



AGM & CONFERENCE

— EDINBURGH 2011 —



NADFAS – THE 'CINDERELLA OF THE ARTS WORLD' HAS A BALL IN EDINBURGH

NADFAS is sometimes described as the 'Cinderella of the Arts World' because the beauty of the society structure and the enthusiasm of the members for the arts and heritage are, for many, as yet undiscovered. The Annual Conferences present an opportunity for members to sparkle as their efforts are highlighted and rewarded with awards, good company and entertainment.

The NADFAS Conference held in Edinburgh from May 10th-12th 2011 was a great success. The events surrounding the AGM were organised by the NADFAS Scotland and Northern Ireland Area. Planning started the spring of 2009 with a committee of five: Chairman Susan Zuill, then Area Chairman, Jennifer Harding-Edgar, Chairman of EDFAS, Elizabeth Black, Area Chairman elect, Mary Callander and Midge Connell. This expanded to include Shelagh Townsend-Rose, Lillian Fleming and Fiona MacSporran in the last few months. As the conference date approached a large team of willing helpers from Area Societies was drafted in to assist with the smooth running and hosting of the hour by hour activities.

Accommodation booking was organised by NADFAS House through the Edinburgh Convention Bureau but many members made their own arrangements to stay with NADFAS friends in the city.

The Conference began, appropriately, to the sound of the Pipes. On Tuesday May 10th at 6pm Andrew Forbes and Dan Lean of the Royal Scottish Pipers' Society played either side of the entrance of the Scottish National Gallery as members arrived for the National Chairman's Reception. Those unaware of the riches of our national collection were noticeably impressed. NADFAS National Chairman, Gri Harrison, gave a welcome address before introducing the Director of the Gallery, Michael Clarke. He thanked NADFAS for its contribution to the arts and heritage over such a long and productive time, noting that NADFAS volunteers had worked in the Scottish National Gallery Print Room Library for more than 16 years. Much laughter accompanied his entertaining remarks as he drew our attention to some of the highlights of the collection. The grand assembly of over 350 members from all over the UK, mainland Europe and Australasia, together with special invited guests, enjoyed drinks and Scottish themed canapés elegantly presented by caterers, 'Pinkertons'. To round off the evening the Pipers struck up once more and marched from the rear of the Gallery to the front door to bid farewell.



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The following morning, Wednesday 11th May, your committee were up with the lark putting the finishing touches to the displays at the Hub and the Assembly Hall. For months Conference Committee Chairman Susan Zuill and her husband Morison had expertly managed all the advance booking and accounts for the events organised by the Area but desks were now to be manned for information queries and possible returns.

Midge Connell and Fiona Macsporrán had co-ordinated the exhibition of Volunteer Projects in Scotland: Church Recording, Church Trails, Heritage Volunteering, and Young Arts. This was on show in the St Andrews Room behind the main auditorium in the Assembly Hall before and after the meeting.



Denise Topolski NADFAS Young Arts Chairman with display boards



At 10.30am, with everyone seated in the magnificent auditorium of the Assembly Hall, the Presentations and Annual General Meeting began, masterminded and orchestrated by Conference Organiser Judith Quiney from NADFAS House. President Christopher Lloyd CVO gave the opening address on the chosen theme 'Making A Difference' after which Vice Presidents, Philippa Glanville, Desmond Shawe-Taylor and Martin Drury introduced podcasts featuring several Scottish projects. After the break the business meeting was well received and Media Awards were presented to worthy winners. A full report of this day's events is to be found in the Autumn edition of the NADFAS Review.

Out of London Conferences, which now are scheduled for every third year, traditionally feature an exhibition of work showing the achievements of NADFAS volunteers in the local Area. A great deal of time and effort is devoted to this short lived showcase so this year the organisers decided to have a more permanent product which would have an after Conference life and purpose. It was decided to create display panels featuring recent projects in all the Volunteer disciplines. Some existing images were available but a great many new digital photographs were taken throughout the Area. In consultation with Midge Connell and Fiona MacSporrán the panels were designed by Graham Neish of Neish Design who has produced the EDFAS newsletter since its inception. The panels were attached to screens lent by NADFAS HQ which also contributed a grant towards the cost of their production. The exhibition also included many colourful artefacts on loan from various bodies: treasures from recorded Churches, items conserved or documented by Heritage Volunteers, examples of Church Trails and the creations of enthusiastic Young Arts Groups.

The display was seen by a gratifyingly large number of delegates and the panels will now travel round the Area for display at Society lectures, special occasions or outside events.



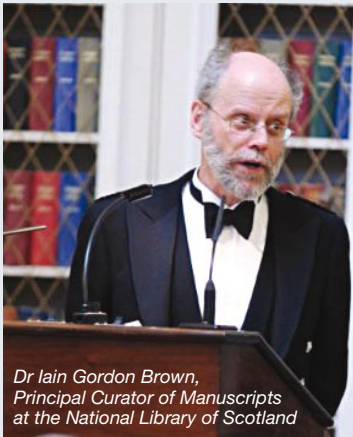
National Chairman Gri Harrison presents Colin Winchester with a media award

At the conclusion of the AGM at 1.45 pm the hungry multitude of over 700 attendees dispersed for their pre-ordered box lunches at the Hub or for separate arrangements. The bright sunny intervals and showers continued to tease but the weather held for the programmed walks down the Royal Mile at 3.30pm. Some 60 members enjoyed the Tales of the Old Town lead by Sheila Szatkowski and her fellow guides.



