



HALLAMSHIRE
DECORATIVE AND FINE ARTS SOCIETY
Annual Report and Newsletter
July 2013

Chairman's Report

It seems hardly any time since I wrote last year's report. My second year now comes to an end and I hand over to Sally Craig at the AGM on September 18th placing the society in very capable hands.

It has been a sad year for our small HDFAS community. The unexpected death of Brian Brooks, our longstanding and much valued treasurer, shortly followed by the loss of Judy Barnard, our secretary Malcolm Barnard's wife, has cast a dark shadow over the past weeks. Brian was treasurer when I joined HDFAS under Jennifer Downey's chairmanship. Jennifer also lost her husband Peter, recently. My thoughts are with Margaret, Malcolm and Jennifer and I am reminded of my own mortality. Other members of HDFAS have also suffered loss this past year and now attend meetings on their own. I hope all continue to find a friendly and supportive group in HDFAS.

This year we enjoyed nine talks covering a fascinating range of topics, delivered to the usual NADFAS high standards. Audiences averaged around 110, which indicates that we are still providing programmes of interest to our members. Ann LeSage takes over from Sally as programme secretary and is already planning 2015. As NADFAS speakers are in much demand we need to book them early.

My happy memory is of a sunny and intriguing informal lunch last September when our Brian communicated his knowledge and passion for antiques. I think he enjoyed himself as much as we did. Many members visited the New Walk Art Gallery in Leicester and Grenville, by popular request, organised a further visit to the Assay Office. We had to abandon a trip to Kent; this was replaced by a day at Althorp in July. A longer visit to Kent is planned for spring 2014. I will miss the warm, friendly Committee meetings, which are really mini parties hosted in turn by the Committee members. I thank all the Committee for their hard work and commitment to the Society and leave confident that they will continue in the same spirit with the same energy. I look forward to HDFAS meetings, trips and visits, now free of all responsibilities. Thank you all for your continued support of our society.

Do visit www.nadfas.org.uk and www.hallamshiredfas.org.uk Enjoy the year ahead and thank you for your support. *Virge James*

Autumn Lunch, Tipton Hall, 11 September 2012

Following our Autumn Lunch, held this year at Tipton Hall, Brian Brooks organised a "Touch, Look, and Tell event." This provided an opportunity to handle a variety of Antiques in a sociable atmosphere, suggest uses for some, and discover important features which help you to date them and know whether or not they are genuine. *Susan Thompson*

Study Day at the Guildhall and New Walk Gallery Leicester, October 24, 2012

Our coach to Leicester left Ranmoor Church at 8 am for a guided tour of the Leicester Guildhall, and for talks by the curatorial staff at the New Walk Gallery on the (Richard) Attenborough collection of Picasso ceramics and on the gallery's collection of German Expressionist paintings and drawings. The Guildhall had been added to the programme as something of an afterthought and at times I was worried about possible problems with timing. In the event we followed the busy timetable with remarkable accuracy. The Guildhall, timber framed and dating back to 1390, is something of a hidden gem and well worth visiting. What we didn't know at the time was that the bones of Richard III were being secretly disinterred from the Cathedral car park just around the corner.

On then to the New Walk Gallery and Museum where we divided into two groups of 15 for the talks. Simon Lake, Curator of the Art Collection, gave an excellent in depth coverage of their unique collection of German Expressionist paintings and drawings, which found its way to Leicester from the collections of Jewish émigrées who left Germany as a result of Nazi persecution in the 1930s. Jane May gave the other talk on the Picasso Ceramics, explaining how Picasso had become interested in the work of the Madoura pottery in Vallauris and got them to produce pottery as works of art to his design, sometimes as numbered editions – a Picasso for the common man! In 1954 Richard and Sheila Attenborough visited the Madoura pottery and began their collection, now numbering over 150 items. In 2007 they entrusted the collection to

the city of Leicester to commemorate the lives of their daughter and granddaughter who died in the 2004 Asian tsunami.

Prior to swapping the groups between speakers for the afternoon session most of the party walked the 450 yards to Pizza Express who provided, with military precision, 23 excellent (all different) lunches, together and on time. Two visiting exhibitions at the gallery (Early 20th century German photographer, August Sander, and satirical artist George Grosz) provided an unexpected bonus on the German theme to round off the visit. *Grenville Turner*

Metal Study day at the Sheffield Assay Office, March 21, 2013

Last year's visit to the newly opened Sheffield Assay Office was so popular that we arranged another this year. Like the first it was fully subscribed with 30 keen members who listened to Emma Paragreen (Librarian/Curator), who organised the event, give a splendid illustrated talk on the history and practice of hallmarking. An excellent buffet lunch was followed by a tour of the production facilities where we were given the opportunity to test our own items. Last year I discovered that my Navajo belt buckle was 952 ppt silver, just short of the 958 required for Britannia standard. It was measured again this year and gave the same answer, 952 ppt, thus illustrating the high precision and reproducibility of the Assay process in Sheffield. We ended with a hands-on study session, where we attempted to read and identify specimens from the Assay Office collection using copies of Bradbury's Book of Hallmarks provided by Emma. *Grenville Turner*

Visit to Althorp, July 3, 2013

This summer's visit to Northamptonshire enabled Hallamshire NADFAS members to focus on the ancient family seat of the Spencers and its 19 generations of farmers, country landowners, warriors, servants to the crown, advisers to government, and politicians who helped shape England from before the Tudor times. Some were great and some were good; many were collectors of art and books, furniture and ceramics; many made prudent marriages and so bolstered the accumulation of treasures.

