

Yarra News

From the Chair

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We are coming up to that time of year when we start to think about the future. While we maintained numbers successfully through the difficult years of 2020 and 2021 now is the time for our existing members to encourage friends to join. We are likely to have places available in 2023 and naturally we are very keen to fill these so if you know of anyone who has expressed an interest in joining, please do follow this up by giving them a brochure or an application card. These are available on the reception table at each lecture.

We have had some wonderful lectures over the last couple of months with Gavin Fry on the women war artists, Alison Inglis on the intriguing Lady Franklin and Grace Cochrane on the ceramics of the Boyds. The lecture program for next year is now in place and the 2023 brochure is being prepared. On September 4th we are going to run a lecture in Meeniyan, South Gippsland to gauge the interest in ADFAS style lectures in this area with a view to establishing another branch of ADFAS if interest is sufficient.

The October 13th Excursion Marvellous Macedon is coming up quickly. Bookings open through Trybooking on Monday 5th September. We are traveling up to Mt Macedon to see the spring gardens. First, we'll go to the Forest Glade Garden that surrounds the truly remarkable Stokes Collection of porcelain, antiques and art where we will have a guided tour. Then we'll move up the road to the Duneira heritage garden with its avenue of Dutch elms and, hopefully, bluebells. We will also have a tour of the house which contains some fabulous Australian art. Please do book early for this.

In recognition of those members who have been part of ADFAS Yarra for ten years or more we recently posted a bookmark as a small token of our appreciation for their continuing membership. Over the years we have lost track of those members who have served on the committee. If you have been a committee member in the past could you please let me know the dates so that I can update our records in this regard.

As this is the last newsletter for the year it is time to say farewell to Joanna Ingram and Berres Thom who have been on the committee for many years and members since 2014 and 2016 respectively. Joanna was Treasurer when I first joined the committee and was impressive in terms of her understanding of the intricacies of the accounts. She has always been willing to open her house for the new members morning teas and most recently has overseen the attendance of guests who wished to attend our lectures. A great team member and contributor to ADFAS Yarra her calm and cooperative approach has been an asset to the committee. She will be much missed. Berres has been membership secretary for the last three years. This is an important job that requires an eye for detail and administrative efficiency. Berres has fulfilled the role with grace, patience, accuracy and sheer competence even when in hospital with a broken leg! I was always absolutely confident that I could leave this work entirely to her and for this I have been very grateful. Both these very able women have been a huge support and I hope I can now count them as friends.

And finally, as I have also finished my term as chair and committee member, I must record that I have enjoyed my time on the committee enormously. Working with such a fun, interesting and effective group of women has been a real privilege and joy. I love the fact that, while the committee and the membership are all a certain age, we are still engaged with learning, interested and committed to fostering the arts and enjoying each other's company. What an honour it has been to be a small part of this.

2022 Committee Members

In response to feedback from members that they do not know who is on the committee, committee members lined up for a group photo. Missing from the line-up is Joanna Ingram (Guest Bookings) who is overseas.



L-R: Jane Anthony (Treasurer), Kerry Lee (Catering), Heather Marmur (Secretary), Carol Johnston (Chair)



L-R: Berres Thom (Membership), Jan Bennellick (Vice-Chair), Suzanne Katz (Young Arts), Maggie Moran

Dandenong Ranges Excursion

We had a beautiful autumn day for our April excursion to Cloudehill Garden and Nursery in Olinda and the Alowyn Gardens in Yarra Glen. Members enjoyed a tour of Cloudehill from owner Jeremy Francis who explained the history of the garden and provenance of its plants and trees. At Alowyn members enjoyed a delicious lunch while owner Prue Van de Linde gave us an entertaining talk on the history of the property. This was followed by a stroll through the garden. Feedback from members indicated that they thoroughly enjoyed the day.



Cloudehill - Jeremy Francis with a tour group



Cloudehill - Garden View



Alowyn Gardens - French Garden



Alowyn Gardens - Wisteria Archway



One of the most fascinating, amongst all the little chapels along the French Riviera, is this Romanesque 14th century 'story book' building dedicated to St Pierre (Saint Peter), patron saint of fishermen. It is situated in the small seaside resort town of Villefranche-sur-Mer, almost within the suburbs of Nice.

