

Out and About in 2016



Diana Hill

It is always a pleasure to visit the Victoria and Albert Museum, home of exquisite treasures, and on **April 3** we headed there for **Botticelli Reimagined**, a major exhibition exploring the ways artists and designers from Pre-Raphaelites to the present day responded to Sandro Botticelli.

The exhibition included paintings, fashion drawings, tapestry, sculpture and print alongside works by artists such as Dante, Rossetti, William Morris and Andy Warhol to name but a few. We were left in no doubt that Botticelli had indeed influenced many great artists in many different ways. After visiting the exhibition, we had time to visit other parts of the V & A that interested us.



Botticelli

June 20 dawned rather grey and wet but this did nothing to dampen our spirits as we set off for **Hampton Court Palace**. We had arranged for two Blue Badge Guides, Jennifer and Wendy, to meet us there. These two were well known to us as they had previously guided us superbly round St Paul's Cathedral and they didn't disappoint this time.



Hampton Court

In the morning they showed us around the Tudor apartments where Henry VIII held sway. We saw the Royal Chapel with its beautiful starry ceiling and the Great Hall, with its magnificent hammer-beam roof and huge tapestries, where once hundreds would have dined.



Stevie Shakesheff

After lunch the sun came out for our guides to show us around the gardens which had undergone several reincarnations. Amongst the many interesting parts, we were shown the sunken garden, originally a fishpond, to provide for the kitchens, and the largest grapevine in the world.

Our guides then took us round the William and Mary apartments, including the marvellous Guard Room artistically hung with hundreds of different weapons, and the series of connecting rooms leading to the innermost private Royal quarters. We had a very enjoyable visit to Hampton Court, a day full of spectacle and interest AND we didn't lose anyone in the maze!

On **September 27**, our old friend, Tim Bridges, guided us around **6 churches** deep in the **Forest of Dean**, an area little known to our members on the coach.

We were delighted to see churches ranging from small intimate churches to the large Norman church in Newland known as "The Cathedral of the Forest" with the most beautiful stained glass windows.



English Bicknor

Our last stop was at English Bicknor. The name may be derived from Bica's Over (ie over the river). We were provided with the most excellent tea and cakes there from such friendly parishioners.

Following the Capability Brown Special Interest Day on 11 October, we visited one of his well known creations at Chatsworth for our **2016 Christmas** outing.

Funds, Administration and our Membership



Bryan Knight

STRADFAS continues to be one of the strongest and most successful Societies in the NADFAS organisation. This we attribute to the quality of our activities and to our remaining financially and administratively sound.

We have, however, been passing through turbulent times, starting with our membership remaining stubbornly some 40 below our 2015 levels as a high attrition rate through age, health or relocation has not been offset by new members joining. We are already feeling the effects of missing £1600 in subscriptions and this trend looks like continuing into 2017 - until we are able to stop it.

Keeping our membership above 600 is essential to maintain our standard of excellence with speakers and events whilst holding subscriptions at our historical favourable levels.

In the past, we have relied on members to promote the benefits of STRADFAS to potential recruits. This must continue and, in addition, the Committee have resolved to look at ways to advertise locally to stimulate a more general awareness and interest.

Ruth Bartlett, our new Membership Secretary, will be very happy to receive applications for new members, particularly for the afternoon lectures.

The financial effects of the lower income mean that we will not have the level of surplus and hence buffer we expected. This is important



Lynne Reekes

now as we have been informed by the ArtsHouse that after several years of static fees, increases in hire charges of between 33% and 58% will be applied from 2017. This will cost STRADFAS nearly £1400 per annum - the equivalent of £2.30 on subscriptions.

We are pleased to say that existing contracts will be honoured (as they should be) at the negotiated prices and so the big increases will apply from our 2018 season. In the meantime we have the more modest inflation of other costs and the unexpected nuisance expenses implied by once-off changes of venue as the move to the Town Hall for our January lectures.

The Committee will buffer and smooth out the financial hiccups as much as we are able and so rather than a single large jump in subscriptions, these will go up from our present £40 to £41 for 2017 and thence to £43 for 2018. Even at these levels, STRADFAS will be in or about the lowest quartile of Societies and we will continue to offer the top quality in lectures and facilities.

The biggest contribution we can all make is to bring in new members and keep Ruth Bartlett happy in her new position!

You will hear an update at our AGM in February 2017.