This history is strikingly intact and visible at Althorp, the family home for nearly 500 years. Its silver tiled classical frontage rises from the green of lawns and surrounding deerpark studded with huge and ancient oak trees. (We learned that this C17th façade conceals the bones of the original C16th redbrick moated home and that consistent ownership by the same family in the intervening years had enabled continual remodelling to reflect the tastes of the day). It is quite beautiful, and still feels like a family home while at the same time holding the most extraordinary collections. The walls of every room are densely hung with pictures, the most exceptional of which are the English portraits by Rubens, Van Dyck, Gainsborough and Reynolds among many other artists.

Yet the proportions, furnishings and lighting of many rooms tell visitors that this is not just a museum but still a lived-in family home an eagle eyed visitor spotted the TV and hairdryer in one of the elegant bedrooms! Chandeliers hang from ribbons; the paintwork is light and furniture relatively small and immaculate; books and drinks trays are to hand in the social rooms on the ground floor.

Visitors with an interest in horses, riding and hunting will not be disappointed: huge hunting scenes greet you in the elegant entry hall; Stubbs' hunters are in the ground floor social rooms; and the outside Italianate stable block of local golden stone will inspire you to go to Tuscany. Those fascinated by Diana Princess of Wales will find a small exhibition in that stable block. Heavy emphasis on her membership of the Spencer family is to be found in both the literature and the audiotapes available to visitors. *Ann LeSage*

LOOKING FORWARD HDFAS programme 2013/4

The last year has given us some wonderful talks and we start the new programme with a topical talk on how David Hockney's art relates to his life by a close friend of his, Peter Webb. By popular request we look towards Russia for Alan Bott to tell us about the cathedrals of Kiev and Novgorod and the Golden Ring and then to the great 15th and 16th century architectural development in Moscow and onwards to the present day. For our Christmas meeting Annie Gray, a great speaker and broadcaster, is going to get us in the spirit with the story of Mrs Beeton's Christmas; we may learn how mince pies became popular in the 14th century and plum pudding in the 1500s. She may come dressed for the part! At a dull time of year Alexandra Drysdale will brighten the day with the story of blue in art. The story of blue goes from the lapis lazuli mines of Afghanistan, to the indigo dyers in Africa and the studios of Titian, Vermeer and Chagall. We have neglected ceramics recently, and it will be wonderful to have Melissa Gallimore to inform us on

those from Europe and the Orient. The story of art, theft and forgery will be told by Heather Birchall; the disappearance of the Mona Lisa baffled the French police in 1911 for two years and works by Vermeer and Goya have been subject to intense analysis in the last century. Then we move underground with Peter Lawrence to explore the streets of London! Leslie Primo, a Renaissance specialist, from the National Gallery, will talk about Leonardo and Michelangelo, a topic of which one can never tire. Brian MacDonald, an expert on tribal rugs, has travelled extensively in Afghanistan and Iran and lived and worked amongst two tribal groups there .

It has been very enjoyable planning the programmes with the help of the committee and the outgoing Chairman, Virge James, who has been very supportive. Next year we welcome Ann LeSage as programme secretary. *Sally Craig*

Autumn Lunch, Tapton Hall, Wednesday, September 11th 2013

This year's autumn lunch will be in the same place as last year. After lunch Nigel James will talk to us about "Mysteries of Oriental Rugs- Persian v Turkish" and will give us a lesson in tying knots! *Susan Thompson*

Visit to the Cutlers' Hall, Monday, October 21st 2013

A guided tour of Sheffield's historic Cutlers' Hall has been arranged for 2.30 pm on Monday, October 21st. It will be led by the Archivist and will be followed by tea and sandwiches. The visit will cost £16 and have a limit of 30 members. *Grenville Turner*

Study Day at Temple Newsam, Spring 2014

A one day visit to Temple Newsam, Leeds, is being planned for the Spring of 2014, probably in April. The visit will include a talk by James Lomax (Curator and our speaker on 19th January 2011), a tour and lunch. Details and an application form will be circulated in the January mailing. *Grenville Turner*

Proposed Summer Visit to Kent, June 2014

A visit to Kent has been planned for 3rd to 6th June 2014. The venues include Ightham Mote, Hever Castle, Penshurst Place, Canterbury Cathedral and Bletchley Park. Details and application form are included with this mailing. *John Shortland*

WIDER ACTIVITIES

NADFAS North East Area Study Days 2013 and 2014

For the past three years I have been an ACE (Area Co-ordinator of Education)! My duties have been to arrange and run four Study Days a year attracting attendance from the 22 NADFAS societies in the North East, each day consisting of three one hour talks.

