The Church Recorders

EDFAS members know we have Church Recorders but how many know what they do and why they do it? The process has its origin in an exhibition at the V&A in 1971 of church memorabilia when it was discovered that many churches did not know what they had. It became clear to the curators that a record of churches was vital to ensure that a valuable part of history was not lost. NADFAS was approached and Church Recorders were born.

Over the years more than 100 EDFAS members have taken part in Church Recording. They have been at work since 1998 when they began recording the Church of the Good Shepherd in Murrayfield. Since then they have completed recordings of Canongate Kirk and St Bennet’s Archiepiscopal Chapel.

Creating a Record for the Kirk of the Greyfriars has taken considerably longer than expected. The scale of the project meant that extra Recorders were recruited from outwith Edinburgh. Monthly meetings meant progress was slow and came to a halt when the building closed for 18 months of conservation work. As in many churches, the extent of the Kirk’s possessions was a surprise to the Minister and congregation. Shocked delight might describe the reaction! The laborious process of compiling is now under way and is being completed by Winifred Morrison.

Recorders have to be trained, and experts are called in to advise on various sections, for example silver, woodwork, stained glass and organs. The process has spawned two booklets written by Church Recorders and ex-Recorders. One is a Glossary of Terms used in churches which also includes histories of the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland and Heraldry in Scotland. The second is an Introduction to the Recording of Church Organs by Brian Gill (both are available to buy from Kate Gill). The Scottish Recorders also have a close association with the Scottish Buildings Trust, the Scottish Catholic Archives and the Royal Commission of Scotland. Continued on page 2

My Favourite Picture…

Elizabeth Sutherland is a founder member of EAFAS (now EDFAS) and a past Chairman. She describes here her favourite picture inspired by the EDFAS trip to Northampton in May.

On our visit to the Buccleuch house at Boughton, which I thought was the most interesting house we visited, we saw many interesting pictures, some of which were family portraits and others collected by the Buccleuch family over many generations. My favourite was The Child in Leading Strings, an endearing full length portrait of a small child in an embroidered dress, holding a drawing of The Madonna and Child, attributed to Juan Pantoja de la Cruz (1553-1608).

I was first attracted to the picture by the detail of the embroidered dress with the lace neck. Even the leading strings are of the same fabric as the dress. The child is not looking directly at the drawing; his attention is clearly elsewhere, perhaps distracted by the dog at his feet. Even today I have a clear vision of this enchanting portrait.

Do you have a favourite picture? Please let the Editor know.

By kind permission of the Trustees of the 9th Duke of Buccleuch’s Chattels Fund
The Recorders are in their second year of work in the delightful Robin Chapel in Craigmillar – a hidden Edinburgh gem (Choral Evensong is held every Sunday at 4.30 pm: do go for beautiful music, a glorious setting and peaceful environment). The Robin Chapel was built as the gift of Sir Francis and Lady Tudsbery in memory of their son Robin, a Lieutenant in the Royal Horse Guards (the Blues), who was killed in the closing weeks of the Second World War. The stained glass, ironwork and woodwork are particularly spectacular. At present 15 EDFAS Recorders are at work in the Chapel.

On 5 July the Robin Chapel was the setting for an inspiring service conducted by the Rev Thomas Coupar in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Earl of Wessex. The occasion was the 70th anniversary of the Thistle Foundation and the 60th anniversary of the dedication of the Robin Chapel as an inter-denominational place of worship. The service began with an Introit, A Prayer of King Henry VI, commissioned for the occasion by the Trustees of the Chapel and composed by Professor Paul Mealor of Aberdeen University. Highlights of the service included the singing of the Chapel Choir, the fitting address by Julian Birchall, Chairman of the Trustees, and the moving Act of Re-Dedication and Prayers written by the Rev Thomas Coupar. The EDFAS Robin Chapel team is led by Lady Gill, who was at the service with her husband Lord Gill, as was Lady Fiona Campbell, Chairman of EDFAS. Lady Fiona wrote to Julian Birchall to thank him for inviting members of the Society, and he replied, ‘Kate Gill and her team are doing sterling work but if there is anything more we can do to link the Chapel with EDFAS please get in touch.’

