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# STRADFAS

The Arts Society Stratford-upon-Avon

## Golden Jubilee

2022-23



Extended tour - Dresden



September talk - Vivaldi in Venice



Members enjoying a talk at the Playhouse



March talk - Sir Anthony van Dyck



April talk - Atkinson Grimshaw



May talk - Indian Modern Art  
Photo credit: Mack Male



Extended tours - All Saints church, Tudeley, Kent (left) & Charlottenburg (right)



What a special year for Jubilee celebrations! First, there was the Queen's 70th Jubilee and now, just a little later, our own STRADFAS Golden Jubilee. As the very first SADFAS lecture was in March 1972 we are already over fifty years old. Eric Knowles of the Antiques Road Show is giving us a talk on The Genius and Legacy of Rene Lalique. The CEO of the Arts Society, Florian Schweizer, together with other dignitaries, is celebrating the occasion with us, so we hope that you enjoy a really interesting lecture followed by a glass of bubbly and cake.

## Chairman's Report



Our incoming Chairman Caroline Johnson with the outgoing David Triggs

Finally this year we have managed to meet in person, and our first lecture had an impressive 86% membership turnout. We have continued to enjoy an amazing range of passionate and well informed speakers. Their professionalism has been outstanding, especially during the Zoom hybrid sessions which rarely went without a hitch! However I am so pleased that around one fifth of our membership was able to join us from home, and I know that feeling is reciprocated. So can I thank you for your enthusiasm and tenacity and, newer members, for having the confidence to join us.

Last year I mentioned the hard work of our committee and trustees and this has actually been recognised with a Marsh award from the Arts Society. It is rightly deserved. I am delighted that my three years as Chairman is ending with Caroline Johnson taking over and the society in great shape.

# STRADFAS *Golden Jubilee* timeline

This timeline has been put together with great help from inaugural member, June Sheppard. June responded to an advertisement in the Stratford Herald in early 1972 placed by our founder, Yvonne Dunn, and became involved in SADFAS from the very start. She joined the Committee later that year and was Chairman in 1978. June was also involved with Audrey Edwards in the production of the SADFAS 20th Anniversary Booklet.



SADFAS has frequently given charitable donations. In 2009, it joined with Royal Leamington Spa in support of the publication of "Oil Paintings in Public Ownership in Warwickshire".



Overseas visits also continued to be popular and Susanne Eastwood led a highly acclaimed visit to St Petersburg in 2011.

Lady Deb Follett, editor of the excellent 40th Anniversary Newsletter in 2012 calculated that, by that time, SADFAS had put on around 360 lectures and at least 80 study days.



SADFAS supported local pupils to take part in a concert given by the Armonico Consort. Two students from Stratford Girls' Grammar School became NADFAS/RBA Scholars and had their art work exhibited in the Mall Galleries in London.

STRADFAS marked the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare's death by putting on "Art meets Music" with the Orchestra of the Swan.

The Town Trust threatened to close the ArtsHouse and members of STRADFAS campaigned to keep it open. The Play House finally emerged under new management.



Ursula Russell handed over to David Triggs, STRADFAS' first male Chairman.

The 2020 Italy visit was disrupted by Covid with many members dropping out! This was the start of a difficult time for all Arts Societies!

The new normal began in September 2021 with Peter Medhurst's "Vivaldi in Venice". This was presented both in person at the Play House and also on Zoom. We look forward to full normality for our Jubilee Lecture in June 2022 to be given by Eric Knowles.



Recording work at 'All Saints', Luddington was completed under the leadership of Richard Potts.

The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) came into being, inspired by Patricia Fay.



Day visits, study courses and social events became very popular. The first visit, in 1972, was to Waddesden Manor.

Lectures moved to the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 1982 and the membership rose to 179 with a considerable waiting list. Afternoon meetings began soon after.

The VCC became NADFAS Volunteers in 1990 and the first Young NADFAS trip took 37 young people to the Ashmolean in Oxford.