In 2012 the overall topic of "the effects of War on the Arts " seemed not to appeal so attendance numbers dropped and I made a loss, which was worrying. Those who came however experienced four of the most exciting and interesting days I can remember.

With this background it was imperative that 2013 would be self financing and we have just made ends meet! The theme was "Signs and Symbols". The first day dealt with Heraldry. Chloé Cockerill was the ideal speaker and York the ideal venue as we left with a much greater understanding of all the signs we saw between the venue and the station: eyes were opened!

The second day dealt with Egyptian Iconography. Lucia Gahlin, who gave HDFAS a brilliant talk on Akhenaton, made everyone aware of what they had missed on their various trips to Egypt and many will return for a second, now more knowledgeable look. A lively Pauline Chakmakjian, academic and expert on Japan and Freemasonry, gave us a wonderful overview of the signs and symbols associated with this organisation ... no longer a mystery. We still look forward to Clare Ford-Wille speaking about the Saints, their symbols and histories from Agatha to Zenobius on September 26th at the Bar Convent in York. There are still a few places left; booking forms available from me and our website.

The overall theme in 2014 is Behind the Scenes, attempting to explore why some artists become household names whilst others fade into obscurity. David Phillips will talk about " Museums , Conservation and Experts " on March 27th ; Anne Anderson will address "The Big Rediscoveries : Collectors and Collections" on June 24th and David Boyd Haycock will present " Creative Rebellion: Inspiration and Influence in British Art 1900-1919". His exhibition is currently at the Dulwich Art Gallery. Only three days in 2014. All these days will be advertised in NADFAS Review and on our web site www.hallamshiredfas.org.uk

Virge James

Young Arts

Silver Bursary sponsorship - With Sheffield DFAS we have agreed to take over sponsorship from North East Area of the 2nd year module in the Metalwork and Jewellery Department of Sheffield Hallam University for 3 years. We are donating £400 between us to the winner of the module "designing for clients" which has to include a pouring item in silver which is then taken into and displayed with the metalwork collection in the Millennium Galleries, alongside established Silversmiths. This year Hannah Chapman has won with a ladle and earthenware pot in honour of Richard Dawkins. This will be on display later in the year.

We continue to support WORK Ltd on Ringinglow Road, as last year, with a donation and small Christmas Sale of work at our November lecture. They are always pleased to see you, weekdays 10am-3pm at their café and shop and love showing you around - do try to visit them. *Sue Thompson*

Heritage Volunteers

Work on the photographs in the Medical History Department at RHH has been in abeyance for several months as it has reached the stage where identification of the pictures has become difficult. However, some good news is that the transfer of selected images onto Picture Sheffield has just now resumed after a gap of two years when Sheffield Libraries had problems with the IT and had to upgrade their machine accordingly. It is hoped that more images will appear on this very accessible resource. Meanwhile, interviews with former nurses in the Central hospitals continues and anyone who might be able to help identify the many scenes of hospital life should contact me (0114 230 5714). I would be very grateful for any information that will enable fuller cataloguing of the images. *Catherine Pinion*

NADFAS Church Recorders – Group Report

We have at last started to record a new church! Some time ago I met with Peter Ingram who is now the priest in charge at St John the Evangelist, Abbeydale together with his own church, Holy Trinity at Millhouses. St John's has recently been re-ordered and Peter and the PCC are most eager for us to fully record their church. My team of recorders is made up of members from both Sheffield and Hallamshire Societies and we have meetings scheduled for every other Wednesday and Friday on alternate weeks. We have made this arrangement as the church is normally locked so we have regular dates to try to accommodate everyone concerned. We have now made a start and are finding some interesting features. It is an Arts and Crafts style of church and has an abundance of woodwork. The foundation stone was laid in 1873. *Monica Slater*

Brian Norman Brooks 1933-2013

Brian served HDFAS as Treasurer under three Chairmen until his death in May this year. Indeed his financial expertise and astuteness ensured the survival of the society many years ago. He faced his illness with great courage and no self pity, working on HDFAS papers even a few days before his death to ensure all was in order.

Brian was a born collector, with great technical skills; he built his own tape recorder. He was extremely curious and knowledgeable about his own eclectic collection, being passionate about glass. He guided our HDFAS visit to the Tiffany collection at the Howarth Gallery in Accrington in 2009. He was fascinated by the technical aspects of antiques; aspects often ignored by other collectors such as printing, colouring, welding and restoration methods. His children and grandchildren remember fascinating, adventurous and educational holidays. Golf was his other great passion. Brian was a wonderful colleague, kind, understanding, with a keen sense of humour. He was utterly reliable and dedicated. We will all miss him.

Virge James