Church Recorders gain a great deal from their work including knowledge, dialogue, friendship as well as a strong sense of ecumenism. EDFAS is so lucky to have these active volunteers who contribute not only to EDFAS but also to Edinburgh and the wider Scottish community. If you are interested in becoming a Church Recorder, please contact Kate Gill: churchrecording@edfas.co.uk.

Join in the Fun and Learn New Skills

New Heritage Volunteer Projects at

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and National Museums Scotland

If you would like more information about the new projects being organised for EDFAS Heritage Volunteers please contact Jen McDowell - email evening@edfas.co.uk or tel. 0131 667 3436

Donations January to August 2013

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EDFAS members will remember our first College of Art Bursary winner from the last newsletter, Orlaigh Murray. She describes her first year…

My first year at Edinburgh College of Art was incredibly exciting and challenging; just what I had hoped for! In a class of only three first year students, I was thrown straight into experimenting with a huge variety of techniques and materials. Every day I learned new techniques, and eventually the sawing, drilling, soldering and hammering became second nature to me. Throughout first year, I took part in a number of projects within my course and learned how to work with plastics and set stones. Stone setting was difficult, but so exciting and interesting! I made jewellery from green Iona stone, including rings and earrings, as well as jewellery from other materials. I must thank everyone at EDFAS for their generosity and support throughout my first year, as with the Access Bursary, I have been able to explore and experiment with a variety of precious stones and materials. I feel incredibly lucky that I did not struggle financially for my materials and tools, and cannot wait to start second year. Thank you so much to everyone at EDFAS for your help and support!

EDINBURGH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER · AUGUST 2013

OUT & ABOUT

Above: Sulgrave Manor, Northamptonshire
Right: Broich Gardens
Below: Cardross
Below right: Jupiter Artland

London 12 November 2013

40 years ago members of NADFAS societies began actively to contribute to the preservation of our heritage thereby achieving the twin aims of NADFAS – Education and Conservation.

While so many valuable projects have been completed over this period there is still much more to do, especially in these difficult economic times. To celebrate this landmark anniversary, a Festival of Volunteering entitled ‘Rising to the Challenge’ will take place in London at Kensington Town Hall on 12 November. It will be attended by Museum Professionals, Partner Organisations, and Volunteers demonstrating and publicising what NADFAS Volunteering can achieve. Everyone who is interested in volunteering is welcome, even if not currently engaged in a project. Do register your interest with Chloe Bevan at NADFAS House and plan a pre-Christmas trip to London. EDFAS and other societies from the Scotland and Northern Ireland Area will be represented so come and join the ‘Celtic Corner’ to see examples of projects from other parts of the country.

40 Years of NADFAS Volunteering: A Celebration in Scotland

In the same spirit of celebration a special event was held on 6 June at the Burrell Collection. All volunteers were invited to attend the day as a ‘thank-you’ for their commitment to the host of projects in Scotland and Northern Ireland carried out by Church Recorders, Heritage Volunteers and Young Arts Organisers. Funds were made available from the Area budget and matched by a very generous donation from EDFAS.

Over 70 volunteers, representing the majority of the 13 societies, travelled to Glasgow for two presentations by members of the Museum’s Conservation staff. Helen Hughes had received a NADFAS grant to partly fund her training at Hampton Court Textile Conservation Centre. Many years on, she is working towards a comprehensive catalogue of the magnificent Tapestry Collection at the Burrell. In her presentation, Marie Stumpff highlighted the world class quality of the stained glass collected by Sir William Burrell and outlined the on-going research project which is providing many insights into the history and craftsmanship of the pieces. In a series of fascinating slides both Helen and Marie showed the dilemmas encountered by the conservators as they sought to preserve the condition as well as the integrity of these beautiful objects.
I read recently in a leaflet targeting the adult education market that for a lecture to be successful, it should be ‘stimulating, informative and entertaining’. Judging from the favourable comments garnered from members after each lecture, most would agree that our latest series was indeed stimulating, informative and entertaining.

Anthony Russell started the ball rolling in the New Year with a thoughtful discourse on the role played by the great British country house from its earliest origins through to the present day. He argued very persuasively that these fine houses, of which he showed us many, need to evolve and move with the times if they are to survive in twenty-first century Britain.

