen in churches or chapels.

Diptychs were cherished by sovereigns, citizens and monks. They

radiate stillness, beauty and refinement. That makes them objects of art that can still deeply move the enthusiasts of today and certainly the members of ADFAS!

GDB (also see www.kmska.be)

Visit to the Felixarchives

15 of us met for the free tour of the Felixarchives, and what an exceptional visit! At the start the inner street of the old "Felix Pakhuis" is a wonderful sight. The architects together with a team from the archives have turned the old warehouse into a functional, safe and modern City Archive.

We then watched a DVD showing all the technical aspects of the move of 16 kilometers of archived documents to the new location. On it we could also see and hear about the work of the ADFAS volunteers, who at the old location cleaned and checked the inventory of 12,000 negatives on glass.

Then we went on a tour of the building. Our guide was Werner Pottier himself (who had supervised the volunteers and was the coordinator of the move) together with Liesbeth (Communications Manager) who translated for Werner. The immense and beautiful reading room with all the inventory books and other electronic research equipment has a marvellous view over the Willem and Kattendijk docks as well as the construction site of the new MAS (*Museum aan de Stroom*). But the highlight of our visit (not part of the regular tour) was the inside of the containers in which the archives are kept, and the explanations of the very elaborate systems of preservation and recording the exact location of all archive documents. We were even shown the cooled container where all films, pictures, videos and electronic devices are kept, including the boxes with packed negatives on glass!

Werner and Liesbeth answered all of our questions and the tour ended in the staff's canteen with a cup of tea or coffee. We also all were presented with a book on the Felixarchives. Thank you Werner, thank you Liesbeth, you gave us a very interesting glimpse of the work and aims of a city archive as well as a most pleasant afternoon – GDB

DATES TO REMEMBER

29 August 2007	ADFAS Committee Meeting (if there is anything you would like to have discussed at the Committee meeting, please get in touch with Georgina Murphy)	
15 September 2007	Outing to the Constant Permeke Museum in Jabbeke and the Paul Delvaux Museum in Sint-Idesbald (information: Gilberte)	All-day outing from 9 am to +/- 7 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
7 January 2008	20th Century Glass Lecturer: Andy McConnell	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
4 February 2008	Cities of Vesuvius: Art and Everyday Life in Ancient Pompeii Lecturer: Neil Faulkner	Preceded by annual supper Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
10 March 2008	Pearls Before Swine Lecturer: Jane Kelsall	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
7 April 2008	Treasures and Curiosities from the Royal Library at Windsor Castle Lecturer: Oliver Everett	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
5 May 2008	Wine-related Antiques Lecturer: John Ericson	Rubenshof, 1st floor as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm

ADFAS CONTACTS

[vacant]	Chair	---	---
Georgina Murphy	Secretary	03/225 21 38	georginabmurphy@gmail.com
Edgard Hubert	Treasurer	03/232 62 37	edgardhubert@hotmail.com
Gilberte Du Bois	Volunteers & Outings	03/230 98 72	gilberte.dubois@belgacom.net
Angela Dodds	Programme Secretary	03/230 39 36	angela.dodds@skynet.be
Maureen Smith	Membership	03/238 29 51	ipdc@scarlet.be
		(GSM: 0478/344 094)	
Grishma Shah	Ordinary Member	03/449 40 98	grishmametha@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editors: Angela Dodds & Gilberte Du Bois

ADFAS website – <http://www.ADFAS.org>

(Webmaster: Janet Hammersley)

Bank account number: 610-1114400-58

With thanks to this month's contributors:
Angela Dodds, Gilberte Du Bois, Jane McKay and Maureen Smith