



EDINBURGH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

## EDFAS STALWARTS

After 55 years working for and supporting EDFAS Lady Johnston (*right*) has decided it is time to stand down as our Vice President. The Edinburgh Antique and Fine Arts Society was founded in 1970, the first NADFAS society in Scotland, which became EDFAS. Anthea was a founding member and on the Committee from 1973-84, quickly becoming Secretary and then Chairman from 1984-87. In addition to running EDFAS she travelled all round Scotland helping to found new Societies. Anthea became the first Area Chairman for Scotland as the number of societies grew to eight and was National Chairman for NADFAS from 1994-96. As National Chairman she galvanised financial support through a subscription from societies and negotiated the purchase a whole house in Guilford Street to be the London office. It was central but not then the most fashionable of areas. It proved to be a most canny investment, and when it was sadly sold recently bolstered the NADFAS finances considerably.

Anthea has been at the heart of what makes EDFAS, from our lecture format, our visits and tours, conservation work and the camaraderie. As Vice President she has supported generations of committee Chairmen and members as things change over time and in navigating our relationship with NADFAS HQ as it has grown to 360 societies. Anthea supported us when we decided to remain as EDFAS when NADFAS became The Arts Society. Thank you, Anthea, for your tireless work, support and friendship and for making EDFAS what it is today.



## Theo Burrell

Theo Burrell is stepping down from the committee this summer, having been a dynamic and vital member of the committee since 2018. Theo has had a busy career with the auctioneers, Lyon and Turnbull, and many of you will have seen her on the BBC's Antiques Roadshow over the years, in her role as a specialist in ceramics. Theo contributed to EDFAS in so many ways: she helped lectures to go online in 2020 when we were plunged into lockdown and, despite dealing with her own health issues, was always understanding and helpful when many of us felt overwhelmed by technology. Theo has a great sense of humour and has been a delight to work with. We thank her for her service to EDFAS.



## Verity Shaw

We were deeply saddened by the death of Verity in early spring this year. Verity had been a member of the committee for some years, but due to her cancer diagnosis, she decided to stand down two years ago. She had joie de vivre and was a power for good. Verity came into her own when we celebrated 50 years of EDFAS, with a collection of reflections of the society, edited by Verity. She is greatly missed.

**EDFAS WEBSITE**  
[www.edfas.uk](http://www.edfas.uk)

EDFAS is aware of the importance of the arts in supporting young people and in doing all we can as an Arts society to open doors, literally and metaphorically, to the world of creative arts. By targeting pupils and students who face economic, social or health related challenges, EDFAS works hard to support such projects to raise aspirations and to offer opportunities.

You, our members, contribute and preserve our artistic heritage through volunteering and by supporting various “Young Arts” outreach projects in the city. The links the society has developed with three educational establishments in the city reflect its commitment to arts education. On behalf of the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh College of Art and the outreach programme at Leith School of Art, thank you.

## DISCOVER THE MUSEUM



### Overview

Since it started, Discover the Museum has taken various forms, all centred on a straightforward goal: offering children from some of Edinburgh's most disadvantaged communities a unique experience at the National Museum of Scotland. Following on the success of last year, our Learning & Engagement team took over coordination of the project, and we continued with our initiatives to encourage children and their families to return to the museum in the future, aiming to build lasting connections.

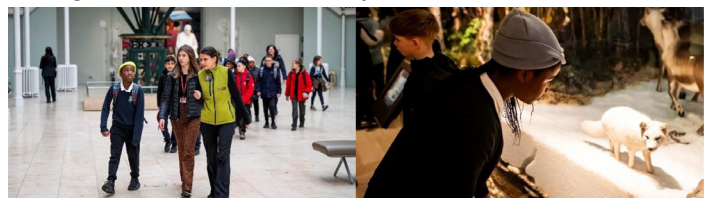
## Discover the Museum Highlights 2024-25

- Engaged over 600 pupils and 83 teachers/carers from 7 Edinburgh primary schools over 10 days at the National Museum of Scotland (Jan - Mar 2025), marking a 38% increase in pupil engagement compared to last year's 434 attendees.
- Delivered an eco-themed Discover the Museum, featuring a rewilding gallery tour and a craft workshop where pupils created fabric books with messages about saving the planet. Each book was bound and returned to its class, encouraging environmental awareness and creativity.
- Continued incentives for repeat visits: 30 pupils from 6 of the 7 schools returned to the museum by the end of March to exchange their Discover the Museum card for a free toy - a 30% increase in uptake of this incentive compared to 2024. These incentives fostered excitement and encouraged ongoing engagement with the museum.
- Hosted a special **Home Education Day** in March, attended by 12 local homeschooled children and 8 parents/carers, all of whom received free toys from the Museum shop.