Ruth Bartlett

If you would like more information about the Stratford-upon-Avon Decorative and Fine Art Society, please contact Ruth Bartlett at membership@stradf.org.uk



STRADFAS Stratford-upon-Avon Decorative and Fine Arts Society



A member society of NADFAS



Newsletter and Programme 2017-2018

Chairman's Report

As we enjoy varied and fascinating lectures each month it is easy to forget that NADFAS is not only about Education but also Conservation. STRADFAS volunteers certainly play their part in conserving and restoring our precious local heritage so we have enlarged the Newsletter to give you a better idea of their work.

We have also included photographs of committee members; now you can recognise those whose valuable contribution is behind the scenes.

Several new committee members are also very new to STRADFAS - there is no need to serve time in the seats before you join our busy and enthusiastic team!

We, along with the Orchestra of the Swan, marked the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare's death in April with a special event exploring Turner's interest in music and Shakespeare, focusing on sketches he made of Stratford. It was a pleasure to welcome back Turner expert, Nicola Moorby, for a specially researched lecture.

NADFAS is currently taking a hard look at its image. Early results suggest that while many local societies are very strong, national impact is weak. Rebranding is underway which might include a name change!

In 2018 we will join in the NADFAS Golden Jubilee celebrations including two national initiatives, an ArtsFest showcasing young talent and 'Our True Gold' celebrating the work of our volunteers, as well as our own STRADFAS event.

In my first, thoroughly enjoyable year as Chair, I have been grateful for the warm support and friendship of Sue Cragoe-Jones, as Vice Chair and super-efficient Study Days Secretary.

I am delighted that Nick Lister, formerly Membership Secretary, has agreed to be Vice Chair for 2017-18. Nick has also been responsible for developing our engaging and informative website, so do keep track of our many activities, join us whenever possible and bring your friends.



Ursula Russell



Nick Lister

The History, Art and Gardens of Suffolk

Our extended visit in June 2016 took us to a very sunny Suffolk. We began our first day by visiting Lavenham, considered one of England's finest medieval towns, full of splendid half-timbered houses built by merchants who had grown rich as a result of the booming wool trade. We were enchanted by The Guildhall and Little Hall, the latter dating back to the 1300's and we also visited the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, modified several times in order to convey the new wealth of the religious community.

Via the stunning villages of this beautiful part of East Anglia we were able to explore Constable country, which included John Constable's studio and St. Mary's Church at East Bergholt, Dedham and the National Trust's delightful Bridge Cottage and Flatford Mill. We also enjoyed visiting Thomas Gainsborough's House at Sudbury, which dates back to the 16th century and was his birthplace. We were shown many of his outstanding paintings plus the extra treat of some of his lesser-known works, not normally on display to the public.

Another day of sunshine accompanied us to the picturesque 16th century fishing village of Aldeburgh, where we ate freshly-smoked salmon and cream cheese bagels on the beach, before visiting Benjamin Britten's fascinating Red House.

One of the highlights of the tour must certainly be the Anglo-Saxon royal burial site of Sutton Hoo. The eminent Anglo-Saxonist, Dr Sam Newton, began by giving us a lecture and then, with his lyre, gave us a spine-chilling performance of the Old English language.



Ickworth House

He then led us around the barrows and enthralled us with the tales of how they were discovered. This was a unique experience.

Not to be forgotten were the magnificent historic buildings we visited. Christchurch Mansion, a fine Tudor building set in an ancient and beautiful park close to the centre of Ipswich, Ickworth House with its Rotunda and "Capability" Brown parkland and, on our way home, Audley End with its truly delightful gardens and superb guides. A perfect end to a perfect trip!



The Crooked House, Lavenham

New Members Coffee Morning

Last May we held a very well-attended coffee morning for people who had recently joined STRADFAS. Apart from enjoying the delicious cakes and biscuits, this event gives our new members a chance to meet one another and the committee. The committee are also able to introduce themselves and to explain what each member does, especially in the volunteering activities. This year our New Members' Coffee Morning will be held on Wednesday **17 May**, so do come if you are able.

NADFAS AGM

The national Annual General Meeting of NADFAS in 2017 will be held in Birmingham on **17 May**. All NADFAS members, not solely committee members, are welcome to attend and details are in the NADFAS Autumn Review.

