

## The Newsletter

As mentioned at the last meeting, your Committee agreed that the Newsletter will appear 3 times a year rather than quarterly as previously.

This is the Spring issue (available at the April meeting), to be followed by the Summer edition which will be mailed to members in August and include details of the AGM. The Winter issue will be available for collection at the November meeting.



## May Lecture

Please note that the May lecture will take place in the Forum Building at Alton College not at Alton Maltings, as indicated on the programme card.

## Gift Aid

GiftAid enables a registered charity, such as NADFAS to seek a of 28p refund of tax for each £1 of a subscription. Part of your subscription to Alton DFAS is passed to the National Office, which is a registered charity and for every member who has signed a Gift Aid form, approximately £3 is reclaimed annually by the National Office. We, in turn, are refunded £1 for each member. At present only about 50% of our membership have a signed Gift Aid form registered with us and I would like to increase this figure. This would provide extra revenue for both the National Office and us.

## Future Visits

**2 June**

### Sculpture Park and Breamore House

The Art Centre Sculpture Park near Salisbury followed by Breamore House and Countryside Museum will be the location for our Summer trip this year.

**Bookings - please contact Jane Woods  
01256 862469**

**22 September – Bletchley Park**

Our proposed visit to Royal Holloway College and Frogmore has been put back to 2011 due to the extension of a loan of the collection of RHC paintings to the USA. As an alternative, we will be visiting Bletchley Park.

**Bookings - please contact Lissa Wilson  
01420 543892**

Consequently, if this Newsletter contains a blank Gift Aid form, it is for those members for whom I do not have a completed form.

Therefore I would like to consider completing this form and bringing it with you for collection at our regular meetings. To be eligible to sign this form you should be in receipt of income on which you pay tax or have tax deducted at source.

**Martin Woods**  
(Treasurer)

# Samplers – their history and conservation

Back in November we were treated to a return visit from Jacqueline Hyman, the well known textiles conservator. It was lovely to spend the day with her again and this time she told us all about samplers.

Our first session dealt with their history from the 17th century up to the present day and we were made aware of the extreme youth of the girls who made them and the development of styles, stitches, threads and fabrics throughout that period. Then Jacqueline looked at the examples we had brought along and she skilfully put them into historical context, advised on the state of repair (or disrepair!) and then how to look after them. We were then able to examine some really beautiful items which she had brought along.

After a delicious lunch, we spent the afternoon learning how a conservator restores a sampler including how to remove it from its frame, clean and repair it before how to remounting and reframing it.

It was a fascinating day given by an expert who clearly delights in her subject. Her enthusiasm quickly inspired her audience and her knowledge and love of textiles and their conservation was

deep and infectious!

On a personal note it was great for me to catch up with Jacqueline as she has been a tremendous inspiration and help with our historic vestment collection at Froyle.

Thanks are also due to Kathie Ogilvie Thompson for the use of the beautiful and tranquil Mill Court as the venue and to Kit Butterfield for arranging the yummy lunch – a great day as these Special Interest Days usually are!



17th century decorated night cap

**Sarah Thursfield**

## College Report *from our ADFAS Scholars*

During the first term of the Art Foundation course we were set projects that encouraged us to work in different styles in order to help us decide what to specialise in next year. It also broadened our knowledge of the many different disciplines incorporated within art and gave us the opportunity to try a wide range of new techniques and mediums. I enjoyed the fine art projects the most as I liked the freedom one was given to develop one's ideas as we are not restrained by a strict brief, as in some of the other disciplines such as graphics.

I am now in the second term and have specialised in Fine Art. I really enjoy working from very broad briefs and having control over my work. It really helps being in a room of like-minded people as ideas can be bounced around and one can learn a lot from others as each person works in different styles and mediums.

I have used the ADFAS Scholarship to cover travel expenditures to exhibitions and university interviews and as I have started to work with oil paint, it has also helped to fund these materials. I am currently in the process of attending interviews at a number of universities in an attempt to read Fine Art.

### **Alex Homans**

Receiving the ADFAS Scholarship has been a great help on the Foundation Art course. It has helped me to buy a new Portfolio, a few canvases for my larger paintings, a new art box full of paints, chalks and pastels, not to mention the endless sketchbooks, pencils, fine liner pens and glue sticks that I go through so rapidly!



