

ALTON DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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WINTER 2013



Editorial

Our December meeting is the very popular seasonal lecture, this year *A History of Christmas Shopping* followed by our traditional party with tasty nibbles and mulled wine which signifies the start of the Festive Season. The Committee hope you will join them on Tuesday, 10 December at Alton Maltings when the lecture will start at 7.30pm.

We will not be issuing a separate invitation so if you would like to bring a guest please inform our Secretary, **Laura Rose** and send her a cheque for £10 payable to ADFAS - address on the new Programme Card.

Special Interest Day

Clocks & Watches with Colin Lattimore
Thursday 6th March 2014
Beech Village Hall



The day will start with a review of early timekeepers from sundials onwards and an introduction to mechanical timekeeping using a weight driven mechanism. The development will be traced through turret clocks and lantern clocks to the long case clock which was in fashion for from 1660 to 1840. There will be a session on spring-driven clocks and watches and after lunch a question and answer session combined with a 'bring and show' of members own clocks and watches. If you have a Long Case Clock a photograph will suffice!

Bookings via Kit Butterfield - 01420 88356

If a booking is cancelled, a refund will only be made if the event is full and there is a replacement from a waiting list.

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 19th February 2014
Hampton Court



Originally built for Cardinal Thomas Wolsey c. 1514, Hampton Court Palace passed to King Henry VIII, who enlarged it. The following century, King William III's massive rebuilding and expansion project intended to rival Versailles was begun. Work halted in 1694, leaving the palace in two distinct contrasting architectural styles, domestic Tudor and Baroque.

Bookings via Vanessa MacMahon (01420 561709)

Bookings can only be accepted upon full payment for the visit. If a booking is cancelled a refund can only be made if the visit is full and there is a replacement from the waiting list.

24th - 28th April 2014
Long weekend visit to Amsterdam

Details to follow.



Longleat – a day of two halves



In mid-September sunshine we approached Longleat House down a long drive with stunning views over the vale to the south west of Warminster. The house, set within 900 acres of landscaped gardens, is generally regarded as one of the best examples of Elizabethan architecture in Britain and one of the most beautiful stately homes open to the public.

From our three competent guides we learnt that Sir John Thynne finished his new home in 1580, shortly before his death. Though the exterior is Tudor, the interior has been much altered by the family over the years to follow the changing dictates of comfort and fashion. The great hall has a Tudor hammer beam roof and carved fireplace, but the rest of the furnishings are Victorian. Much of the interior decoration was in an Italian style and there were a number of Flemish tapestries,



a collection of period furniture as well as Meissen and Sèvres porcelain and eight libraries containing 40,000 books, some of a very early date.

Pictures dating back as the 16th century were hung on lavishly decorated walls and we also saw family portraits in the great hall tracing the Thynne family back to Tudor times; modern murals by the 7th Marquess on display in the West Wing were the subject of a separate afternoon tour, although like the tour before lunch, it overran as there was so much for our guide (who reminded me of Victoria Wood in speech, stature and delivery) to share with us. Our guide thought that we would either like or hate the private wing with its 'modern paintings' and would be talking about it for a long time. Our thanks must go to Niven for arranging a unique visitor experience.

On a personal level I was very taken by the façade of the house in pale Bath Stone and the well-kept appearance of the lawns and gardens around the house, especially after a very dry season. The rain during the day prevented extensive exploration of the gardens at lunchtime, although I noted that staff on duty inside the front door were dispensing elongate plastic bags for dripping visitor umbrellas and this made great sense in conservation terms. However, I was not enamoured by the turquoise 'polo' shirts they wore. Whilst, in my opinion, they were appropriate for staff working outside in the park or in the numerous attractions, I felt they were not 'in keeping' for the inside of a stately home. Perhaps because I was near the end of the queue the restaurant staff seemed a little slow with our group and I wonder how they would cope during a busy summer weekend? As a final (and very personal comment) whilst I will 'put up' with cardboard cups for coffee and tea in some places, I think that if Starbucks can use ceramic cups at motorway services, Longleat could do better in a 'premier league' country house.

Tony Cross



New Members Evening

It was touch and go until late afternoon – but the weather brightened up and we were delighted to be able to hold the gathering in the Chairman's garden. Committee and guests chatted in the horticultural delight which Gillian Baird maintains to a very high standard that most of us simply dream of achieving. Niven Baird, elected as Chairman a few days earlier in the week welcomed the new intake of members, introduced them to the Committee and encouraged them to engage in the full range of ADFAS activities during the coming year.





ADFAS supports the 'young at art'

It was an incredibly busy Summer term for the Art Department of Amery Hill School in Alton where grants from Alton DFAS, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Area and the national Patricia Fay Memorial Fund were put to very good use.

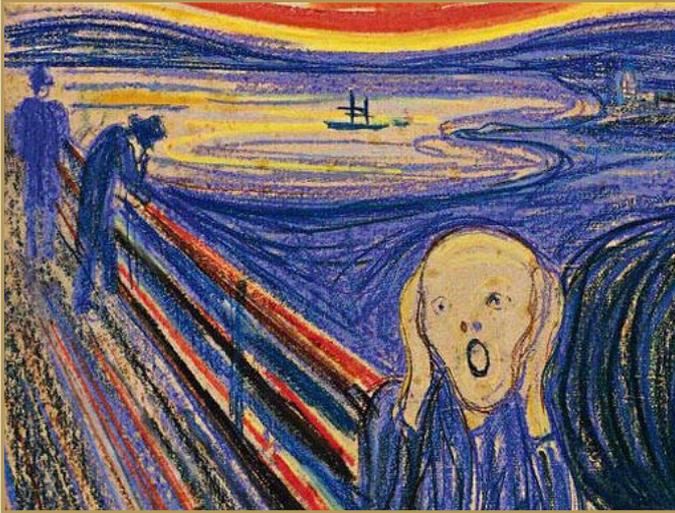
A notable feature was the variety of workshops that took place where both students and staff embraced a range of techniques and processes they have never experienced before. These included Breeze Block Carving, Jewellery Making, 3D Collage, How to carve a soap as well as more traditional topics such as Observational Drawing, How to paint a Landscape, Drawing a face, Working with Clay, Making Pots and Painting on Canvas. The art teachers hope that the project has shown that Art is not only about whether a painting can be painted beautifully but that it incorporates a huge range of different techniques and processes and that each one is valued and has its place within the Art world.

