

BRIDFAS News

BRITISH DECORATIVE AND FINE ARTS
SOCIETY OF BRUSSELS

www.bridfas.org

March 2010

The **next lecture** will be held at 20.00 pm on Wednesday, March 3
at the Woluwe St-Lambert Town Hall, Ave Paul Hymans 2.
Welcome drinks will be offered starting at 19.30.

COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES **February's Lecture**

I had no idea of the wealth of castles and beautiful homes and gardens in Normandy, France, but our lecturer, Mrs. Helen McCabe, made it seem like there was a marvel to be seen on every corner. She began her talk with a bit of history regarding Henry I and Henry II and the historical connection (and contention) between England and France. This had a profound influence on architecture. In the medieval, as can be seen at the Château d'Harcourt, there was no difference between the English and French styles. The château was a classic stone castle with several turrets and a moat around it.

The differentiation began in the Renaissance where courtyards were added to the design such as at the château of St-Germain-de-Livet. The moats and turrets were retained but the building style became much more ornate. As with Tudor design, timbers alternated with stucco were used as decorative elements. The timbers were mounted on a stone base, though, and were often placed so that they created intricate, geometric patterns.

The high point in French country houses was reached during the Baroque. Greater attention was paid to symmetry, and the moat and courtyard were slowly abandoned. This was also the epoch which saw the development of the formal garden with a limited range of colors and plants such as elaborately trimmed and shaped box hedges contrasted by white roses. The Château de Balleroy is a stunning example.

During the 1700s the building style became simpler and, although the color range remained limited, design elements of the romantic, more naturalistic English garden were introduced.

By the 1800s the seaside resort was invented and the English influence became more prevalent. There were references to the Gothic revival as well as to the arts and crafts movement. Homes were less and less symmetrical and gardens were less and less structured illustrating a greater variety of plants.

In the 1900s stately homes continued to be built in a greater variety of styles than ever. Some featured colorful, naturalistic gardens while others continued to make specific references to the formal gardens of old with plenty of white flowers and topiary.

Mrs. McCabe concluded her talk with Normandy's most loved garden, the home of the famous impressionist painter, Claude Monet, in Giverny. What a plethora of colors! Unlike previous gardens, this one relied heavily on the element of water with brooks, lily pads and romantic little bridges. Built in the late 1800s, it was certainly a painter's paradise!

March's Lecture

March's lecture will be a total departure from the luxurious green gardens of Normandy. This time our lecture will be delivered by Christopher Bradley on "The Splendours of North Africa". Mr. Bradley will lead us to the dry, golden sands of the Sahara where the Romans and Carthaginians once trod. He will cover the historical remnants of the ancient past as well as present day Islamic constructions.

Mr. Bradley is a photographer as well as film maker and has written several books including "The Discovery Guide to Yemen", "The Insight Guide to the Silk Road", and "The Berlitz Guide to Libya". He also has pictures represented in four different photographic libraries and has lectured to groups as diverse as the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Institute of British Architects.

The lecture is bound to be very richly illustrated!

Paula Cagli

SPECIAL THANKS

To FULCRA, Our sponsors for the month of February

We are very happy to count Fulcra as one of our most precious sponsors. Since 2005 they have been supporting our lectures. This year they chose to sponsor the "Houses and Gardens of Normandy" which we all enjoyed so much.

Founded in 1996 Fulcra International Financial Planning provides tailor-made financial and retirement planning solutions, which include investment and tax related issues. Fulcra has offices in Brussels and has clients throughout the European Union (and beyond) to whom they offer fully integrated financial planning advice.

So thank you Fulcra from all of us at **BRIDFAS**. Brochures and more detailed information about their services can be found at the next lecture

In the meantime, please visit them at www.fulcra-international.com

To THALES, Our sponsors for the month of March

We are, indeed, fortunate to have THALES as our sponsor for the lecture on "The Splendours of North Africa" this month. THALES has also accompanied **BRIDFAS** for the last several years, and we are very grateful for their continued support. Their kindness and generosity has permitted us to engage so many lecturers which we have found interesting as well as enlightening.

So thank you THALES for permitting us to further our arts education and to enjoy ourselves in the convivial atmosphere that has always been the hallmark of **BRIDFAS**.

Paula Cagli

COURTESY OF MRS. HELEN McCABE
Houses and Gardens of Normandy List

Chateau d' Harcourt: 14C fortified castle set in lovely surroundings. Not furnished inside, but fascinating information on its history. 19C arboretum round it. Between Neubourg and Brionne.

