

Editorial

Firstly, thank you for renewing your subscription for the year. Our Membership Secretary has been kept busy in recent months making sure that no-one has been overlooked, for as you can imagine it is a difficult task keeping tabs on 300 people.

As has been said before, if 10% of us introduced another member to ADFAS during the year our numbers and finances would continue to remain healthy. Our October meeting should be of great interest, whilst the November lecture might have particular appeal to those with connections North of the Border, so why not invite a few friends along as guests?

Secondly, I am sure you have remembered that our September lecture, devoted to an aspect of art and culture of a little known part of the world, is preceded by the Annual General Meeting which starts at 7.30pm. The relevant papers are enclosed and we look forward to a good attendance for this annual opportunity to become more aware of the activities of our Society.

In conclusion, during the holiday season we make no apology for the number of images appearing in this issue. We have had a good selection of visits in recent months and feel there are plenty of interesting pictures that may encourage you to explore either the North East or Wessex and enjoy the features discovered by some of our more adventurous members.

Editorial Board

Diary Date

'Samplers: A Child's View of Embroidery, their History and Conservation' with Jacqueline Hyman.

19th November 2009 to be held at Mill Court, Upper Froyle.

An in-depth study of Samplers from the 1600's to the present day, their styles, designs, fabrics and threads. All the illustrations are unique as Jacqueline has had the privilege of conserving all of them. She describes their appropriate treatments as each sampler has a story to tell. Sadly, many have been vulnerable to neglect and so advice on care and display is given, ensuring that they will survive to enable future generations to enjoy them. Participants can bring along their own samplers for advice and specialist conservation materials will be available for purchase.

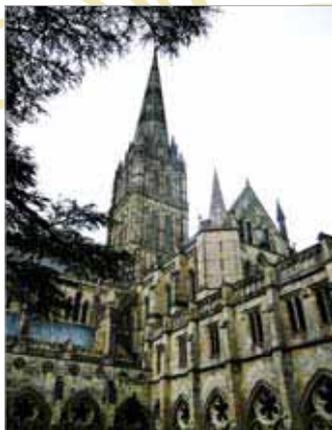


Alton College Scholars

For many years, as a result with our close association with Alton College, ADFAS has been pleased to provide scholarships for two students undertaking the Art Foundation Course there. One of the aims of NADFAS is to support excellence in the arts and we are pleased that our funds have helped young artists in their studies. Who knows what successes our scholars might achieve in their future careers?

This year, as always, there was strong competition for our awards and the successful recipients are Amy Tapuska and Alex Homans. You will be able to read about them in the February Newsletter, and meet them shortly afterwards when they bring examples of their work to one of our Spring meetings.

Salisbury and Wilton



A June visit to a famous cathedral and stately house sounded a good idea back in chilly February and whilst the weather could have been worse, it was not the gloriously sunny summer outing we had anticipated. In reality, as we were inside for much of the day the rather cool weather didn't really affect our enjoyment – and there was plenty of that from two of southern England's premier attractions.

The coffee and pastries on arrival at the cathedral put us in receptive mood and our guide brought the building to life with her knowledge and ability to use stories of the people associated with the site to bring the history alive. We were introduced to the main features of the building and given explanations, liberally sprinkled with modern parlance, which helped provide a framework within which the story unfolded. There were plenty of highlights and it would be invidious to choose between the medieval clock, the effigies, the chantry chapels, the monuments, the brasses, the Magna Carta or the medieval frieze in the Chapter House to name but a few. As a casual visitor it would have been easy to miss the significance of so much of the splendours and I came away wanting to explore some of the topics further.

Mention should also be made of the new water sculpture by William Pye (b.1938) in the centre of the nave, already regarded as a modern treasure', and probably the largest piece of modern art to be installed within a medieval cathedral. Cruciform in shape, and with a three metre span to allow for total immersion baptism, it is an imposing green patinated bronze vessel with a Purbeck Freestone plinth and brown patinated bronze grating. It was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury last September on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the building. Whilst it will be used as a font, one cannot but think of similar pieces installed in many external locations, including the garden at Highgrove.

