

THE NEWSLETTER

Issue No.3 – January/February 2008

An Introduction

Dear Members,

We have now had two meetings at the Church Hall and both were very successful, in particular our December one on photography, when the Hall was as full as it could be. The *gezellig* atmosphere is greatly helped by the bar, serving tea/coffee, soft drinks and wine and run by Maureen & Michael Smith – thank you from us all to them and their team! The chief criticism that I have heard so far concerns the hardness of the chairs, but some of you are already getting round that by bringing your own cushions.

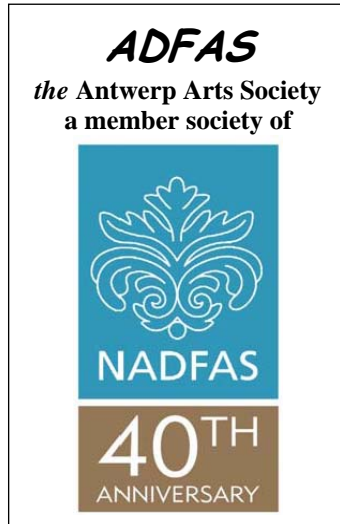
One major problem which is not so easily solved is a lack of good restaurants or eating places in the area, which means that we will not be having our usual pre-lecture dinner in February. However, we are investigating other places, possibilities and dates for a friendly ADFAS dinner in the near future, and as soon as we have found what we think is the perfect answer, we will let you know.

We're half way through the season! With only four more lectures to go, it is now possible to take out half-yearly membership, details of which are available at the door at each meeting. If you have friends or relations who would like to join ADFAS for the rest of the season, bring them along next time and it can all be arranged on the spot. And why not come to the Church Hall early next time and join us for a drink and a chat well before the lecture? We're open at 7 pm.

Angela Dodds



Marina Vaizey with Angela Dodds



Visitors at the December lecture in the Church Hall

Forgotten masterpiece, used as dartboard!

(from *The Times*, Nov 22 2007)

An oil painting that was used as a dartboard and repeatedly slashed while it hung for years on the walls of a youth detention centre in Buckinghamshire, UK, was hailed as an important work of art when it went on exhibition at the National Gallery in London recently.

The painting *Courtyard at the Rubenshuis* has now been identified as a 17th century depiction of the ostentatious house that Rubens, the Flemish master, built for himself in Antwerp. Susan Foister, director of collections at the National Gallery, said the painting's significance is that it gives a dramatic new insight into how the historic house once looked.

(from the *Bucks Free Press*, by Francine Wolfisz)

The painting used to hang upon the walls of Denham Court and has until recently been in the care of the Buckinghamshire County Museum.

But it has become something of a star attraction at The National Gallery's Discoveries exhibition (*which closes on 10 February 2008 – Ed.*). New research has revealed that the painting, dated to between 1645 and 1675, is the earliest known depiction of the house once owned by artist Peter Paul Rubens in Antwerp - and the only true record of how he decorated it. Such is the importance of the painting that the Bucks County Museum is currently in talks with the Rubenshuis, now one of Antwerp's most prominent art galleries, about the possibility of a long-term loan.



Courtyard at the Rubenshuis, attributed to Anton Gunther Gheringh

But more than that, there's now a creeping realisation that conservation work carried out on the Rubenshuis to restore the building to its original glory, was based on later and less-detailed sketches. Future restoration work will no doubt depend on this painting for a more accurate account of how the house once looked.

Our meeting place:
The Church Hall (St.Boniface Anglican Church), Grétrystraat, 2018 Antwerpen
Info: 03/230 39 36.

The October and November lectures

Monday 4 February 2008

**CITIES OF VESUVIUS: Art and
Everyday Life in Ancient Pompeii**
Lecturer: NEIL FAULKNER

In 79 AD Mount Vesuvius erupted and buried the ancient towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum with a seven-meter high blanket of ash and fragments of larva. In 1748, Pompeii was accidentally rediscovered, and since then the many archaeological digs that have been going on in and around Pompeii have uncovered many of the monuments that survived the disaster, such as the *Antiquarium* (where the casts of the inhabitants buried under the lava are kept), the Temples of Apollo, Vespasian and Jupiter, and the Slaughterhouse, the Thermal Spa Bathhouse and the Surgeon's House.