Crevecoeur en Auge: 15C manorhouse, impeccably restored with its own bassecour, dovecote, barn, farmhouse and gatehouse. Interesting video presentations on the technique of half-timbering. In the Auge valley just north of N13.

Coupesarte: A 16C half-timbered manorhouse with its own moat. Not open to public but you can walk round the outside. Near Crevecoeur.

St Germain-en-Livet: A lovely small manorhouse in a tiny hamlet in the Pays d'Auge. Moat, turrets, arches and house is open inside. South of Lisieux.

Balleroy: Absolutely stunning 17C chateau by Mansart, near Bayeux. Its approach from the village of Balleroy is spectacular. Superbly restored both inside and out by American millionaire Forbes family.

Beaumesnil: 17C chateau surrounded by a beautiful moat, fountains and parterres. A most attractive ensemble and the house is open too. South east of Bernay.

Miromesnil: Chateau is open and well worth a visit. B and B starting this year! Magnificent beech avenue, forecourt, recently restored and very well planted potager and parkland. Just south of Dieppe.

Brecy – between Bayeux and Caen: 17C terraced gardens sloping upwards. Beautifully restored and re-planted in the last 10 years. Sheer delight.

Haras National du Pin: stud farm founded by Colbert in early 18C and still flourishing. The architecture is stunning and the tour of the stables fascinating because you learn about horse-breeding and see the stallions. In meadows on southern edge of the pays d'Auge, east of Argentan.

Chateau de Sassy, near Argentan : Formal terraces with magnificent parterres. And the interior of the chateau is charming too.

Seaside Hotel villas in Trouville: c. 1850.

Villa Strasbourger, Deauville: c. 1910. A tremendous variety of villa architecture in both these towns, which have retained their charm and chic.

Le Bois des Moutiers, at Varengeville: c. 1900. Built by Lutyens with garden by Jekyll for the Mallet family who still own it. Members of the family do the guided tour of the arts and crafts house. Wonderful formal gardens still very sensitively planted, with herbaceous borders, rose garden and woodland valley garden packed with rhodos, azaleas and interesting trees.

Le Vasterival, also in Varengeville: A truly great garden planted by la Princesse Sturdza. By appointment only and not in my lecture because she will not allow it to be photographed. Expensive to visit but worth every penny!

Vauville, near Cherbourg: Garden created in the 1950s at sea-level, right on the coast. It has great atmosphere, with groves of eucalyptus sculpted by wind.

Le Clos du Coudray: 5 acre garden due south of Dieppe, at Estampuis. Many different compartments laid out in 1980s. Lovely in April, May and June.

Agapanthe: Another attractive contemporary garden, close to Le Clos du Coudray, near Grigneuseville.

Chateau de Mesnil-Geoffroy, west of Dieppe at Ermenouville: Charming 17/18C chateau which is open and magnificent rose-garden laid out in 1990s, with every rose named and classified with the date of its introduction.

Monet's garden at Giverny!

Helen McCabe

Dieppe Itinerary

Stay in Rouen. Hotel Mercure or Hotel du vieux marche

Day 1

Varengville, Le Bois des Moutiers. Tour of house and garden. All morning or all afternoon. Arts and Crafts house by Lutyens belonging to Mallet family. Gardens by Jekyll and a magnificent woodland valley garden.

Tel: 02 35 85 10 02

Le Vasterival. Tour of garden only lasting 1-2 hours. This is a truly great garden.

Tel: 02 35 85 12 05 (La Princesse Sturdza)

You can also visit the little church at Varengville, with its beautiful stained glass window by Braque. Also the remains of the Renaissance Manor d'Ango.

Lunch at La Terrazza.

Ask Le Bois des Moutiers for Tel. Nos.

Day 2 A.M.

Chateau de Miromesnil. Not far from Dieppe at Tourville sur Arques. Privately owned. Chateau is open – a guided tour - and is set in magnificent park land with a well planted potager close to house. 2 hours, including tour of house. Ask if you can have a simple lunch there.

Tel: 02 35 85 02 80

P.M.

Le Clos du Coudray, near Estampuis. A 5 acre garden created in last 15 years. Many different 'rooms' and packed with plants and good ideas.

Tel: 02 35 34 96 85. 1-2 hours

Agapanthe, near Grigneuseville. Very near Le Clos du Coudray. Slightly smaller garden, created in last 15 years, but most attractive. 1 hour.

Tel: 02 35 33 32 05

Optional: Bosmolet, near Auffay. Chateau charming to look at but not open. Recently restored large potager, with sections devoted to colours of rainbow. Worth seeing, but I thought it was over ambitious. But a lovely setting overall.