Programme of our Activities in 2017-2018

Lectures in 2017-2018



Lynne Hurst

Programme Organiser: Lynne Hurst
lectures@stradfas.org.uk

Location and Times:

Lectures are held at Stratford Artshouse 14 Rother Street, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6LU

Mornings at 10.45 am
Afternoons at 1.30 pm

For latest information visit the website:
www.stradfas.org.uk

February



Thursday 16 February
AGM 11am followed by a lecture

Love, Power and Scandal - A Royal Jewel For Every Occasion

Susan Ruffitt

From Henry VIII to the Duchess of Cambridge, this lecture will focus on Royal Jewels which have caused gasps of shock over the last 500 years. We will admire the symbolic jewels of Henry VIII and Mary, the scandalous jewels surrounding Charles II and George IV and the romantic stories behind the jewels that Prince Albert gave to his beloved Queen Victoria.

March



Thursday 16 March

Manet: A bar at the Folies-Bergère

Lizzie Darbyshire

Edouard Manet's A bar at the Folies-Bergère of 1882 is a treasured possession of The Courtauld Collection. We engage with a young barmaid at work in a fashionable establishment while a gentleman waits to be served. What is the establishment and who frequented it? Who was the barmaid and who was the gentleman? These questions are answered about this painting by the god-father of Modern art.

April



Thursday 13 April

Now You See it, Now You Don't

Bertie Pearce

From Roman times illusions and the distortions of perspective have been used in art. Bertie Pearce examines various aspects of perception through trompe l'oeil, Anamorphic art as well as the Ambiguous imagery of René Magritte. In the sixties Optical Art became popular through Victor Vasarely and Bridget Riley. We are also shown how theatre magic is the ultimate illusion as it conceals and shrinks reality.

May



Thursday 18 May

Theatre-going in Georgian England 1715-1830

Simon Rees

The theatre was the main place of entertainment during this era and masterpieces of plays and operas by Sheridan, Handel, Gay and others were produced. It showcased the skills of actors such as Garrick and singers such as Farinelli. Caricaturists drew cruel satirical prints whilst painters such as Hogarth and Reynolds captured stage images. Even the theatre buildings are examined.

June



Thursday 15 June

Art and Revolution: The Life and Death of the Russian Avant-garde

Rosamund Bartlett

Russian artists staged a revolution of their own before the 1917 Russian deposing of the Tsar. Certain artists became leaders of the European avant-garde and changed the language of art. Stravinsky and Goncharova remained abroad hoping to help create a bright utopian future while Chagall and Kandinsky influenced Russian culture from inside the country until their dreams were shattered.

September



Thursday 21 September

Giles: His Life and Cartoons

Barry Venning

Giles loved Grandma as through her he could say impolite things in his cartoons! He made fun of authority including Hitler, traffic wardens and even his Daily Express employers! His many admirers included Prince Charles and Sir Malcolm Sargent. As a war correspondent he had visited Belsen where the camp commandant was a fan. Barry Venning explores how Giles gave us an amazing picture of fifty years of British life.

October



Thursday 19 October

Music, Masquerades and Monkeys

Jane Gardiner

Jane Gardiner examines porcelain figures as a form of table decoration, as pieces for a mantle shelf. They all reflect eighteenth century society in miniature. She shows us characters from the Commedia dell'Arte, pedlars, exotic creatures, lovers, musicians, shepherds, shepherdesses and gods of Olympus. To add to the mix she promises to show us monkeys who were also made of porcelain.

November



Thursday 16 November

Ghosts!

Susan Owens

We know that ghosts have changed in appearance over time because of the way artists have depicted them. Some are shown as walking corpses, others as headless or in period costume or a sheet! Telling the fascinating story of ghosts in English art and entertainment, Susan Owens uses diverse visual resources such as medieval manuscripts, political caricatures, photography, paintings and magic lanterns to explore the changing appearance of ghosts.

December



Thursday 14 December

Frida Kahlo: Reflections of a Life on Canvas

Sian Walters

Born in Mexico City three years before the revolution, Frida Kahlo's self-portraits record not only her physical likeness but also the poignant events of her life. However it is her self-portraits which are the most memorable of her works. Her paintings show us her emotions, family and her political sympathies. Sian Walters traces Kahlo's suffering through her paintings and explores various themes such as nationalism and surrealism.