In Pompeii many of the buildings survived whereas in Herculaneum most of them were destroyed; but in both cities a great number of the objects that were inside the houses were saved by being slowly covered by deep layers of ash which protected them like a blanket. Thanks to this phenomenon, all kind of perfectly preserved objects can now be seen: furniture, ornaments and also papyruses and wooden objects that can still be looked at today even though they were carbonized so many centuries ago. Studying these objects helps us to understand the habits and daily life of the population that lived there almost 2000 years ago and has given us a near-perfect representation of what life was like in a Roman provincial town.

(For those who wish to know more about the archaeology of the Bay of Naples, Neil Faulkner recommends *Cities of Vesuvius, Pompeii & Herculaneum* by Michael Grant.)

GDB

Monday 10 March 2008

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE
Lecturer: JANE KELSALL

The origin of the expression: Pearls before Swine comes from the Bible, *Matthew 7:6* (King James Version): "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet."

The meaning of the expression we all know: Items of quality offered to those who aren't cultured enough to appreciate them will be damaged or tossed aside.

Jane Kelsall's lecture under this title traces the journey of a magnificent pearl necklace where a carelessly worded will resulted in an ownership dispute. Queen Elizabeth II wears some of the pearls but where are the others?

An interesting, amusing lecture to look forward to.

GDB

Our lecturers

NEIL FAULKNER

Neil Faulkner studied at King's College, Cambridge, and the Institute of Archaeology (University College London) where he is now an Honorary Lecturer. He works as a freelance lecturer, editor, writer, excavator and occasional broadcaster and has lectured in archaeology, ancient history and classical civilisation. He is the author of numerous articles, academic papers, and several books. He is currently involved in a project in north-west Norfolk, which is excavating an Anglo-Saxon village and cemetery, and the Great War Archaeology Group, investigating sites associated with the Zeppelin raids over Britain and with the campaigns of Lawrence of Arabia in Jordan.

JANE KELSALL

Jane Kelsall is a graduate in English and history, and studied Fine Art and Sculpture at the St. Albans College of Art. She is now a freelance lecturer in Fine Arts, and has been an honorary guide at St. Albans Cathedral for the last 30 years. She describes her life as 'always scratching around in piles of archives, always happy'.

KMSK Ghent: British Vision

ADFAS Outing, 24 November 2007

This hugely ambitious exhibition of more than 300 works by British artists from 1750–1950 is exciting and

informative. Many disciplines are represented: painting, sculpture, drawing, etching, photograph and text.

We began our tour in rooms 9 and 10, unfortunately not the chronological start that would have helped us follow the artistic developments clearly. There was an overwhelming amount to see under the heading *The Visionary*; many works by William Blake, Blake's death mask painted by Francis Bacon and sculptures by Moore and Epstein were some of the most memorable.

Then to *Modern Landscape* and *Modern Life*, where the themes of the exhibition, *Observation and Imagination*, were clear. Paul Nash, Spencer and Sickert were well represented with many works by less well-known artists. The style of painting in these rooms was, for the most part, powerful and charismatic.

Room 1 laid the foundations of the exhibition, exploring the effects of Industrialisation on British life and art. Pre-Raphaelite works were numerous, many with vivid colours and heightened realism. Throughout the exhibition, wonderful photographs helped portray the social background of the relevant era. Next we were treated to an overview of early British satire. Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress* was probably the best known (David Hockney's modern take on the same theme was in room 13) but artists James Gillray and John Fuseli were no less observant and humorous.

The final rooms on our tour held some of the most iconic paintings by British artists of the 18th and 19th centuries. The presence of Constable's *Flatford Mill* is testimony to the standing of this exhibition and there are many other wonderful landscapes by his contemporaries, including Turner.