Tel: 02 35 32 81 07

Day 3

Chateau de Mesnil-Geoffroy. West of Dieppe, near Ermenouville.

A charming, privately owned 18C chateau with lovely, furnished interiors. And magnificent rose-garden with every rose named and classified with the date of its introduction. 2 hours, including tour of house.

Tel: 02 35 57 12 77

Chateau de Cany, near Cany-Barville. Stunning privately owned chateau with lake and magnificent range of stables.

Tel: 02 35 97 70 32

Other possibilities: Monet's garden at Giverny. (tel: 02 32 51 28 21). A garden called Jardin du Plume, just east of Rouen (Tel: 02 35 23 00 01) – typical Normandy orchard, using grasses, hardy perennials, box and beech hedges mirrored in pond. Also nearby Jardins d'Angelique (tel: 02 35 79 08 12). Wonderful roses, herbaceous plants, shrubs very pleasingly laid out.

Helen McCabe

MEMBERS' FORUM

“VOYAGE TO ITALY”

Thank You for Your Support

As you know, I inaugurated my most recent solo photography exhibition at the HUB, the U.S. Department of State European Media Center, at the beginning of February. I am pleased to say that it was a very successful event with many guests in attendance. I was particularly happy to see how many members of **BRIDFAS** came to show me their support. Thank you sincerely for your kindness and solidarity.

The exhibition was entitled “Voyage to Italy”, and I displayed some forty photographs from almost every region all the way from Lombardy to Sicily.

The Senior Studio Technician also shot a video of me in which I explained a little of my background, my artistic philosophy and how I compose my photos. Included in the video were yet more of my photographs. It was so much fun to see myself on screen talking about my personal mixture of art history and photography. The presentation that the Director of the HUB, Susan Elbow, gave me was nearly overwhelming.

For those of you who missed the event, Victor will be projecting images of the highlights before the beginning of the March lecture.

Paula Cagli

EXHIBITION SCENE

Brussels:

MAGRITTE MUSEUM

Place Royale

Newly opened flagship museum for Brussels, 100,000 visitors by 7th August!

Tickets can be booked on line

“ASIA-EUROPE Faith and Trade”

@ BOZAR 25/6/10 - 3/10/10

“MEXICO festival”

@ BOZAR 16/1/10 - 25/4/10

“AFRICA festival”

@ BOZAR 11/6/10 - 20/9/10

Liege:

GRAND CURTIUS

Now open the new museum that brings together the collections along the banks of the Meuse

Louvain La Neuve :

HERGE MUSEUM

A new purpose built museum opened in May 2009 to celebrate Herge and his most famous creation Tin-Tin

Tongeren:

“AMBIORIX ROI DES EBURONS”

@ Museum Gallo-Roman 4/10/09 – 31/3/10

Amsterdam:

“FROM MATISSE TO MALEVICH”
@ Hermitage Museum 6/3/10 – 17/9/10

London:

“KINGDOM OF LIFE-SCULPTURES OF WEST AFRICA”
@ British Museum 4/3/10 - 6/6/10

“FRA ANGELICO TO LEONARDO: ITALIAN RENAISSANCE DRAWING”
@ British Museum 22/4/10 - 25/7/10

“CHRISTEN KOBKE - DANISH MASTER OF LIGHT”
@ National Gallery 17/3/10 - 13/6/10

“VENICE: CANALETTO AND HIS RIVALS”
@ National Gallery 13/10/10 - 16/1/11
Expect heavy crowds, book in advance

“PAUL NASH: THE ELEMENTS”
@ Dulwich Picture Gallery 10/2/10 - 9/5/10

“VICTORIA AND ALBERT: ART AND LOVE”
@ Queens Gallery 19/3/10 - 31/10/10

“THE REAL VAN GOGH: ARTIST AND HIS LETTERS”
@ Royal Academy 23/1/10 - 18/4/10

Oxford:

7th November the Ashmolean Museum reopens after major re-building

Lausanne:

“EDWARD HOPPER”
@ Fondation Hermitage 25/6/10 - 24/10/10

Bonn:

“JAMES COOK AND THE EXPLORATION OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC”
@ Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany 28/8/09 – 28/2/10

Andrew McCubbin

UPCOMING LECTURES

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|----------------------|---|
| 3 March 2010 | Christopher Bradley “ <i>Splendours of North Africa</i> ” |
| 14 April 2010 | Colin Lattimore “ <i>History of the Long Case Clock</i> ” |
| 12 May 2010 | James Taylor “ <i>Ocean Liner Art</i> ” |