## How the project ran

As part of Discover the Museum, participants were provided with the following, free of charge:

- Participation, support and full coordination provided by a dedicated member of the National Museums Scotland team.
- Coach transport for a class or year group (including students, teachers, and parents/carers) from each school to and from the National Museum of Scotland.
- A healthy snack upon arrival.
- Priority access to the cloakroom and lunchroom to eat packed lunches brought with them.
- A full schedule of activities planned and delivered free of charge. For 2025 this included a museum orientation tour, a Gallery safari exploring endangered animals and rewilding initiatives and a related craft workshop.
- Access to additional support materials as needed.
- Incentives to return - a card to trade in for a free toy at the museum shop.
- Inaugural Home Education Day for home schooled children.





# DISCOVER THE MUSEUM



Schools were identified based on deprivation data and visit history to the museum; schools were targeted who had not engaged with us recently. In addition to the above we also ensured the project was evaluated, to inform future programmes and measure success.

## Schools

Twenty classes from seven schools visited over ten days December - March 2025.

## Feedback and Impact

Teacher feedback was highly positive with evaluation reports evidencing that pupils enjoyed a fun and engaging experience. They noted that the free visit effectively supported their curriculum goals related to Learning for Sustainability and contributed to efforts in promoting pupil equity and addressing the poverty-related attainment gap.

## Teacher Feedback

### Overall Experience and Organisation:

- 100% of teachers rated the visit as either Excellent or Very Good.
- All respondents agreed the visit was well organised and that staff were welcoming.

*"The workshop was great. The class loved it."*

*"We felt welcomed by staff."*

### Engagement and Learning:

- 100% reported that pupils were engaged throughout the visit and learned something new.
- Teachers highlighted the value of hands-on activities and interactive exhibits.

*"The children were engaged with the art exercise and interested in the exhibits - particularly the 3-part habitat exploration of early Scotland and spotting the animals."*

### Accessibility and Inclusion:

- Every teacher stated the visit was accessible to all, with no cost barriers.
- The free programme and transport were repeatedly praised for enabling participation.

*"Allowed the trip to be accessible to all with no payment barrier. Some pupils would not have had the chance to visit with family before and they have now experienced something new."*

*"This has allowed all pupils to join the trip without the added stress for parents, it also reduced the stress of needing bus fares or bus passes."*

### Impact on Pupil Equity and Attainment Gap:

- 100% of teachers said the free programme supported their school's efforts to promote pupil equity and narrow the attainment gap.

### Likelihood of Future Visits:

- All teachers indicated that the programme increased the likelihood of them and their pupils visiting the museum again.

### Additional comments:

*"For many of the children it was their first time to the museum - their excitement was lovely."*

*"The free experience helped deliver our curriculum targets for Learning for Sustainability and support our work on pupil equity and closing the poverty related attainment gap."*

*"Children seeing animals and interactive aspects that were more like play."*

## Pupil Feedback

Pupils were invited to draw and write their responses, using the prompt, "I really enjoyed..."

