

# ALTON DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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## Editorial

Our December meeting comprises a very popular seasonal lecture by Valerie Woodgate entitled The Art of Christmas followed by our traditional party with tasty nibbles and mulled wine which signifies the start of the festive season.

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 - her address is on the new Programme Card.

## Special Interest Day



**Music and Manners**  
– Life in 18th century England  
with Jeanne Dolmetsch

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015**  
**Beech Village Hall**

**Bookings to open at the January**  
**lecture meeting.**

## Dates for your diary

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014**  
**Rembrandt - the late works at the**  
**National Gallery**

Rembrandt's later years were turbulent and marked with controversy, but they also produced some of his most soulful, deeply moving and strikingly modern works and the show offers an opportunity to experience the passion, emotion and innovation of this great artist.

**Bookings via Vanessa MacMahon**

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015**  
**Highclere and Sandham**  
**Memorial Chapel**

Highclere Castle is one of England's most beautiful Victorian Castles set amidst 1,000 acres of spectacular parkland. The Carnarvon family has lived at Highclere since 1679, and the current Castle stands on the site of an earlier house, which in turn was built on the foundations of the medieval palace owned by the Bishops of Winchester for some 800 years.

Nearby is the recently restored Sandham - a modest red-brick building tucked away in a quiet corner of north Hampshire which houses an epic series of large-scale murals by the acclaimed war artist Sir Stanley Spencer.

**Bookings will open at the January lecture via**  
**Vanessa MacMahon**

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.

**April 2015**  
**Long weekend**  
**visit to Bath**

Details to follow.



## A Church Trail for St Andrews, Medstead



The latest initiative undertaken by ADFAS is a Church Trail to see how it all works. These trails are a series of questions that aim to guide children and accompanying adults around a church and encourage them to engage with the architecture, history and furnishings. Committee member and Medstead resident Ann Salzman researched and wrote the questions and corresponding answer sheets. The aim was to encourage 8-12 year olds and their families to learn about the building

and inspire them to visit and enjoy other churches.

Recently it was tested by a group from Medstead C of E Primary School and judging from the responses from the children, we may well be looking at other local churches with a view to producing more Trails in the future. If you are interested in being involved please contact our Chairman, Niven Baird.

**Pictured above: Rev Ben Flenley demonstrates how to pull three bell ropes at once - one in each hand with a loop on the third to enable a foot to be used.**

## Winchester Cathedral's Windows Appeal



The glazing of the cathedral windows, which were originally open spaces, began around 1330 and continued until 1538. After 450 years of cathedral construction, there followed 200 years of neglect and during the Civil War there were terrible acts of destruction of stained window glass after the capture of the Royalist city by Parliamentary troops.

The Friends of Winchester Cathedral are organising an appeal for the conservation of stained glass in the clerestory, aisles and East window that escaped the Civil War damage. The provisional estimate is £800,000 and The Friends have a leaflet which provides information on the project and details of tax efficient giving.

## Picture This

In the past NADFAS has worked in partnership with The Royal Society of British Artists to find the most outstanding work by A-level students from around the country and display it as part of their Annual Exhibition which shows the best of contemporary representational painting, sculpture, printmaking and drawing at the Mall Galleries in London. Last year 42 Societies submitted 277 digital images for consideration by the RBA and the work consisted of portraits, landscapes and still-life or nature studies. The RBA President, James Horton and his fellow council members picked 27 pieces which combined the highest levels of skill, expression and draughtsmanship to show alongside that of professional artists at the RBA's annual exhibition last March.

Last summer we worked with Alton College and submitted nine photographs, of what we thought were outstanding pieces of work from seven students, for consideration for the RBA annual exhibition in 2015. Included amongst them was the oil portrait of a young man (shown here) by **Flo Saralis**. We await a decision by the selection committee to see if any of our proposals make the cut!





## Waddesdon Manor

Waddesdon Manor is a rather special country house in Buckinghamshire. It was built in style of a French chateau between 1874 and 1889 for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839–1898). It is set in formal gardens and an English landscaped park, and was built on a barren hilltop overlooking Waddesdon village. The visit by ADFAS took place back in September and amongst the comments made by members were:

*Our superb guide brought the whole house to life and gave us a wonderful insight into the Rothschild life. The richness of the art and furniture was a great treat. A magnificent day.*

*Amazingly beautiful house and gardens from the first impression as we walked up the drive. A warm friendly greeting to us all and our guide was well versed in her subject and quite delightful. Fantastic weather*

*Quite the best visit day I've ever had with ADFAS; the welcome, the venue and the refreshments were of the highest standard. It was lovely to view the house in its original state with its original contents – and what contents!*

*It was sheer delight from beginning to end and the bonus was the wonderful mosaic exhibition.*

