



*Fine
Lines*

Newsletter - Volume 32

SEPTEMBER, 2014

Decorative & Fine Arts Society



Chester

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Members,

It's a great pleasure to welcome back members for the start of our lecture year, and to say a warm hello to our new members. Last year was busy as usual and included the highlight of winning a prize in the NADFAS Media Awards for our recruitment postcards – see the article on the AGM in the NADFAS Review! Putting together the postcards was a team effort for which the committee is justly proud. (See bottom page 2)

I hope you've enjoyed the summer and that you're now looking forward, as I am, to our new programme. We have a fabulous set of lectures, outings and other events for the coming months, of which we'll give more details in these pages and on our website, www.chesterdfas.org.uk. In the lecture programme we range from Michelangelo to the Newlyn School; from churches to children's books; and from Christmas feasts to ceramics. In October we have a visit to the church of **St. Mary the Virgin in Shrewsbury** to see the wonderful stained glass windows and tiled floors, and to **Stokesay Medieval Manor**. Our Study Day in November is **Art Detectives**, learning how to decipher paintings; and in February we will focus on **Russian Art – from Icons to Socialist Realism**. See you there!

Lynne Emerson



It was lovely to see so many members attending **our “social” visit to the Zoo on 3rd June**. Many of you agreed that members of the horticultural team who gave us three short tours of the gardens and greenhouses did an excellent job; they were extremely knowledgeable and charming. It was amazing to learn so much about the conservation that the team does, especially with native plants, and a world-class collection of orchids. After our tours the catering staff provided us with a delicious tea, with such a generous supply of cakes that several of us went home with doggy bags!

Chester DFAS Young Arts - report from Juliet Staines

I began representing Chester DFAS as their new YA Rep, taking over from Cathy Routhwaite, in April 2014. There are lots of exciting ideas in the pipeline including a potential joint project with Pat Billsborrow and our Heritage Volunteers working on an intergenerational project in Weaverham. This is still in the early stages of discussion, but projects already under way include: -

Grosvenor Museum and Chester DFAS Cultural Youth Panel: working with the Grosvenor Museum, Chester DFAS have supported and paid (£95) for one training place for a member of the Grosvenor Education Team to attend a symposium day at Imperial Museum North organised by “Kids in Museums” & GEM, looking at how to set up a successful youth panel in a museum or gallery setting. Using this training information the Grosvenor Museum staff and I will support the recruitment of cultural youth panel sessions over the next year, beginning in September 2014 and working towards a launch event for Halloween in October.

Grosvenor Museum, Young Carers & Chester DFAS: Working with a newly identified group of young carers from Ellesmere Port, the Grosvenor Museum and Chester DFAS will support the transport costs for one or more trips for the young carers to take part in an art & craft series of workshops with myself in the role of Artist Educator delivering the art & craft practical side of the sessions. We will work towards creating a collaborative textiles piece of work (using fabrics kindly donated by members of Chester DFAS) for an art piece to be included in the forthcoming Museum Exhibition, “Hillforts and Habitats”, opening in summer 2015 at the Grosvenor Museum.

Hazlehurst Studios and Chester DFAS: Working with two young emerging artists from Hazlehurst Studios in Runcorn, Chester DFAS have supported and paid (£150) Arts Award training place for one of the artists whilst Hazlehurst Studios have match funded another place (NB ... Arts Award is for young people aged 25 or under to work towards achieving a portfolio based on a nationally recognised qualification). Once trained as Arts Award Advisers, the two artists from Hazlehurst will be supported by Chester DFAS in setting up an arts award group of young people and we hope this may prove a sustainable process year on year for Chester DFAS to support in either time and/or funding. We have also set aside a small budget of £50 towards collating an arts box for a younger children’s workshop at Hazlehurst Studios.

High Sherriff’s Exhibition: Helsby High School has kindly offered to exhibit photography work in collaboration with Chester DFAS at the forthcoming exhibition at Tatton Park later this year. Chester DFAS have agreed to pay for reusable frames to the value of approximately £200 from our YA budget to support this, with the aim of having a set of frames that can be reused for future young arts project work.

We're having a lovely time...

Wish you were here! ...enjoying learning about a stimulating range of subjects connected with decorative and fine arts! We meet on the third Tuesday of each month from Sept to June at Chester Zoo lecture theatre – and throughout the year there are extra study days, visits to places of interest and occasional social events. There is an annual subscription, and if you'd like to try us out, there is an admission charge of £7 for guests. Visit our web site to see the programme and details of how to join us—or email memsec@chesterdfas.org.uk

Chester Decorative and Fine Arts Society
www.chesterdfas.org.uk



Chester DFAS is a member society of the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS)

Great Tarts in Art: High Culture and the Oldest Profession – Study Day 25th February 2014 - report from Lynne Emerson

Well, we expected great things of Linda Smith's study day from the intriguing title, and Linda commented in her introduction that it was one of her most popular topics. We were not disappointed as we had an extremely entertaining as well as informative day about the careers of consorts to the rich and powerful and the paintings that commemorate them.