The multi-talented Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) first came to this area in the early 1920s, and he stayed at the Hôtel Welcome. Cocteau was a polymath intellectual at the heart of Paris's avant-garde musical, artistic, filmmaking and design world. He was a painter, novelist, poet, scriptwriter, playwright, essayist, and critic who had become a national celebrity in the early twenties. The Hôtel Welcome was the scene of wild parties and opium smoking but also of huge creative output. It was in this little village that Cocteau 'turned back' to religion; and eventually in the 1950s, after war had interrupted his regular visits, he returned to stay with the great American patron Francine Weisweiler at her fabulous Villa Santo Sospir on nearby Cap Ferrat.

The small chapel space beside the Hôtel Welcome had been used for years by local fishermen as a place in which to store their nets and tackle. Cocteau was determined to transform this building and to dedicate it to St Pierre, patron saint of fishermen. He met with strong opposition from the locals and soon found his ladders went missing and his supplies disappeared. Fortunately, opposition eventually vanished when people began to pay to see the chapel and all this money went to a Fishermen's Benevolent Fund. Cocteau did all the work at his own expense and after 6 months it was opened officially. Picasso was impressed and publicly congratulated him on his murals.



To enter this small chapel is to walk into a magical space filled with extraordinary images of the life of St Pierre. Cocteau created these scenes using locals as models. The wall paintings are in the primitive style, with figurative and popular images. He drew local women and gypsies and fishing nets on the walls as a reminder that God also fishes for souls. The local, rather macho fishermen were a little non-plussed when they discovered that Cocteau had painted all the angels 'male', with fish-shaped eyes and hairy armpits! His paintings cover walls, ceilings, doors, and every available space. Other local craftspeople, ceramicists and stone cutters, participated in the restoration and redecoration.



Today the chapel is a popular venue for weddings. In 1995 the building was included in the French Historic Sites Registry. It is a little gem along the French Riviera, often overlooked by tourists, but not to be missed - one day we can dream of visiting the south of France again.

Some of you may have had an opportunity recently to visit the National Trust's Dolls House and Miniatures exhibition at Como House. I was delighted to lend my Georgian style house for the exhibition, where it was on view in the first room. As a Guide at the Johnston Collection until recently, I'd developed a love of Georgian style and while my own home is modern, building and dressing a dolls house satisfied my hunger for a much older style.

The house arrived from the UK as a flat pack, and it took 6 months to sort the 150 pieces, glue them together, wallpaper, paint and attach skirting boards, doors, windows, cornices and light fittings. An astonishing range of furniture and accessories are available online, although interesting bits and pieces were found nearer to home. For example, the frescoes in the salon were postcards from the National Trust's Villa Alba in Kew, which were copies of frescoes in their upstairs corridor. Camberwell's Trash and Treasure market was a treasure trove of older pieces, and Archibald Prize winner Euan Macleod even painted a tiny miniature for the Gentleman's study.

The delicate wallpaper in the lady's bedroom, along with the Aubusson carpet and white brocade four-poster bed, were replica pieces from the exquisite Queen Mary's Dolls House at Windsor Castle. A fireguard came from Paris and exact replica plaster cornices and fireplaces were bought online from the UK. The fires in the grates were cut from a flyer for a fireplace retailer here in Richmond, and look quite warmly convincing! The framed paintings on the walls came from Sotheby's catalogues, trimmed and glued to balsa wood, then edged with gold-leaf paint.

When I went overseas seven years ago, I hid my jewellery and on returning, found all but a precious watch. For the next 6 years, my daughters and I searched our house from top to bottom, with no luck. When the National Trust asked to come and see the Dolls House, I did a quick dust, as due to Covid, my grandchildren, who usually love to flick a makeup brush over it all, were unable to visit. I picked up a court cupboard and it felt a little heavy and there it was! If it hadn't been for the National Trust I might never have found the watch. [I don't remember hiding it there, which is a worry!].

The last item was to have a nameplate made for the front, so I made up an address: Rutland House 3 Eaton Square Belgravia SW1. One sign-maker webpage advertised 'No job too small', but given the metal sign was to be 50mm x 25mm, they said it couldn't be done. I pointed out their website promise and they eventually rose to the challenge! Meanwhile a friend was off to London, so I asked for a photo of the building at that address. She was surprised to find, that although there were numbers 1 and 5, there was no number 3. Off course not! It's here!

It was a wonderful project and always reminds me of my father, whose legacy paid for it, but one daughter has promised that on my demise, she will have it stripped out and redecorated in Scandinavian Modern! Needless to say I won't be leaving it to her!



Upcoming Events

Lecture 7

Thursday 1 September 2022

10.00 am & 1.30 pm

The Petit Trianon at Versailles: a Sanctuary for Royal Mistresses and a Queen

John Broadley

John Broadley is a historian of Australian colonial architecture, French culture, and relationships between Australia and Europe. He holds an MA in Cultural Heritage Studies from Charles Sturt University. John has worked in conjunction with heritage architects on conservation management programs for numerous significant heritage properties in New South Wales and has published on the historic houses of New South Wales.