A short hop to Wilton for lunch was followed by a guided tour of what is often regarded as Britain's most beautiful stately home. The country house of the Earls of Pembroke for the past 450 years, the house occupies the site of an Abbey dissolved by Henry VIII during the reformation. Whilst the title has been held by a number of English families since its creation in 1138, Sir William Herbert who had married Anne Parr, sister of Henry VIII's sixth wife Catherine Parr, was created Earl in 1551 and the title has been held by his descendants.

A Tudor mansion with a central courtyard makes the core of the present house and the 17th century staterooms were designed by Inigo Jones (well, possibly) and contain works of art that include Rembrandt, Rubens, Brueghel, Poussin, Van Dyke, Lely and other 'lesser' artists. A perambulation of the rooms brought us into contact with statuary – including an 18th century figure

of Shakespeare; the Single and Double Cube Rooms, the Great Ante Room and the Colonnade Room which was formerly the State Bedroom. The painted ceilings were breathtaking, the pictures numerous and the furniture extensive. The equestrian pictures in the Smoking Room detracted from the Chippendale furniture located there but there was so much quality material one could not fail to be impressed. 200 years ago the 11th Earl engaged James Wyatt to up-date the house, a project that took eleven years to complete.

Whilst not the largest country house, it certainly exercised our group and its obvious quality has been recognised by numerous film and TV producers and various rooms have featured in *The Madness of King*, *Mrs Brown*, *Pride and Prejudice*; scenes from *The Young Victoria*, released earlier this year, were also filmed at Wilton.



A number of pictures caught my eye – Rembrandt's portrait of his mother, a pair of fascinating Brueghels and, perhaps surprisingly, a recent portrait of the 18th Earl (also the 15th Earl of Montgomery) who was born in 1978. Described by our guide as "tall, dark and handsome", the ladies in our group agreed having seen photographs, whilst the gentlemen seemed equally impressed with his fiancé of two months. The portrait showed him with an estate map on a computer screen, design books and a motor racing helmet on his desk – a modern image which one more commonly associates with photographs these days. He inherited the titles from his late father, the film producer Henry Herbert who died in 2003. Ranked 510 on the Sunday Times Rich List, with an estimated wealth of £105m, he is an only son with six sisters, an heir without a spare, and judging from various articles it seems he is all too aware of the need for a son or two to ensure the continuation of the line!

There was not enough time to explore the grounds, so a return visit will be required however we all managed to examine the Palladian Bridge over the River Nadder, a feature designed by the 9th Earl in 1736-7.

With Jane's organisational skills and Ray's logistical input our timings were perfect and everything went like clockwork a grand day out which was appreciated by all concerned.

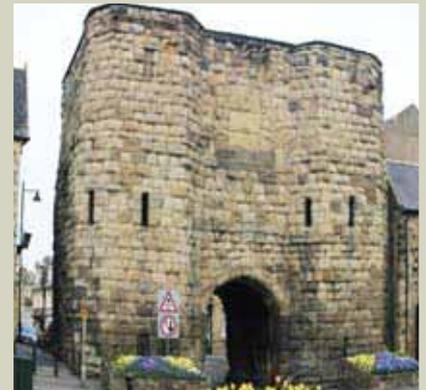
Tony Cross

The Magic of Northumberland

I think it would be fair to say that there was something for everyone on the visit to Northumberland back in April - including architecture, ceramics, paintings, sculpture, local history and gardens in abundance! The trip North was punctuated with a lunch stop and exploration of Belton House near Grantham, whilst on the way back Harewood House near Leeds performed the same role - but both could have occupied a day each. Alnwick Castle and gardens took up a day; a lightning tour of rural Northumberland and an encounter with an A4 Pacific steaming up the East Coast main line prefaced Holy Island with its Castle and Priory. There was also a stop at Bamburgh where we enjoyed St Aidan's church and the Grace Darling Museum but unfortunately there was no time for the impressive restored castle. Sunday saw us at Wallington and Cragston, both interesting houses, both with interesting contents and impressive gardens.