January 2018



Thursday 18 January

Albrecht Durer: The Italian and Northern Renaissance

Leslie Primo

Albrecht Durer lived during the years following the Renaissance in Europe when trade and ideas spread across the Empire. Leslie Primo examines this precocious and talented youth who was born in Nuremberg in the Holy Roman Empire in 1471. His early life and works will be explored together with an examination of the long lasting influence that Durer had on the Italian Renaissance.

February 2018



Thursday 15 February

AGM 11 am followed by a lecture

Optical Entertainments before the Movies

Andrew Gill

There were many inventions, dances and discoveries that led to the first showing of the movies in 1895. This lecture explores "cave art", "peep shows", "transforming pictures" and "persistence of vision machines" together with the forgotten world of artists, showmen and early scientists who attempted to capture and reproduce real life imagery long before the coming of cinema.

Visits in 2017



David & Charlotte Triggs

On **28 February** we are going to Tate Britain to see an exhibition of one of the most influential British artists of the 20th century. This exhibition gathers together an extensive selection of David Hockney's works celebrating his achievements in painting, drawing, photography and video across six decades. As he approaches his 80th birthday, Hockney continues to change his style and ways of working, embracing new technologies as he goes. This exhibition shows how the roots of each new direction lay in the work that came before, and is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see these unforgettable works together.

On **7 June** we will be visiting one of London's best-kept secrets, Ham House. Built in 1610, this rare and atmospheric treasure trove is a delight. The grand Stuart house, with an



Ham House

intriguing history, sits on the banks of the River Thames, surrounded by lovely gardens.

We are having a **Royal Day Out** on **Sunday 24 September**, starting with the Queen's Gallery for *Canaletto and the Art of Venice* and the Royal Mews with its dazzling carriages. Next we tour Buckingham Palace and the 19 State Rooms where the Queen entertains official guests. Individual audio guides provide a wealth of information about the exquisite furnishings and unique works of art on display. Among the many highlights are rooms such as the stunning White Drawing Room and the Throne Room, paintings by Van Dyck, sculpture by Canova and Sèvres porcelain. Afterwards we can relax and enjoy the view from the Garden Café. There will be a further visit in **December 2017**.

Extended Tour to Vienna



Annie Giles

Our five-day tour, both in April and July 2017, will take us to Vienna to explore the great wealth of the Hapsburgs and the splendour of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Our visit will begin with the 12th century St Stephen's Cathedral, followed by Schönbrunn Palace, commissioned in 1696 by Leopold 1. The next day we will travel along the beautiful Danube Valley to visit the famous Benedictine Melk Abbey. On our fourth morning we will see the authentically furnished Imperial Apartments, the Sisi Museum and the Silver Collection at the Hofburg and in the afternoon the Kunsthistorisches



Belvedere Palace



St Stephen's Cathedral

from the Middle Ages to the present day, including works from Egon Schiele and Kokoschka and the world's largest Gustav Klimt collection.



Inside Upper Belvedere Palace

Museum. Finally, we bid farewell to Vienna with a guided tour of the magnificent Upper Belvedere Palace, conveniently situated right next to our hotel and the Botanical Gardens. There we can enjoy the fine collection of Austrian art dating

Special Interest Days



Sue Cragoe-Jones

For those interested in antiques we shall be holding '**A Day with Mark Hill: Collectables and 20th Century Glass Specialist**' on Tuesday **28 March**. Antiques Roadshow followers may recognise the smart, blond-haired man who also co-authors Miller's Collectables Guide.

Mark will give a lecture on glass from the last century looking at the emergence of the major factories and the influences behind the work produced by their designers.

A second lecture will focus on the purchasing of antiques and what collectors are buying.

There will be 2 ID/valuing sessions, to which participants are encouraged to bring items, to provide the audience with, to quote Mark, "informative entertainment".



Wedgwood glass



Caroline Newey

To rekindle memories of our trip to Vienna, Gavin Plumley, a lecturer on Classical Music and the Culture of Central Europe, will talk on Thursday **2 November** about '**Klimt and his World: the Art and Culture of fin-de-siècle Vienna**'.

At the turn of the last century this capital of a vast empire was one of the most exciting cultural laboratories in the world. Why and how this happened will be explained: artists, architects, a psychoanalyst, a philosopher and a composer all played their part.

Gustave Klimt, who produced murals and paintings with bold use of colour and gold, and Otto Wagner, who left an extraordinary architectural legacy, will each be highlighted.



The Kiss