In February, Fenella Billington conjured up wonderful images of a bygone era when the Great Twelve Livery Companies of the City of London dominated civic life in feudal England. She also examined their origins and essential role in modern society. How sad that the few original halls to survive the Great Fire of London were destroyed in the Blitz.

Amanda Herries then took us on an intrepid expedition that started in the Far East scrutinising ancient Chinese porcelain and culminated in the competitive industrial pottery towns of nineteenth century England. The story that she wove around the ubiquitous blue and white Willow Pattern plate contained many surprises and fine illustrations.

Some quite superb illustrations of maritime paintings illuminated the lecture theatre wall in April. Julia Korner introduced us to an array of maritime artists, focusing primarily on the Pier - head painters and the Roux family in particular. As a neat tie-in, we were able to view the oil painting, Leith with Galleon, that had been restored by specialist conservators utilising a donation we gave to Historic House, Leith.

A masterly lecture on Klimt and the Viennese Secession followed. Douglas Skeggs is an outstanding lecturer and this one was no exception. As we waltzed around Vienna, he showed us the sensual appeal of Gustav Klimt, how he fused feelings of love, passion and desire with despair and anxiety, whilst touching upon the collective unconsciousness of the 20th century.

We ended our session with an excellent lesson on the seminal American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. Anthea Streeter is another impressive lecturer and we enjoyed her expert examination of FLW’s long career; versatility and colourful private life. Having shown us numerous buildings including his two acknowledged masterpieces, Falling Water in Pennsylvania and the Guggenheim in New York, she summed up his core message in three words, ‘Form Follows Function’.

No one could accuse our Events committee of sitting idly by. In the last six months we’ve enjoyed multiple trips to the Samuel J Peploe retrospective in Modern 2, the Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh and the National Museums of Scotland Ceramics Store in Granton. I would like to thank Senior Curator Alice Strang at Modern 2, Old Master Brian Adair, Ceramics expert Celia Curnow and Rose Watban and Alison Patterson of NMS for giving not just their time but their expertise so generously. In late May we travelled to Stirling and visited two very different country houses. I’m always amused by Gertrude Stein’s remark that a house in the country is not the same as a country house. Both Cardross and Broich are definitely country houses. We spent a happy morning at Cardross being shown around by Sir Archie and Lady Orr-Ewing and enjoyed a stylish lunch in their splendid dining room. After a short trip on the bus we arrived at Broich and gasped in collective unison at the wondrous bank of rhododendrons in front of the house. Sir Peter and Lady Hutchison led various tours around their magnificent garden before spoiling us with an excellent tea. And as an added bonus the sun shone.

It continued to shine when we visited the contemporary art installations orbiting Edinburgh at Jupiter Artland. Nicky Wilson gave an exceptional overview of what they have achieved in the past five years and also the philosophy behind this exciting venture. There is so much to see at Jupiter but I think my favourite installation on this visit must be the underground chamber of amethyst which danced and dazzled off the sunken walls.

At the Society Lecture in February, Colin Bailey revealed the eccentricities of various artists which challenged the assumptions of what constitutes ‘normal behaviour’. Afterwards, Trevor Jones, Executive Director of Art in Healthcare, told us about the invaluable work carried out by his charity; how they provide original artworks to hospitals, care centres, hospices and health centres throughout Scotland. This is a remarkable organisation and I was proud to hand over a cheque for £6,000 on behalf of EDFAS (pictured above).

We wrapped up our full and varied Events programme with a special visit to Paxton House where members enjoyed a tour of the house, an entertaining lecture on the picture collection by a bygone era when the Great Twelve Livery Companies of the City of London dominated civic life in feudal England. She also examined their origins and essential role in modern society. How sad that the few original halls to survive the Great Fire of London were destroyed in the Blitz.

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Finally, there are three words that describe our terrific tour to Northamptonshire in May, arranged impeccably, as ever, by Neil Hynd: stimulating, informative and entertaining. Please join me in thanking the EDFAS committee for their diligence, dedication and enthusiasm over these last hectic six months.

Fiona Campbell, August 2013