*"I really enjoyed the museum, it was very good and it was one of my favourite school trips. I really enjoyed the three habitats and trying to find the animals, the smell cubes, then at the end having free time. It was so interesting and it was one of my favourite trips. Thank you."*

*"I really enjoyed the gold Buddha that I saw when we were walking up the stairs. It was so so so so so sparkly coz it has diamonds on it."*

*"I really enjoyed the part when we got to see the different types of forest like oak and tundra and see all of the animals I haven't really seen before..."*

*"I really enjoyed making the poster about climate change. It was really cool because I touched a wolf skull!! And looking at the Japanese spider crab."*

*"I really enjoyed doing the art about climate change. I liked the fact that there were templates if we could not draw the animals. And that there was a word bank for us if we needed help."*



# EDINBURGH COLLEGE OF ART STUDENTS RECEIVING EDFAS BURSARIES

## Yarah Kamleh

Yara has been working in metal, casting old keys and running them though in bronze. She explained that keys have a particular significance in Palestinian culture, as families always take their old house keys with them when they were moved on. She has a key that belonged to her grandparents, which they took to Syria and she is creating a sculpture with the bronze casts. Her other courses this semester have been Art and Practice in Context and her elective is Spanish, which she very much enjoys. Earlier in the year, she made a series of vases, based on water jugs that are traditionally carried by Palestinian women and she also worked with traditional embroidery, known as tatreez, all aspects of her Palestinian background. Yara worked at the Portrait Gallery Café in the holidays.

## Zoë Smillie

Zoë was delighted with her grades last term, achieving an A in her Art in Practice and a B in Spanish, despite having to deal with a great many personal challenges. She moved into a studio flat and is happier in her own space. The class has been focusing on the idea of 'distortion' this year, which she has chosen to link to health; students looked at buildings and worked on a canvas linked with her project to create an image of her GP practice, using redacted prescriptions, to explore the ideas and perceptions of trauma and distress; she also built a sculpture of a pair of lungs. In addition, she is learning about book binding. Zoe made a solo trip to Amsterdam before Christmas, which she thoroughly enjoyed, immersing herself in the Rijksmuseum.



Zoe with her sculpture of a pair of lungs

## Dan Reid

Dan has just completed his final year and was delighted to hand in his dissertation, which examines the treatment of vampires in film, as a reflection of society's values over the years.

He looked at Nosferatu (1922 and 1979) and Dracula Untold (2014). Dan then turned his attention to the Degree Show, when he produced a variety of work. The principal project

was a board game. Together with another student, Dan has been commissioned to produce a game by a commercial games producer, as a 'test game', which is most encouraging. His final project is an illustrated book *The Trow*, based on a Scottish Folk tale about the origin of midges. It contains 22 pages of illustrations and he is binding it himself. We wish Dan well for the future.



## Dan reports here on his experience at the College of Art

Over my time at university, the EDFAS Scholarship has been hugely beneficial and allowed me to focus fully on my studies, as I struggle with mental health issues and would have found it hard to cope with working while studying full time. I was able to get my first laptop, meaning I could better familiarise myself with software such as InDesign and Illustrator, which prepared me for work beyond university and let me work on projects/pdfs for deadlines at home. I am autistic and sometimes find the studio too overwhelming. This support also meant I have been able to afford to fund my creative projects, experiment with a wider variety of materials and art processes, and cover travel costs for research trips as well as print costs.

I was worried that I would feel out of place at Edinburgh due to being from a low-income background, but the scholarship meant I was able to access the same opportunities as other students, such as the illustration department's trip to Oban, where a group of 4th years spent a week exploring and creating a small body of self-directed research relevant to our studies. This also gave me a much-needed break as I was very burnt out after finishing my dissertation, and it reignited my creative passion for the semester ahead. Outside of my studies, the funding let me join in on extracurricular and social events with my classmates, which I am immensely grateful for, as the community from the studio has been one of the most valuable things I have gained from my time here.

I would like to express my thanks to the Committee and everyone at EDFAS for the support I have received over the past four years, which really did make a difference to my experience at Edinburgh.



## OUTREACH PROJECT AT LEITH SCHOOL OF ART



Leith School of Art Schools' programme continues to offer a group of secondary school pupils access to first class tuition and the experience of working in a college environment. Their focus is on drawing, alongside introducing more challenging drawing materials and techniques. There is an introduction to a wider variety of artists and an increased focus on the development of visual contextual research, a key requirement for continuing study at degree level. Meeting the Leith School of Art tutors at the Christmas end of term show, confirmed just how dynamic the atmosphere is for the young people who attend. Their work was impressive and interesting. Class outings have included visits to the Scottish National Galleries and the Talbot Rice Gallery.

