



NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2017

A VERY GOOD YEAR

Attendance has been high and members have responded very positively in the main to an excellent and stimulating series of lectures, with only one perhaps not fully meeting expectations. It's been a lively and enriching year beyond the lecture programme, with three outstanding Special Interest Days, a highly enjoyable day in Salisbury and a very successful five-day tour of Holland.

OUR NEW NAME

The change to the Society's identity was formally enacted at the national AGM in Birmingham in May, which saw a record attendance and a high level of enthusiastic support for the new direction taken. It was also recognised with real sensitivity that some members are not comfortable with the change, and that the transition will naturally take time.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

With the need to re-design our written communications we were not ready to send out the membership renewal documents at the time of the June lecture, so they accompany this newsletter. You will be pleased to note that our healthy finances have enabled us to hold the subscription steady for 2017-18, and we have another attractive and varied programme lined up.

CORRESPONDENCE

While recognising that a small number of members don't have the technology, we would very much like to reduce expenditure through more emailing of information when possible in the time ahead. Please make sure that Monica (Secretary) and Lavender (Membership) have an up to date email address for you.

RECRUITMENT

We were pleased to climb back to 200 in the course of this year, but there is always a certain turnover each summer and new members are always welcome. Experience shows that word of mouth is by far the most productive means

of recruitment, so do please promote the society to your friends and neighbours and to people new to the area.

PARKING AT BRUSHFORD

After a quiet period there have been complaints again recently from Brushford residents about gateways being at least partially blocked and the road being constricted by cars parked opposite each other (creating difficulty for large vehicles and potentially for emergency services). This isn't good PR for us, clearly, and all members are asked to be aware of the problem. Where possible, please arrange car-sharing to reduce the number of vehicles seeking parking space on lecture days.

WEBSITE AND PRINTED COMMUNICATION

The change of identity has brought a challenge in this area, and the committee has co-opted one of this year's new members, Su Elsdon, who is willing to help by offering experience and expertise drawn from her career running a design company. As well as redesigning our paperwork (where we have a degree of freedom as an individual society within unifying national principles) Su has been working hard on gathering proposals and quotations for a new Arts Society Exmoor website, and the committee will decide shortly on the direction to take. It will take a few months and there is a cost involved, of course, but our reserves are now more than adequate to meet revised national guidelines, and we can afford to dip into them to ensure that a good (rather than simply cheap) job is done without raising membership subscriptions.

In the meantime the old website for Exmoor DFAS will continue to be active.

SPECIAL INTEREST DAY IN NOVEMBER - A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

On November 13th the excellent Douglas Skeggs will be with us again, to talk on The Romanov Dynasty.

SOUTH WEST AREA

Do keep an eye on the area website for interesting courses, special interest days and tours. On November 22nd in Tiverton there is a day on American Art – some of you may have seen the recent exhibition at the RA.

2018 TOUR

Daphne Chidwick is leading provisional planning for a tour of Norfolk (based at Norwich) in May 2018. More information will follow in September.

SETTING UP THE HALL FOR LECTURES

We continue to search for someone local to take on this 45-minute job for an appropriate fee. I will be grateful to receive any fresh suggestions.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS NEXT YEAR

As I have outlined previously, to mark this milestone in the Society's history the South West Area is organising an event at Dartington Hall (near Totnes) on July 18th and 19th, 2018. I can now give a fuller preview of this.

On each of the two days there will be a two-session study day on Music and Art in the South West, prepared specially for the occasion by Peter Medhurst, one of the Society's leading lecturers. There will be an antiques

“Call my Bluff” entertainment, exhibitions, displays and lunch. At this point 10 places per day are reserved for each individual society at £40 per head for the full range of events. Bookings can be made through me in order of receipt from October 1st, with closure on December 31st; if any society has not taken its full allocation by then, unused places will be distributed to others with waiting lists.

Alternatively, a £10 ticket booked in advance or simply purchased on the day will give access to the house and grounds and all exhibitions, plus a cream tea.

It will also be possible on an individual basis (though numbers are limited) to arrange overnight accommodation at Dartington Hall.

The proposed exhibition of art and craft work by members is going ahead. The maximum size of any item will be 3' x 3' (so no Anish Kapoor-style installations, I'm afraid). Submission of work for consideration must initially take place in photographic form on a memory stick, and Su Elsdon will be co-ordinating that during this autumn (with help for those unsure of how to go about it). The deadline will be in early January ahead of a selection panel in late January / early February. Items exhibited can be offered for sale.

With all good wishes for an enjoyable summer, we look forward to seeing you at the AGM and first lecture in October.

William Rees - *Chairman*