We are now at the stage in our course where we have sent off our applications to the Universities and have finished frantically putting together our Portfolios filled with our best work from the last two years. We have completed a 3000 word essay involving researching and analysing 10 pieces of artwork as though we are curating our own exhibition of Influential Modern Art.

This term we had to choose an area to specialise in, and I chose Fine Art. It is much more exhilarating because I am able to express myself through painting on a huge scale. The result has been really exciting for me because I've discovered a much more liberating way of manipulating the paint, capturing the essence and atmosphere of a scene by the expressive mark-making and texture. Our classroom is buzzing with ideas and experimentation, and everyone is feeling inspired.

I have interviews at Wimbledon, Brighton and Loughborough which I am currently preparing for. I hope to get accepted on a Fine Art degree course at one of them because they are all very good courses and I would benefit so much from them.

**Amy Tapuska**

# Turner at Tate Britain

The publicity for this exhibition announced that “this unforgettable show places beautiful masterpieces by Canaletto, Rubens, Rembrandt and Titian next to some of JMW Turner's most dramatic paintings. It shines light on a lesser-known side of the British Romantic painter: his obsession to prove he was just as good, if not better, than the old masters who he so admired”.



In our lecture in the morning we learned that Turner was born into a working-class family and relentlessly pursued his ambition to be a great artist. He entered into direct competition with artists – past and present – who he considered as worthy rivals to his own fame. In a final act of self-promotion, he asked in his bequest that two of his paintings hang in the National Gallery alongside the work of Claude Lorrain.

Interestingly, it seems that this is the first exhibition ever to explore the full range of Turner's challenges to the past, and his fierce rivalry with his contemporaries. Many works were reunited here for the first time in hundreds of years and others have never been seen together before in this light. The theme seemed to be ‘come along and decide which for yourselves which battles Turner wins, and which he loses’ – quite a few in my view. Indeed, there were even a number of interactive computers on which one could record one's vote and I'm awaiting the final result delivered by e-mail after the show closes.

This was a good day – well structured with a lecture by Rosalind Whyte, followed by lunch and a visit to the thoughtful, curated show. Interestingly the images used in the lecture didn't really prepare me for the pictures which were both large and small (unlike the lecture theatre screen where they are all the same size) and showed far more detail; digital images are all very convenient, but I don't think one can beat the quality of crisp, colour slides.

I was amazed at the locations where pictures had been borrowed – Washington, Boston, Toledo, New York, Japan and a little nearer home - The National Gallery, Dulwich, V&A, The Royal Collection and Bury Art Gallery.

A very atmospheric painting of Lindisfarne Castle painted by Thomas Girtin, born in the same year as Turner provided a reminder of the Northumberland trip last year. Other comparisons were provided by paintings by Wilson, Sandby, van de Velde, Jacob van Ruisdael, Wilkie, Teniers the Younger, Cuyp, de Louterbourg, Stubbs, Bonnington and Clarkson Stanfield. A very interesting and thought provoking exhibition which also provided an opportunity to look at other Turners in the permanent galleries and other works on the walls – I particularly enjoyed the ‘Bloomsbury Set’ pictures after our talk and visit last year.

There was even the chance of a cuppa before Ray, our driver, brought us back to Alton a little ahead of schedule. Well done Jane – an enjoyable, if rather exhausting, day out!

**Tony Cross**

# Temple Church and The Foundling Museum

A selection of comments from members concerning our visit to London in February:

*It was inspiring to stand in a place of continuous worship dating from 1185 when founded by the Knights Templar. The exhibition in the building just off Fleet Street, helped clarify the historical details covered by Master of The Temple, Rev Robin Griffith-Jones, in his enthusiastic, if somewhat breathless, presentation.*



Discovered a lot about Round churches in a short time.

*A riveting talk from an impressive character.*

The Temple Church is a hidden gem and the inspirational talk encouraged some of us to attend a Sunday morning service.

*Interesting stained glass, especially the 2008 window.*

The pews and somewhat austere post-war restoration, following damage due to bombing on in 1941, seemed to rob the church of much of its character.

*The Master really brought the building to life in his wonderful talk – not bad for his £17 a year stipend!*

The Foundling Museum gave us the story of London's first home for abandoned children and of three major figures in British history -the campaigning founder the philanthropist Thomas Coram, the artist William Hogarth and Handel, the famous composer.