This lecture traces the fate of the Petit Trianon at Versailles. This delightful pavilion, deceptively large inside, was built by King Louis XV as a retreat for his mistress, the ever-discreet Madame de Pompadour, who died before it was completed. It was subsequently used by his later mistress, the brazen, decidedly common, and much hated Madame du Barry. Upon succeeding his grandfather as king in 1774, Louis XVI allocated the Petit Trianon to his wife, the Austrian-born Queen Marie Antoinette. Here she would escape from the stifling court etiquette of Louis XIV's immense palace with a few close and trusted friends and here she was happiest, creating an idyllic rustic landscape with her adjacent farm.

In this lecture you will discover the intricacy of the interior of this architectural gem and tour the numerous outbuildings and magnificent grounds.

Lecture 8

Thursday 29 September 2022

10.00 am & 1.30 pm

Nightingales & Roses: An introduction to Iranian Art

Dr Sam Bowker

Dr Sam Bowker is Senior Lecturer in Art History and Visual Culture at Charles Sturt University, where he is also the Sub Dean of Graduate Research. Prior to joining Charles Sturt University he worked for the National Portrait Gallery, the National Museum of Australia, the National Library of Australia and lectured in Art Theory for the Australian National University's School of Art.

In addition to developing Australia's leading 'Islamic Art and Design' subject for university students, Sam has curated diverse international exhibitions and published widely on the history of Khayamiya, Egyptian Tentmaker Applique.

Members will remember his fascinating lecture Khayamiya: A History of the Egyptian Tentmakers which he delivered as an on-line lecture in 2021.

In this lecture Sam will focus on the cultural legacies of the Safavid and Qajar dynasties and discuss the extent to which they have informed contemporary art in Iran and the Iranian diaspora. Using remarkable case studies, he will review how Iranian art has made distinctive contributions to global art histories, including architecture, textiles, painting, photography and literature. The art of Iran is complex, vast, and diverse, so this presentation provides a compelling introduction for a lifetime of exploration.

Lecture 9

Thursday 10 November 2022

10.00 am & 1.30 pm

Norman Magnificence in Sicily

Dr. Kathleen Olive

Dr. Kathleen Olive is a literary and cultural historian with over 15 years' experience leading tours to Italy, Spain, France, Turkey, Japan and the United States for Academy Travel. ADFAS members who have been fortunate to travel with Kathleen have returned with glowing stories of her extensive breadth and depth of knowledge and her charming and engaging personality.

She has a strong personal interest in the visual arts, interior design, fashion history and contemporary fiction. Kathleen holds a BA with first class Honours and a PhD in Italian Renaissance literature and is an Honorary Research Fellow with the Department of Italian Studies, University of Sydney. For several years, she worked as a lecturer at the University of Sydney and the University of Technology, Sydney, teaching Italian language, literature and history. Kathleen continues to teach, as a national lecturer for ADFAS, and in adult education courses in Sydney. In 2015, Kathleen's edition of the Codex Rustici (a 15th-century commonplace book that she worked on with Nerida Newbigin for her doctoral studies and for publication) was presented to Pope Francis on his first official visit to Florence.

The Normans in Sicily and southern Italy produced some of Italy's greatest treasures. The mosaics of Monreale and Palermo, for example, are a fusion of styles and a testament to the extraordinarily cosmopolitan society fostered by the Normans in the region. Their rule was not unproblematic however, and their presence in the south had repercussions far beyond their realms. Kathleen's lecture will provide us with a much deeper understanding of the complex society of this Mediterranean island.

Guests are most welcome to attend lectures. Prior booking for guests is essential and a \$25 fee applies.

Excursion

**Marvellous Mt. Macedon
Thursday 13 October 2022
Cost: \$120**

Our spring excursion to Mt Macedon will be to two private gardens. Our first stop will be at Forest Glade which is considered one of Australia's finest private gardens. While there we will also tour the Stokes collection of porcelain, antiques and art. Our second stop will be at Duniera Estate which has the last remaining Dutch elm driveway in the Southern Hemisphere. Our visit will include a tour of the homestead and its extensive library, artwork collection, Persian rugs and period furniture.



Forest Glade Garden



Duniera Heritage Garden



Stokes Collection



Duniera Homestead

Bookings open on Trybooking from 10am **Monday 5 September or call Carol Johnston on 0409 871 254.**