The 20th anniversary "acanthus" brooch was designed by member, Ann Smith. Not all Chairmen have worn this!

The 25th Anniversary in 1997 was marked by a champagne reception at the Swan Theatre where Prunella Scales presented "An Evening with Queen Victoria".

In 2006 The first Annual Newsletter was produced informing members of achievements and plans. It reported the successful completion of a long-term project (with other W Midland groups) to provide 38 new tapestry seat covers for Coughton Court.

Upheaval – with the RSC requiring the Civic Hall whilst the new theatre was being built. Back to The Birthplace Trust...

1967

1972

1976

1982

1983

1990

1992

1997

1999

2006

2009

Stratford upon Avon DFAS (SADFAS) became the 39th NADFAS member in March 1972 with a lecture on Period Furniture. Monthly meetings at Mason Croft attracted a membership which soon exceeded 100.

The Voluntary Conservation Corps (VCC) was initiated in 1976 with cataloguing for the Shakespeare Trust and Records Office.

Weekends Away began, with the first to Buxton in 1983. Church Recording began at St James', Alveston.



The first overseas visit was made by 100 members to Bruges in September 1992. The membership was then around 600 with 200 on the waiting list. The 20th Anniversary was celebrated with a black tie reception and Opera evening in the Civic Hall.

Pressures on membership eased with the formation of Royal Leamington Spa DFAS in 1993 and a move to the Civic Hall in 1997. The waiting list was cancelled two years later.

R. Atkin became the first male Committee Member in 1999 – as Treasurer. Treasurers have been male ever since! Lunches for Church Recorders and Heritage Volunteers, and New Members' Coffee Mornings began.

2009

The SADFAS website went online and SADFAS was runner-up in the NADFAS competition for Best Newsletter.

2010

Expert in church architecture, Tim Bridges, led a visit to six Cotswold churches in 2010, continuing this popular tradition.

2011

Back to the Civic Hall again! Claude Walters at the Civic Hall was very supportive in helping SADFAS move from slide to digital projection.

2012

The 40th Anniversary lecture was given by Antiques Roadshow star, Lars Tharp, on "Harlots, Rakes and Crashing China". Fizz and cake followed.

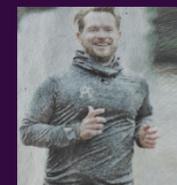


2013

SADFAS became STRADFAS (although some older members still referred to it as NADFAS!). Membership exceeded 600 again. The Civic Hall began a multi-million pound refurbishment to become the Arts House. However, storm damage in 2014 caused the AGM to be relocated to the RSC Courtyard Theatre.

2016

NADFAS rebranded itself in 2017 as the Arts Society. Its CEO, Florian Schweizer, ran 10 miles around Shakespeare's Stratford in 2018 as one of his 50 Anniversary runs.



2018

STRADFAS changed its membership year to run from September to June and achieved Charitable Status. The grants budget was increased by 33% to reflect this. It also joined Facebook, posting details of all its activities.

2019

2020

STRADFAS mounted its first virtual lecture in March 2020 with Sian Walters presenting "Raphael" from home! Around 15 further virtual lectures followed, often joint with smaller societies. STRADFAS even put on virtual day visits to London and Bristol. Committee members received a "highly commended" in the Marsh Society 2022 Awards.

2022

# Volunteering with STRADFAS

## Heritage Volunteers

Kay Anderson



Our wonderful volunteers have been successful in conserving a variety of valuable projects including the amazing gold work on ecclesiastical embroideries for local churches and the restoration of four vestments and new cushions for Holy Trinity.

Our involvement with the Shakespeare Birthplace has helped them preserve so many of their textiles and costumes for the enjoyment of future generations. However, the educational Tudor costume project at Hall's Croft continues to be delayed while the restoration work on the four hundred year old house is completed.

## Church Recorders

Jean Vaudeau



There have been several groups of Stradfas Church Recorders over the last 50 years. Although seldom seen at work by our members, they have produced many excellent records of Warwickshire churches.