The selection of pictures aims to provide a taste of the trip and encourage you to join next year's long weekend.

Tony Cross



Confessions of a Curator

The history of the letter box is fascinating to some and whilst their 150th anniversary was commemorated in 2002 by special stamps, only pillar boxes were featured. To those 'in the know' there are other types and this month the Post Office are featuring different types of letter box on another stamp issue.



Villages did not need the volume of a pillar box so smaller letter boxes built into walls first appeared in 1857, with a great many variations in detail with differing designs introduced following operational experience. Wall boxes with distinctive enamel plates were made for sub-post offices between 1885 and 1965 and many of these survive. They are known as Ludlow boxes after their Birmingham manufacturer.

The final design is the lamp box, so-called as they were generally attached to lamp posts. They first appeared in 1896 as public gas lighting was being introduced and it is interesting that whilst their origin was in urban areas, nowadays they are found mostly on telegraph poles in the countryside or even built into rural walls.

The vast majority of letter boxes are made of cast iron, however plastic letter boxes are a recent innovation for indoor locations such as supermarkets, although one doubts they will survive 150 years.

Just when you thought there was quite enough variation, one should add that when a new Sovereign comes to the throne, the new Royal Cipher is used on any new letter boxes, although pre-existing boxes remain in service. A quick calculation shows that we have had six monarchs since letter boxes were introduced, so that if you wanted to see examples of them all, you would be looking for 24 types. Then there are the changes in design, so those with a well ordered disposition could be looking for examples of three or even four times that number!

We are fortunate in having a selection of wall and lamp boxes on display in the Curtis Museum and you will be amazed at the variation when you start looking at examples in local villages.

Tony Cross
Hampshire Museums

Forthcoming Lectures

8th September

Arabia Felix - Secret Treasure Chest of Yemen and Oman

Christopher Bradley

South Arabia is one of the world's oldest inhabited regions. The Romans called it Arabia 'Felix' meaning 'prosperous' because of the great wealth, traded along the Gold and Incense Road.

From the mud skyscrapers of Shibam to 'zabur' style buildings of Sadah, building techniques and decoration are spectacular. Inside the old city of San'a, capital of Yemen, a riot of building styles brings together ornate early-period mosques and soaring minarets; ancient bustling caravanserais and decorated houses, where multi-coloured glass windows have only recently replaced alabaster sheets.

Unique stone, mud and wood architecture are highlighted in the houses of Red Sea Ottoman merchants, who grew wealthy from trading coffee. Fine workmanship can still be seen today in women's jewellery and the Yemeni and Omani daggers with needlework belts, still worn by the men.

13th October

Great Tarts in Art: High Culture and the Oldest Profession

Linda Smith

A mixture of art-historical analysis and scandalous anecdote, this lecture takes a generally light-hearted look at changing attitudes to sexual morality down the ages, by examining the portraits and careers of some of history's most notorious mistresses and courtesans. It also charts the rather complex and ambiguous attitudes of art and society towards the numerous anonymous 'working girls' at the lower end of the scale, by investigating how they have been represented in different times and places from the 17th to the 20th century.

10th November

The Scottish Colourists – Style and Sophistication from the Jazz Age

Vivien Heffernan

It would be hard to find a more exciting and inventive group of artists than Peplow, Cadell, Fergusson and Hunter. Painting mainly in Edinburgh and France, they produced some of the most dramatically colourful, progressive and admired works of the 20th century. The lecture explores their landscapes, portraits and still-lives, paying particular attention to the vibrant sensual colour, expressive brushwork and stunning sense of rhythm and design. The captivating freshness and optimism of these works is guaranteed to delight and inspire.