The 2024/25 academic year has been very successful. Out of the twelve participants in the schools' project, three will be moving to the Foundation course at Leith School of Art, where one student will receive a full bursary and another student will receive a 70% bursary.

**Here are some comments from the students:**

*"I think I have grown more confident around other people and it has made me sure that I want a career in art."*

*"I learned how to use oil paints and new media and to draw more in sketch books."*

*"This course has helped build my confidence and also helped me apply to uni and college. Thanks a lot!"*





## WELCOME...

**Lynda Young** joined the EDFAS Committee during the 2024-25 season. She is Highland by birth, Edinburgh by choice. Lynda studied French and Italian at university and worked for a Swiss bank for most of her professional life. Now retired, she is thrilled and excited to have the time to further widen her interests and to be involved in EDFAS.

Lynda says she is 'just learning how I can contribute to the Society but I am prepared to roll up my sleeves in any way required. I am particularly fascinated by the outreach aspect of EDFAS and its amazing impact on the young people in the world of Art and Design.'



## CHAIR'S REFLECTIONS

It has been another busy year in the society, with an outstanding season of lectures, each one offering us fascinating insights, from an artist's perspective, a movement that reflects a period in history, or how to navigate our way through a work of art. I hope that you have found something to suit your tastes and interests within the lecture programme. We have also enjoyed stimulating visits and a tour to North Wales. We are so lucky to be able to come together or watch lectures online. Thank you for your support and your friendship.

My thanks, on your behalf, must also go to my fellow committee members for all their time, efforts and enthusiasm. Their commitment means that lectures are planned a year in advance, and the lectures themselves are enjoyable and stimulating. Most lecturers travel quite a distance, so members of the committee host and feed them and ensure that their experience of EDFAS and of Edinburgh is the best it can be. There is also a great deal of administration and technical support in place to ensure the smooth running of the society. From membership to communication, each member of the committee has a distinct role, and this makes for a great team. We may not always get it right, but at such times, we are grateful for your patience and understanding. If you ever feel that you need more help to access lectures, in person, or online, do get in touch, so that we can help.



Our Events programme kicked off in September with a super visit to **"Discovering Degas"** at **The Burrell Collection** and ended with sunny afternoons exploring **Mertoun House**, (below left) outside St Boswells, and **Lennoxlove**, (below right) near Haddington. We try to keep the cost of such visits down, so there are times when we invite members to share places in cars where possible, to avoid the cost of hiring coaches and hope that this also encourages members to meet up and get to know one another a little better.





# CHAIR'S REFLECTIONS



Highlights of the year for me included my first visit to **Edinburgh Printmakers' Studio** (left), in Fountainbridge, which was so impressive as a building, but also as a creative hub and the first open-access studio in the UK. If you haven't discovered this hidden gem (super café and shop too) you must visit. One of our earlier lectures in the autumn, delivered by **Suzanne Fagence-Cooper**, offered us insights into the world of female photography, from Julia Margaret Cameron to Lee Miller. It was so interesting to hear of the developments in photography and the impact of individuals on this art form in society in general. I believe such lectures really stimulate the mind and can help to highlight connections with other art forms and movements. A recent lecture by **Dr John Stevens** on the Indian polymath and Nobel Prize winner, **Rabindranath Tagore**, embraced art, music and poetry. Hearing one of his poems, read so beautifully in Bengali by John, made a lasting impression on many of us, and I am sure that I am not alone in following up that lecture with some of my own humble research!

We live in challenging times, so coming together and engaging with the arts, either actively or passively, can only have benefits for our wellbeing. EDFAS has much to be proud of in terms of our Outreach projects; we do all we can to uphold the main aim of the society: to enrich people's lives through art.