*A remarkable collection of art, period interiors and social in a restored and refurbished building adjacent to the original site of the Hospital which we learned was demolished in 1928 The visit to the Foundling Museum linked well with the lecture we had been given some time back. The guides were well informed and the time we were given allowed one to return to particular areas of interest.*

A real bonus to have the contemporary work of Tracy Emin, Paula Rego and Mat Collishaw bringing up-to-date the involvement of artists in the organisation.

*A complete surprise – a combination of philanthropy and self interest plus Tracy Emin – very good indeed.*

An impressive institution which, long before the welfare state, provided everything but love to a foundling.

*What could be more diverse than Handel and Tracy Emin, however the essence of the museum and exhibition was in total unison in its concept. Somewhat disturbing, tragic and challenging.*

# Admiral Keppel For Ever!

In these image conscious times Admiral Augustus Keppel (1725-86), with few teeth and a crippling bad back, probably would not qualify as a media hero. However early in 1779, during his court martial in nearby Portsmouth, the newspapers could not get enough of him. His acquittal on 11 February of charges that many saw as politically motivated produced a popular song ( ... Tho' he's been false-accused, his character abused, still he's the thing...) also a crop of souvenirs, including this plate, purporting to carry his likeness.

At sea from the age of ten, Keppel was made Acting Lieutenant at sixteen whilst with Commodore Anson on a protracted voyage to attack the Spanish off the coast of South America. Scurvy was rife, leading to the loss of his teeth (the bad back resulted from a fall onboard ship many years later). He went on to serve with distinction in the Seven Years' War (1756-63) and numerous minor conflicts, rising to Rear Admiral by 1762.

In tandem with his naval career Keppel was an active politician. Unfortunately his allegiance was to the Whig party, opposed by King George III and by the First Lord of the Admiralty. This caused difficulty during the American War of Independence, which the Whigs were against. When put in charge of the Channel Fleet in order to fight America's ally, France, he foresaw political danger. Sure enough, in 1778 a row with Admiral Hugh Palliser after an action at sea where Keppel performed indifferently grew into accusations of misconduct and neglect of duty and led to his court martial the following year.

The charges did not stick, of course, and by 1783, in a new political climate, he was himself First Lord of the Admiralty and had been created 1st Viscount Keppel. He lived not far away at Bagshot Park Lodge

and was elected Knight of the Shire of Surrey in 1780. The house was demolished in 1878 after its last occupant (the physician to Queen Victoria) vacated it in the 1860s.

As an aside, the present house in Bagshot Park was built between 1875-99 for the Duke of Connaught (seventh child and third son of Queen Victoria). It is now the home of HRH Prince Edward Earl of Wessex and the Countess of Wessex.

Whilst Admiral Keppel's fame was relatively short-lived, his flagship at the Battle of Ushant, the sea action mentioned above, achieved longer lasting recognition, for it marked the first use in war of HMS Victory. As Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar twenty-seven years later she was to fight a more famous battle under a far greater Admiral.

**Neil Hyman**  
Hampshire Museums



## Forthcoming Lectures

**11 May – Alton College**  
***The Decanter - an Illustrated History***  
**Andy McConnell**

The decanter occupies a unique position in glass history. Though its name was not coined until around 1700, the decanter has been the fount of wine drinking for 2000 years, and it remained the principal vessel in the repertoire of British table-glass for centuries. This lecture places the decanter within glassmaking history, charts its stylistic evolution and the life and times of its users.

**8 June – Alton College**  
***Klimt and the Viennese Secession***  
**Douglas Skeggs**

Art in Vienna 1900

The fears and anxieties of Vienna in the final years before the outbreak of the Great War found expression in the writing of Freud, the music of Gustav Mahler and the haunting paintings of Klimt, Kokoschka and Schiele. Shimmering portraits flecked with gold, hypnotic landscapes of vibrant brushstrokes, erotic dreams of decadence and death reveal a society in search for salvation at a time when mankind had lost faith in its future. The lecture traces the course of this brief, often dark but always dazzlingly inventive period of art.



Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I, 1907

## Account Examiner

I am looking for an Account Examiner for our annual accounts. Because of our size, we do not justify a full audit and therefore we do not require an accountant to undertake an audit. However, an examiner should be numerate and, in our particular case, be reasonably familiar with computer spreadsheets as our accounts are now computerised.

The accounts follow a simple process and, as such, are easy to explain. Should any member be interested to provide this service, I would be only willing to demonstrate our accounts process and to explain the role of an examiner. This would of course be 'without any obligation' so please do not hesitate to come forward!

**Martin Woods**