Two prestige events had been arranged for the evening of May 11th: private tours of the Palace of Holyroodhouse and an 'Enlightenment Entertainment' at the Signet Library supported by Turcan Connell, Solicitors and Asset Managers. Both were fully booked with many requests for any returned tickets. The dark skies, lit by shafts of evening sunlight, added drama to the backdrop of the Palace tours which were led by Deborah Clarke and her colleagues. Afterwards as an extra surprise, the 62 members were invited to view the exhibition of Royal Photography in the Queen's Gallery.

At the Signet Library Dr Iain Gordon Brown, Vice President of EDFAS, was Master of Ceremonies. In his erudite and highly entertaining introduction to the evening he described the famous characters of Enlightenment Edinburgh and discussed the architectural and decorative features of the Library's glorious interior. The five musicians of Concerto Caledonia led by David McGuinness, together with soprano Lorna Anderson, then treated their audience to a superb programme of music and song featuring, amongst others, the compositions of Thomas Erskine, Robert Burns and Pietro Urbani. In turn the performers interlaced and illuminated the pieces with amusing anecdotes. The 18th century mood was continued through the interval when the audience of 270 members enjoyed refreshments of sweet wine and Madeira cake.



*Dr Iain Gordon Brown,
Principal Curator of Manuscripts
at the National Library of Scotland*



Gri Harrison, Douglas Connell and Susan Zuill



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On the final day, Thursday May 12th, a choice of selected visits to historic properties in and around Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling was on offer. Castle Terrace was the departure point for all the out-of-town visits so the lawyers and accountants arriving at Saltire Court had to negotiate throngs of NADFAS members seeking out their colour-coded coaches to begin the day's adventures.

44 members chose to travel to East Lothian to see **Lennoxlove and Newhailes**. This included one late-booking member who, having misheard the departure time for Stirling Castle, arrived after the bus had left but was scooped up to join this party. Everyone enjoyed the chance to experience the contrasting approach to the preservation and promotion of these two notable houses whose owners had been so closely involved in important periods in Scottish history.

The first visit to sell out months before was to **Dalmeny and Hopetoun**. Demand was so high that two coaches were required to take the 82 members to and fro. Our President, Lady Rosebery, was, as ever, most knowledgeable and hospitable opening her whole house to her fascinated guests. Lunch was taken at Hopetoun where the guides offered insights into the Grand Tour history of this magnificent Adam mansion.



Lady Rosebery at Dalmeny House

Neil Hynd was on hand to illuminate a very special preview of the **Royal Palace at Stirling Castle**, not to be opened to the general public for another few weeks. 49 members were thrilled to see the beautifully restored and painted rooms where the Hunt of the Unicorn Tapestries will hang. The Church of the Holy Rude, the first to be recorded by NADFAS in Scotland, was also open to view.



The Tapestry in-situ at Stirling Castle



With thanks to **Edinburgh Life and the Lothians** for the use of some of their photographs published in the July/August issue

The **Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society** in Glasgow orchestrated a tour for 46 members of the architecture, furnishings and works of art by this celebrated artist, including The Glasgow Arts Club, Queen's Cross Church and the Mackintosh House at the Hunterian Art Gallery.

Those going to **Winton** had the double pleasure of seeing not only some of the most exceptional examples of 17th century plasterwork in Scotland in a house with many Royal connections, but also a hugely entertaining performance of **'Undressing Mr Darcy'**.

There was an audible gasp from the ladies in the company of 44 members as the handsome gentleman himself strode into the room. To further excitement he then gradually removed his garments down to his underclothes as his companion gave a commentary, illustrated by amusing contemporary texts, about the history and construction of each item.



Mr Darcy with Jennifer Harding-Edgar



A guided tour of Lennoxlove

The weather held up well for this visit to our newest contemporary art attraction, **Jupiter Artland**. Nicky Wilson, who with her husband Robert owns Jupiter Artland, and education officer Diana McMicking gave a talk to an audience of 36 then, after lunch, led a tour of the wonderful outdoor exhibits.

Very rarely is there the chance to see the full collection of exceptional silverware owned by the Royal Company of Archers but on this special occasion a total of 90 members were welcomed in morning and afternoon groups to **Archers' Hall**. Lt. Col. Richard Callander gave an illustrated talk on the history of the Company as his guests sat surrounded by magnificent portraits. Delicious home baking was kindly provided by the organising committee.

The ideas and carefully executed plans for Edinburgh 2011 all paid off. Susan Zuill and Jennifer Harding-Edgar received many letters of thanks and appreciation from members representing all corners of the Association. The Scotland and Northern Ireland Area had fulfilled its brief and shown, once more, its well deserved reputation for hospitality.



Scotland & Northern Ireland Area Conference Committee