Tricia Lancaster  
Chair EDFAS

## LECTURES 2025/26

### 9th September 2025

Daniel Robbins  
*A Private Palace of Art:  
Frederic Leighton's  
Studio-House*

### 14th October 2025

Julia Marwood  
*William McTaggart:  
The Water and the Light*

### 11th November 2025

Helen Rufus-Ward  
*The Mosaics of Ravenna:  
For the Glory of Kings,  
Emperors and Empresses*

### 9th December 2025

Imogen Corrigan  
*Jan Van Eyck*

### 13th January 2026

Toby Faber  
*T S Eliot and Art*

### 10th February 2026

Anne Sebba  
*The Women's Orchestra of  
Auschwitz: A story of Music  
and Survival*

### 10th March 2026

Caroline Shenton  
*National Treasures: Saving  
London's Museums and Galleries  
in the Second World War*

### 14th April 2026

Roger Askew  
*"A Boy from Lowestoft"  
- The Life and Works  
of Benjamin Britten*

### 12th May 2026

Andrew Prince  
*The Taste of Splendour:  
How dining changed the world*

### 9th June 2026

Lucrezia Walker  
*Piero della Francesca*

## DONATIONS 2024/25

### DONATIONS RECEIVED

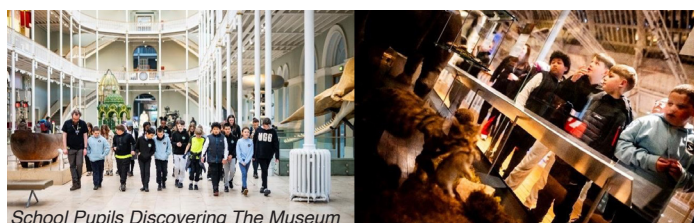
Guest donations .....	£287
Refreshment donations .....	£198
(net of cost)	

### DONATIONS MADE

Edinburgh College of Art .....	£4,500
Leith School of Art .....	£3,000
National Museum of Scotland .....	£7,600

Total Donations Made **£15,100**

Raffle .....	£745
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School Pupils Discovering The Museum



## EDFAS TRIP TO WALES 2025

Charlie and Gail excelled themselves. 29 of us set off from Saltire Court with our lovely driver Darren who took us to Northern Ireland last year. We stayed all week at Bodelwyddan Castle Hotel, a Victorian Gothic Revival extravaganza with lovely gardens. We visited three National Trust houses and gardens, **Portmeirion**, and three private houses and also had a ride in a barge across the **Pontcysyllte Aqueduct** which carries the canal across 18 spectacular stone arches high above the River Dee.

Our tour started with a visit to **Plas Newydd** on **Anglesey**, on the shores of the Menai Strait. The major feature of the house is the dining room mural by Rex Whistler.

Having loved 'The Prisoner', on TV so many years ago in black and white, we were surprised to find **Portmeirion** a riot of colour. We had a delicious lunch in the Hotel in the village.



The next day we visited **Erddig House and gardens**. The house dates from 1693 and the Yorke family never threw out anything. Their fortunes declined until it had to be handed to the National Trust.

After our trip across the aqueduct we drove to a second house called **Plas Newydd**. This one is in Llangollen, the home of the two "**Ladies of Llangollen**", two Irish aristocrats who had escaped from their families to set up home in Wales where they were an unmissable attraction for visitors from far and wide. Their charming cottage was festooned with decorative timberwork, cast offs from houses that were being updated, and surrounded by charming gardens.

On our final day, and a highlight of the week, we visited **Bodrhyddan Hall**, the home of Lord Langford and his family for over 500 years. This is a real home, full of fascinating things and surrounded by 12 acres of outstanding gardens and ponds.

We then visited the 80 acres of manicured lawns and grand flower filled terraces of **Bodnant Gardens** (below right)

Our final visit was to **Gwydir Castle, Llanrwst**, which has been gradually brought back to life with a total restoration by Judy and Peter Corbett with many fascinating stories of how they had found many items such as the 17th century panelling and leather frieze that Randolph Hearst had bought when the castle contents were sold in 1921.

The Guests also organised two talks. On the first night Jessica Hatcher-Moore introduced us to the area and on the final evening Catherine Robinson, a member of the local Arts Society, talked about **Bodelwyddan**, where we were staying.

It was a wonderful trip, and I hope the Guests can be persuaded to organise their 7th EDFAS tour.

**Anne Mason Brown**



EDINBURGH  
DECORATIVE  
& FINE ARTS  
SOCIETY

### Edinburgh Decorative and Fine Arts Society

*A Member Society of The Arts Society*

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