

Chairman's Report

Thank you all for renewing your membership, welcome back! An especially warm welcome to our new members.

You will by now have received your cards with the details of next year's full and varied programme of lectures, visits and overseas tours. The visits remain a popular activity and are often fully subscribed on the evening that bookings are open. Make sure you keep an eye on the visits boards and come early to put your name down to avoid disappointment.

Thank you to the volunteers offering to help at meetings either at the door, with car parking or refreshments; we shall be making a rota and will contact you just before it is your time. It would be rewarding to have new members who would be willing to give the Vote of Thanks to the lecturer, or to be on the committee; we only need two or three people to ensure continuity and replace those who have taken their turn. Please talk to me, without commitment, if you are willing to consider.

Next year is the 40th Anniversary of our national society – NADFAS – to which we are affiliated and events to mark the occasion are planned over the year. I shall use the website Notice-Board to keep you informed.

Meanwhile, on behalf of the committee may I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

John Cook – Chairman

WEBSITE INFORMATION

Bob Evans continues to maintain our website. It was rewarding to note the 3000th visitor contacted the site during October 2007; quite an achievement for such a small society.

The website gives information about many aspects of the society in addition to showing our programme of lectures and visits. The members of the committee are listed including their contact details.

We have continued to keep the www.bookham-dfas.co.uk NOTICE-BOARD feature up to date with current information.

YOUNG ARTS

We made a financial contribution to the Arts week of Dawnay School in June 2007. It was used to fund some of the activities in a north American programme including making traditional totem poles as well as studying contemporary native Indian art.

Headteacher. Louise Emmet has expressed the appreciation of

PROGRAMME

The 2008 programme will soon be starting and is detailed on your membership card. We have tried to give you a varied programme – Art, Architecture, Music, Gardens, and a light hearted one in February to complement Valentine's Day! Next year is the anniversary of Palladio's birth so we have arranged a lecture on the English Palladian Country House in March and a visit to Basildon Park on 15th May. In June we shall preview and complement the July Normandy tour with a talk about the houses and gardens in the region.

I hope you will find subjects to interest you. It has been rewarding to research and plan the programmes, discussing topics with lecturers and meeting them on Tuesday evenings.

I have enjoyed being on the committee – friendly but business like – and I can recommend it.

Pam Wilson will be taking over from me in April and planning the 2009 programme. We do our best to provide variety and interest but it is always good to have suggestions about lecturers you have especially enjoyed to subjects you have found stimulating. Please tell any member of the committee if you have particular subject areas or lecturers that you would like included in the 2009 programme, we really do value your opinions. Even better..... perhaps you would like to join the committee and work with Pam to plan for 2009.

Muriel Wheatley – Programme Secretary

East Surrey Area NADFAS

We are part of the East Surrey group and I meet twice-yearly with other chairmen and area officers to share views informally about lecturers and individual society business. There are area representatives for the various parts of the society, Young Arts, Church Recording, Heritage Volunteers and Education and Training, and each gives a report on their respective area.

The topic most occupying people's minds at present, after the 40th anniversary, has been the growing movement away from the traditional slide projection for lectures to the new digital presentation using PowerPoint. Soon, all of the lecturers will be using digital and we shall need to buy new equipment rather than borrow. Nationally and at area level, recommendations are being made about the best equipment to buy and where to obtain it at the most reasonable price. Nationally NADFAS may even buy in bulk and then sell on to local societies. In my view, the flexibility and additional facilities offered by digital machines make them a positive step forward for presentations. We shall be looking to buy during this next year.

Church Recording – The Saga: Episode 7

To recap – and for the benefit of any “new readers” - our Church Recording Project is part of a national NADFAS initiative which encourages local Groups to undertake a detailed survey of their local Church, itemizing and describing everything inside. This covers stonework, woodwork, metalwork, windows, memorials and other areas, down to what are listed as “miscellaneous”. This is, by any criteria, a long and detailed task.

A dedicated group of around 20 volunteers started work on completing a description of St Nicolas Church just over three years ago. I see, looking back, that I have described our project as being variously a “long, long trail” or like a Marathon. Although we have very sadly lost Michael Russell one of our members, who died earlier this year, and another couple have felt they needed to stand down, there are still 18 of us working on the project. This is thanks to two volunteers who came forward when we asked for help with putting together the final Record. Our one need now is for someone who understands wood to help us describe the remaining few items we need to cover in completing that Section – any volunteers please?

I am pleased to say that our progress continues to be good, steady and real - we have been able to send on completed descriptive work covering four of the nine Sections we need to cover to our NADFAS Area Representative for final checking. A further two are likely to be ready soon. We have also identified someone who should be able to help us present the final Record.

We hope we may be in a position within the next year to hand over the finished work to the new Rector of St Nicolas.

Our grateful and continuing thanks to all our colleagues.

**Michael Anderson
Angela Stevens**

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VISITS

What a good year we have had so far especially those who ventured forth with me on our Holland trip. It was a great success! We had four days in Leiden packed with Rembrandt activities; his life, his family and his paintings. We visited the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam where there were many wonderful works including several self-portraits, ‘The Jewish Bride’ and ‘The Night Watch’. At the Hague the compact and unique Mauritius was a real enthusiast’s gallery and contained some gems including Vermeer’s ‘The Girl with the Pearl Earring’. In addition to the ‘education’ aspect we also visited the Delft Pottery, Anne Frank’s House and enjoyed an exhilarating trip on the Amsterdam canals. It was interesting touring Holland and observing the towns, canals and countryside painted by the Dutch masters. We frequented local restaurants for supper each night and had a highly enjoyable final celebration dinner on the last night.

We have a full programme arranged for next year including overseas trips to Normandy and Petra, as well as interesting places a little closer to home. Already booked and on your members programme card include: Tutankhamun at O², The Globe, Kew Palace and Gardens, a London walk, the Stanley Picker Gallery and ‘Christmas at Blenheim’. *There will be a sheet for everybody at the January meeting giving further details.* Details are on our website, too, but do keep an eye on the notice boards at our meetings.

I shall be handing over to John Tiffney at the AGM in March. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time organising visits, I have met so many new people. Like Muriel, I encourage those interested to join the committee; it can be fun!

Hazel Parker – Visits Organiser

Membership

Membership of the Society remains buoyant and stands at 225, although 20 of these have not attended a meeting throughout the year. It may be necessary to review this non-attendance to give an opportunity to those on the waiting list.

Membership has been renewed for 2008 and I am pleased to report that only 14 members have resigned due to change in personal circumstances; one member has passed away.

Applications to join the Society are fairly constant and the waiting time to become a full member is approximately one year, depending on the time of application.

Attendances at meetings remain high at approximately 60% which is well within the capacity of the hall.

The committee has decided to admit as many new members as possible bearing in mind the capacity of the Barn Hall. This means all on the waiting list to June 2007 have received invitations to join. Please offer them a warm welcome.

John D G Jones - Membership Secretary.

Rembrandt tour 2007.



Mauritshuis: The Hague