After a 2-hour tour, we were all eagerly anticipating lunch at the museum's restaurant, pre-arranged by Gilberte. I felt as though we had only skimmed the surface of this outstanding exhibition. I shall be going again, to linger over favourite exhibits and to seek out some of the many missed.

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Other items of interest

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

Marina Vaizey on the Art of Photography: Photography as Art (December 2007)

A new venue, or if you prefer, back to the first ADFAS venue of the '90s! Good to have a full room including a group of young photography students from the Academy. Being December we had the usual Christmas and other cakes + coffee, tea, wine, "Glühwein" and a Raffle with very nice prizes. It was good to see Marion and John Lawrence again, the first ADFAS chairmen.

But what to say about the lecture? Too long, too many slides, too many names. Not that our speaker didn't master her subject, but it was not clearly defined. It covered the period from 1820 to 2007 with the works of many important photographers in different countries with here and there a snap of the technical aspects and that was far too much for one lecture.

In her introduction Marina Vaizey pointed out the two big problems of Photography as an Art form. It is a visual art and it is one in which every one participates. Who has never taken a photograph? But it is also an art form that is almost finished, as we no longer take manual photographs, but have gone digital. At first a photograph was like a painting, a single and unique picture of a person, a landscape, an interior, an animal, a battlefield etc.

The first part of the lecture was very interesting as we saw the earliest known photograph by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, his *View from the Photographer's Studio* (1827) being brushed zinc plate with bitumen dust, exposed for 8 hours. Then came *Boulevard du Temple* (1839), a view of a busy street in Paris by Louis Daguerre, a significant pioneer, who gave his name to the daguerreotype. *The Open Door* (1844) was a photograph by William Henry Fox Talbot taken at several different times of the day and published in his book *The Pencil of Nature*; he was a private scholar, who eventually discovered the positive-negative process, the calotype. The lecture went on with more pictures by 19th C photography pioneers, and then Marina came to some better known photographers (by non

specialists like me): Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Man Ray, Henri Cartier Bresson, Ansel Adams, Alfred Eisenstaedt, David Hockney, Andreas Gursky.

To my astonishment a few of the last pictures were from the Belgian Stephan Vanfleteren. His work is currently on exhibition at the Antwerp Photography Museum until 10 February 2008.

GDB

Andy McConnell on 20th Century Glass (January 200)

Speaker Andy McConnell was wildly enthusiastic, and delighted to share his knowledge and enthusiasm with his audience. He says that his mission is to engage, entertain and educate. He never delivers the same talk twice, doesn't work from notes and rearranges his slides for every talk.

Before reaching the 20th C we had a lightning overview of the different glass periods:

Roman: 100 BC–450 AD

Middle Eastern: 800–1300 AD

Venetian: 1400–1700

Bohemian (engraving): 1700–1770

Bohemian (etching): 1770–1840

Arriving at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London which drew over 6 million visitors he explained that here the first catalogue about glassware was made. Vast amounts and different styles of glass were exhibited and it was obvious that a lot was bought, exported and copied abroad.

The year 1878 saw the first professional designer: Christopher Dresser, and in 1900 French designer Emile Gallé became the first to sign his work.

1900–1930 is known for its reproductions of earlier forms (18th and 19th C) and it is very hard to find out if something is old, or who made it.

By 1925 René Lalique appeared with his lost wax technique; it is interesting to know that 4 years ago Bonhams sold a Lalique for £110,000 ! For many collectors, owning a genuine Lalique is the apogee. Andy pointed out however that once a mould was made, hundreds of copies could be produced without any intervention by the artist apart from the addition of his signature.

The 20th C witnessed the greatest transformation in the role of decorative glass in 6,000 years. Historically, glassware had been the preserve of the wealthy but industrialisation, improving infrastructure and the enrichment of the working classes combined to a point where it was given away free at petrol filling stations.

The greatest problem with 20th C glass is that so much of it was produced, and hardly any of it bears identifiable maker or designer marks. 'At least a million different designs were produced by hundreds of factories.'