The present group, formed ten years ago, was privileged to cut its teeth at St Milburga's Wixford, moving on to the larger St Michael and All Angels, Claverdon and they are currently

recording St Lawrence, Mickleton, Gloucestershire. Over the years our core group of members have developed a wide range of interests and skills while they thoroughly researched the history and furnishings of each of the churches.

## Community Art

Anne Maguire



As life returns to some normality, so are our grants for Arts projects. The Young Carers and Bereaved Children have already been recipients this year. The Fred Winter Centre is ready to take up our offer of funded artwork when it opens.

As the name change above suggests, we are able to offer grants to a wider range of groups and negotiations are underway for another donation to be made. If you think there is a group who could benefit, let us know.



# STRADFAS

The Arts Society Stratford-upon-Avon

## Newsletter & Programme 2022/23

### Administration & Funds

Our membership of 420 is low due to members not renewing during the pandemic. The financial loss we predicted for last year did not materialise because we had several 'online' lectures, which cost less, but we are forecasting a loss for the coming year. An increase in membership fees is required and we will continue to draw on reserves until we return to a break-even membership of between 510-530. Our thanks to Lynne Hurst for tirelessly negotiating the reductions in lecturers fees, and to the volunteers for raising funds by means of coffees, raffles and technical support.



### New members' coffee morning

In March, we were delighted to welcome 25 new members to our first coffee morning after a two year covid break. The committee gathered in the lounge at the back of the Play House where it was good to meet and chat. We especially appreciated the presence of several new gentlemen members! Our Chairman, David Triggs, introduced the committee and gave a little background to the history of our society and what STRADFAS has to offer. We hope that all our members enjoy the new programme of lectures and events, and some may wish to become involved in volunteering and committee work.

### Day and extended visits

In September, a group of 52 visited All Saints' Church, Selsley, the last of the Cotswold wool churches, and Rodmarton Manor, the home of the Biddulph family, both showcasing the English Arts and Crafts movement. Selsley church with its 100 feet saddleback tower is renowned for its magnificent stained-glass windows. the work of luminaries such as Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The building of Rodmarton Manor and its extensive gardens in the early 1900s provided employment for many local people using rural crafts and the quality of their work was there for all to admire.



Extended visit to Kent, May 2022





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

Times: **Thursday mornings at 10.45am, repeated in the afternoons at 1.30pm**

**SEP  
15**

**Shaken by an Earthquake.  
Sandy Burnett**

In analysing the build up to the Rite of Spring's premiere in Paris in 1913, Sandy examines one of the greatest collaborations of all between Igor Stravinsky and Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Sandy studies the build up to the Rites of Spring premiere, plays excerpts from the inventive score and explores reasons for divided opinions which led to a riot at the Rite.



**OCT  
20**

**Regency Revelations:  
The Lost Diary of a Dandy. Mark Hill**

This diary was found by accident with books bought on Amazon and covers 2 years of the life of John Margesson from 1831 to 1833. This lively and entertaining lecture explores his life, obsessions, observations of Regency London and a scandal which resulted in his exile. Etchings, illustrations and photographs are used in Mark's talk about the beautifully copper plated journal.



**FEB  
16**

**Heaven on Earth: A Road Trip Through  
Medieval Burgundy. Caroline Shenton**

Burgundy has many architectural wonders dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries such as Autun, Vezelay, Fontenay, Pontigny and Cluny. Caroline explores Romanesque terror to show how Benedictine abbeys and Cistercian monasteries created some of the best wines in the world. She will give us travel tips and tasting recommendations!



**MAR  
16**

**Fashion, Fury  
and Feminism.  
Tessa Boase**

Tessa was denied access to the archives of The RSPB when she wanted to write about their early history. This challenge resulted in Tessa revealing the intriguing love affair of women with plumage and of the eco feminists who championed the cause of the birds. The lecture takes us to a world where every woman of every class wore a hat!