Of particular interest were the Photoshop sessions where students learned how to manipulate and edit photographs and, by using a range of techniques, they discovered how to do a variety of 'artistic things' with their images. From turning colour photographs into black and white art, leaving one colour behind and adding filters to drastically alter an image the pupils worked hard learning the basics of the computer programme. A competition was a great opportunity for them to show off their newly acquired skills and the four photos that won demonstrated high levels of creativity and confirmed their understanding of the techniques taught.

The 'joined-up' NADFAS support from national, area and our local source enabled this Young Arts Project to incorporate a wider variety of sessions by using more outside specialists, enabled modern computer techniques to be introduced into the classroom and through the provision of art materials, staff and students were able to experiment with this variety of techniques. The art department staff remarked on the amazing creativity and enthusiasm on display and they look forward to seeing this continue into lessons in the new term.



Edvard Munch



The auction in New York eighteen months ago of a 1895 pastel on board version of *The Scream*, perhaps one of the best known paintings of all time, resulted in a record \$120M sale price. There was also the four-month Tate exhibition devoted to the artist last year.

Munch was born 150 years ago next month and became a Norwegian painter and printmaker regarded as a pioneer of the Expressionist movement. His art work from the late 1800's is perhaps the most well-known, but his later work is now attracting more interest.

Born on 12 December 1863 he grew up in what is now Oslo. Edvard was related to painter Jacob Munch (1776 – 1839) and historian Peter Andreas Munch (1810 – 1863). After the death of his mother of tuberculosis when he was five, Munch was raised by his father, until 1889 when his father died. Christian Munch instilled in his children a deep-rooted fear of hell by repeatedly telling them that if they sinned, in any way, they would be doomed to hell without chance of pardon.

While Munch was young, his mother, a brother and his sister Sophie died. A younger sister was diagnosed with mental illness at an early age. Munch was also often ill. Of the five siblings only one married but he died a few months after the wedding. All of this may well explain the bleakness and pessimism of much of Munch's work. He would later say, "Sickness, insanity and death were the angels that surrounded my cradle and they have followed me throughout my life." It has been suggested that Munch's illness was probably bipolar disorder.

Munch died near Oslo on 23 January 1944, a month after his 80th birthday. He left 1,000 paintings, 15,400 prints, 4,500 drawings and watercolours, and six sculptures to the City of Oslo, which built the Munch Museum at Tøyen in his honour. Not surprisingly this museum houses the broadest collection of his works, although he is also represented in major museums and galleries in Norway as well as abroad.

As a mark of his importance Munch appears on the Norwegian 1,000 Kroner note (worth equivalent to c. £113) along with images inspired by his artwork. Perhaps the Bank of England might consider an English artist a future subject for one of our banknotes as those worthies chosen to date seem to represent more restricted fields of endeavour.

Tony Cross

Forthcoming Lectures

10th December 2013 – Alton Maltings Centre

A History of Christmas Shopping

Dr Claire Walsh

Before the late 19th century Christmas was a simple domestic affair concentrated on Christmas Day. From the Renaissance to the mid-19th century, shopping for Christmas simply meant buying for the Christmas Day meal. By the late 19th century, however, the celebration of Christmas had been transformed and as the popularity of gift exchange increased, 'doing the shops' became a central feature of Christmas preparation.

14th January 2014

British Artists in the First World War

Jo Walton

With the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo in June 1914, the nations of Europe were set on a collision course. This lecture looks at the work of a group of young British War Artists and considers the ways in which they recorded this new and terrifying form of war in a body of work still remarkable for its ability to move and shock.

11th February 2014

The Howards of Arundel Castle and Castle Howard

William Forrester

We will examine one of England's greatest families, tracing them from The Middle Ages to the present. Always prominent in public life, we encounter the 1st Duke of Norfolk who fell at Bosworth Field in 1485; the 2nd Duke who trounced the Scots at Flodden Field in 1513; the 3rd Duke who was uncle to two of Henry VIII's wives and who only escaped execution by the timely death of the King the night before. Also mentioned will be the 16th Duke and Earl Marshal, who presided over the Coronation in 1953.

11th March 2014

Lost on the *Titanic*: The Story of the Great Omar

Binding - Dominic Riley

We will learn of the making of the fabulous Great Omar - the most fabulous, elaborate and opulent binding ever created. It was embellished with over one thousand jewels, five thousand leather on-lays and a hundred square feet of gold leaf, which took a team of craftsmen over two and a half years to make. It went down with on the *Titanic* in 1912.

8th April 2014

Turner and Beauty

Eric Shanes

Britain's greatest painter, J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), was always concerned to create beauty in his art. But precisely what kind of beauty? In this lecture, Eric Shanes – who is writing the longest and what will probably be the most authoritative biography of Turner to date – investigates what the artist meant by beauty, and how this translated into his images.