We started with Charles II and his succession of mistresses, beginning with **Mrs. Barbara Palmer, later Countess Castlemaine, painted by Sir Pete Lely.** She had the slightly bulbous eyes and pad of fat under the chin that became the standard of beauty of the age.



There followed mistresses from high society and low, Nell Gwyn being famously “common as muck”, but many were depicted by the top painters of the day to reflect the high status mistresses could attain. However, their careers were usually short-lived and, of course, there have always been many women living as prostitutes under much less glamorous circumstances. Toulouse Lautrec, in his painting “**Au Salon Rue des Moulins**” shows a group of prostitutes apparently relaxing, but as Linda explained, they are waiting for their enforced and sometimes brutal medical examination.

We finished with a reference to Christine Keeler and the famous image by Lewis Morley and an observation of how our attitudes to mistresses have become much less indulgent. A

delicious and very generous lunch, provided by Annie Trevor-Jones, complemented a fascinating and fun study day.



Day Visit to Birmingham on 24th June, 2014 - report from Sheila Pemberton

This June over forty Chester DFAS members enjoyed an outing to Birmingham. First of all we visited the Birmingham Museum, where we split into two groups and enjoyed a guided introduction to the magnificent display of the Staffordshire Hoard, the largest trove of Anglo-Saxon gold ever found. It was amazing to see close-up the detail of the gold filigree work, the setting of so many cloisonné garnets, and just to marvel at the quantity of items discovered. We also had time to

explore highlights throughout the museum, including one of the world's finest collections of Pre-Raphaelite works. Afterward we went on to the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, where we were guided round the workshops and offices of the Smith & Pepper family business, in operation until the 1980s but with little change over the previous 80 years. Our guides were brilliant and really brought a sense of what the working environment would have been like – complete with demonstrations of the (extremely noisy) machinery! **Altogether a thought-provoking and enjoyable visit.**

Dates for your Diary

7th October 2014 – visit to the Church of St. Mary the Virgin,



Shrewsbury, and Stokesay Castle.

The church is famous for its beautiful stained glass, especially the C14th “Jesse window”, but it also has a wonderful selection of floor tiles by Minton, Godwin and Maw.

After lunch we will go on to English Heritage’s Stokesay Castle, the best-preserved medieval manor house in England, set in beautiful countryside near Ludlow.

We have a few tickets left for this trip and the tickets are priced at £22.00.

Spring 2015: Walking Tour of London

To complement our February lecture on Sir Christopher Wren, we are planning a



walking tour of London in March 2015, also led by the lecturer Tony Tucker.

We will go inside at least five of Wren’s best churches, including St Stephen Walbrook and St Mary Aldermary, see the

steeple of a dozen others, visit some small churchyard gardens, hear stories of Roman emperors, medieval kings and queens and visit sites with connections to Milton, Keats, and Wordsworth, finishing with a superb view of the London skyline from a City rooftop. We will make our own arrangements for transport to London but coffee and lunch will be arranged.

Study Day –25th November 2014

Art Detectives: How to look at and decipher 13th to 19th Century paintings – when, where, how and by whom?

For this study day we have Nadfas lecturer **Nirvana Romell** to guide us through the interpretation of paintings. Get more out of your gallery visits by learning what questions to ask! To be held at **The Grosvenor Museum, Chester, with lunch to be served at the Cheshire Regiment Museum on Castle Square.**

Study Day - 24th February 2015

Russian Art: from Icons to Socialist

Realism. This study day offers an introduction to an intriguing period of artistic and political evolution in Russia. It aims to present the major movements and artists of 20th Century Russian Art and to place the various “isms” of the avant-garde within a wider cultural context. Major artists to be considered include **Kandinsky, Malevich, Tatlin, Lissitzky, Goncharova, Chagall, Rodchenko and Popova.**

Theodora Clarke is an expert and a lecturer on Russian art and twentieth century modernism. She founded and currently edits the online arts magazine ‘Russian Art and Culture’, and founded Russian Art week in London.

Venue: Chester Grosvenor Museum.

Details of further events will be publicised at lectures and on our website with tickets on sale approximately three months before each event.

For Study Days:

Email studysec@chesterdfas.org.uk

For Visits:

Email visits@chesterdfas.org.uk

Cheques payable to Chester DFAS

Please note that refunds are not available unless a replacement can be found.

Editor – Janet Palmer