**NOV  
17**

**Lord Fitzwilliam and his  
Bequest to Cambridge.  
Sarah Burles**

The Fitzwilliam Museum was founded in Cambridge in 1816 on the death of Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam. Whilst exploring the works in the collection, Sarah shows how this extensive collection was acquired, why it was left to the University and the connection with Napoleon.



**DEC  
8**

**No Ordinary  
Christmas.  
Ghislaine Howard**

Ghislaine is a painter whose own work is inspired by the human figure. She tells the story of Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds and the Magi by using paintings and poems that speak to us all, some familiar, others less well known. And it is never too early to think about Christmas!



**JAN  
19**

**The Art of the  
Cartoonist.  
Harry Venning**

Harry Venning has been a cartoonist for over thirty years. In this talk he explores the history of cartoons with examples of early cartoonists such as Cruickshank and Hogarth to contemporary artists like Giles and Schulz. He will be producing cartoons fresh on the day and will let us in on some trade secrets such as where to put eyebrows for maximum effect!



**APR  
20**

**Stairway  
to Heaven:  
Poignant  
Works of Fra  
Angelico.  
Stella Lyons**



Fra Giovanni da Fiesole was also known as Fra Angelico or the "Blessed Angelico" because his paintings of paradise were so moving. Stella Lyons explores his delicate works including frescoes and his painting of Christ with bloodied eyes.

**The Painting Secrets  
of Freud and Bacon.  
Alice White**

Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon are two giants of British Figure Painting. Alice takes us behind the scenes of their studios and explores how their images illustrate a deep and delicate human psyche. This lecture illustrates passion and personality through the "fleshy folds of the human form".



**MAY  
18**

**JUN  
15**

**Music in Art.  
Sophie Matthews**

Works of art depicting musical instruments show us not only what musical instruments

looked like but also the social context in which they would have been played. Sophie explores the instruments in selected works of art and gives live demonstrations on replicas of these instruments, some of which she has made herself and taught herself to play.



**SPECIAL INTEREST DAYS**

**Chinese Imperial Court Life and  
Exceptional Rulers: David Rosier  
3 November 2022**



The Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1911) was an important part of China's history. The day starts with an exploration of Chinese Imperial Court life in terms of structure and protocol and sees the impact of regulated formal Imperial Clan Court Costume worn by the Chinese along with Civil and Military Officials. Finally, the day finishes with a study of the Dowager Empress Cixi.

**Bhutan, Buddhism and Buddhist Art:  
Zara Fleming  
9 March 2023**

The day begins with Siddhartha (revered today as Buddha Sakyamuni) and his influence on personal discipline and spiritual growth. The study illustrates how Buddhism spread from its beginnings in India through the Himalayas to Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. Finally, we focus on Bhutan, the country of Gross National Happiness, with its unique culture in ecology, spirituality, etiquette and politics.



**DAY VISITS**

**Shropshire Churches  
6 July 2022**



Geoff Pick / St. Mary Magdalene, Quatford / CC BY-SA 2.0

In 2022 we shall make a tour of Shropshire churches.



Alexander's lecture last November, to St Albans, to Althorp House and to the Arcadian Thames.

Althorp House. Photo:

In 2023, we are planning to arrange visits to the Dufy exhibition, following on from Mary

**EXTENDED TOURS**

**The History and Art of Glasgow  
and Edinburgh. May 2023**

We will see the legacy of Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Glasgow and Helensburgh. Our Blue Badge Guide will take us to the Hunterian Gallery in Glasgow and the National Gallery in Edinburgh. We will visit the Royal Yacht Britannia and Holyrood House.



**The Palaces and Art of Veneto and  
Venice. October 2023**



This 6 day trip includes guided tours of Vicenza, Padua and Mantua, each with its own fascinating history, art and architecture. There will be a private boat trip to three islands in the Venetian Lagoon and a day in Venice where we visit the Galleria dell'Accademia and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.