*Fantastic collection of Sevres china; so many rooms and so much opulence. A fantastic visit with so much to see that we must visit again. An extraordinary collection of inlaid work on guns and weapons in Bachelor's Wing.*

*A splendid, glorious setting with stunning paintings – an extra delight was the camera obscura whilst the Lod Mosaic was a very special highlight. The house and furniture were excellent whilst the mosaics were a masterpiece.*

*Personally I enjoyed the visit more than most others I've been on and feel I must go again as I did not have enough time to visit everything.*

*A wonderful day, a fabulous house to visit and our guide was the best ever. PS excellent ice creams!*



# Mr MacGregor does it again



An exhibition at the British Museum until 25 January 2015 seems worth a visit. *Germany – memories of a nation* explores elements of German history over the past 600 years in the context of the fall of the Berlin Wall 25 years ago. British Museum Director Neil MacGregor, who four years ago did an entertaining job of exploring history through 100 objects, has turned his attention on what the world looks like if you are German – an interesting notion in this centenary year of the start of the Great War.

From the Renaissance to reunification and beyond, the show uses objects to investigate the complexities of addressing a German history which is full of both triumphs and tragedies. It tries to navigate through Germany's many political changes – from the Holy Roman Empire through unification in the 1870s and the troubled 20th century to today's economic powerhouse at the centre of Europe. Visitors are able to explore art by Dürer, Holbein and Richter, and marvel at technological achievements which gave the world Gutenberg's printing press, Meissen porcelain, the Bauhaus movement and modern design icon the VW Beetle.

We are familiar with war memorials which honour the dead, but MacGregor thinks it is striking that in Germany the focus is on those who are left – monuments depict the grief of the survivor. The 20th century resulted in many catastrophic deaths and there have been many grieving survivors including Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945), who explored all through her life how the image of one woman's pain can carry the sorrow of a continent.

Käthe Kollwitz was a mother whose son had died in October 1914 and who was asked to provide a memorial at the cemetery, near Vladslo in Belgium, where her son was buried. She turned a complex mix of loss, guilt and responsibility into an exploration of the tragedy of the Great War. She made a simple image of two parents, on their knees, separate, isolated in their own grief, looking over the cemetery full of the young dead. There is no image of their son.

**Tony Cross**

## Forthcoming Lectures

**9th December 2014**

**The Art of Christmas at Alton Maltings**

**Valerie Woodgate**

Many of the greatest and most moving works of art ever created have been inspired by the life of Christ. In particular, the birth of is a popular subject in art from the Middle Ages and Renaissance. It could arouse deep feelings of devotion and helped the viewer meditate on the sacred event. In fact, some of these images depict the devout persons who commissioned them as eyewitnesses to the miracle. Over time, however, artists added details not found in the Bible stories, including the animals of the stable and even midwives.

**13th January 2015 at Alton Maltings**

**Basingstoke and its contribution to world culture**

**Rupert Willoughby**

One of the most derided towns in England, renowned for its dullness, nearby Basingstoke is distinguished by its numerous roundabouts and absurd Modernist architecture. Rupert explains that the post-war planners, who inflicted such features as 'the Great Wall of Basingstoke' on the town, were politically-motivated and bent on destroying all traces of its past. He reveals the nobler town that is buried beneath the concrete, and the few historic gems that have survived. It is a story that neatly illustrates the ugliest episode in England's architectural history.

**10th February 2015 at Alton College**

**The Artists of Montmartre - The Pilgrims of Babylon**

**Douglas Skeggs**

There is no name more evocative of Bohemian life: the high spirits, the decadence and the poverty, as well as the spirit of revolutionary art in Paris, than Montmartre. In reality it was little more than a run-down suburb overlooking the city, a labyrinth of alleyways bristling with windmills. And yet the shackled studios that spilled down the hillside of Montmartre would become the inspiration and home to some of France's greatest artists. They painted canvases that shook the foundations of Western art and this not-to-be-missed lecture charts the course of this extraordinary artistic life.

**10th March 2015 at Alton College**

**Mozart's Magic Flute - More than Meets the Eye**

**Jonathan Hinden**

This is noted as a non-technical and not-too-serious account of this masterpiece, its characters and story, with musical illustrations on the piano, focussing on the composer's ability to express character and mood through music and with a brief look at the circumstances and context of its composition. It will be a highlight of the year so it is suggested that you arrive early!

**14th April 2015 at Alton College**

**Bath - a World Heritage City**

**Jane Tapley**

Ever since the Romans came to Aquae Sulis and built their famous baths around the only hot spring in the British Isles, Bath has been a mecca for visitors. In the 18th century Bath became the second social city to London and the crescents and terraces for which it is now famous were built for the *Beau Monde*. Today it is visited for its unique architecture and fine Roman remains, as well as its shops and restaurants that make it the only World Heritage City in England.