The most creative glass producing countries were Sweden (with the Orrefors and Kosta Boda factories), Finland, and Denmark. Kosta was founded in 1742, Orrefors in 1898, and today they are modern workplaces for over 950 people.

Orrefors originally made window glass and practical objects such as jam jars. However the company changed ownership in 1913, and by 1916 was attempting to take a more artistic direction. Two Swedish painters, Simon Gate and Edvard Hald, were hired to decorate and design the glass, despite neither of them having any experience with the medium. They were later joined by artists such as Vike Lindstrand and Edvin Öhrström. Each of these had their own style, but together created several unique features and innovations. One such was Graal glass, where coloured relief decorations are encased in another layer of colourless and transparent crystal which gives a smooth surface.

A similar technique was devised in 1935 which trapped air within the walls of the glass and was known as Ariel, after Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. A major influence was Emile Gallé's Art Nouveau work.

In Finland the most famous products made by the Iittala company are the glassware designs of architect Alvar Aalto, such as the so-called Aalto (or Savoy) Vase of 1936, and Timo Sarpaneva, who started designing glassware in 1950.

Andy owns around 20,000 pieces of glass and 15,000 glass-related images dating between 1750–1980. His Glass Etc in Rye is one of Britain's largest shops selling antique and 20th C glass.

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STOP PRESS

We have just received an invitation from our sister society in The Hague to join them on a guided tour arranged by AXA Art of TEFAF – The European Fine Arts Fair. TEFAF is held every year in Maastricht, and is rightly acclaimed as the world's most prestigious art and antiques fair. Over 200 dealers from 17 countries bring a diversity of exquisite museum quality pieces - and all for sale. The Fair built its reputation with old masters but there is modern art too, and a dazzling choice of old manuscripts, maps, coins, furniture - old and 20th century, porcelain, silver, jewellery, together with objects from Asia, Africa and South America. All in one amazing venue. The Hague DFAS has arranged for a guided tour on Saturday 15 March at 4 pm, and the cost is € 45 per person which includes the entrance ticket, superb catalogue, guided tour and a refreshment.

If anyone is interested, please let Angela or Gilberte know, contact details below. The deadline for booking a place on the tour is 15 February.

DATES TO REMEMBER

4 February 2008	<i>Cities of Vesuvius: Art and Everyday Life in Ancient Pompeii</i> Lecturer: Neil Faulkner	Church Hall, Grétrystraat as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
20 February 2008	ADFAS Committee Meeting (if you have anything you would like brought up at the Committee meeting, please get in touch with Michael Smith)	
10 March 2008	<i>Pearls before Swine</i> Lecturer: Jane Kelsall	Church Hall, Grétrystraat as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
7 April 2008	<i>Treasures and Curiosities from the Royal Library at Windsor Castle</i> Lecturer: Oliver Everett	Church Hall, Grétrystraat as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm
5 May 2008	<i>Wine-related Antiques</i> Lecturer: John Ericson	Church Hall, Grétrystraat as from 7 pm Lecture at 8 pm

ADFAS CONTACTS

Angela Dodds	Chair/Programme Sec.	03/230 39 36	angela.dodds@skynet.be
Shirley Fletcher	Deputy Chair	03/219 89 00	peter.fletcher@skynet.be
Michael Smith	Secretary	03/238 29 51	ipdc@scarlet.be
Edgard Hubert	Treasurer	03/232 62 37	edgardhubert@hotmail.com
Gilberte Du Bois	Volunteers & Outings	03/230 98 72	gilberte.dubois@belgacom.net
Maureen Smith	Membership	03/238 29 51	ipdc@scarlet.be
		(GSM: 0478/344 094)	
Grishma Shah	Ordinary Member	03/449 40 98	grishmamehta@hotmail.com
Peter Fletcher	Ordinary Member	03/219 89 00	peter.fletcher@skynet.be

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:
Richard Cootmans, Angela Dodds, Trudy Debice, Gilberte Du Bois