

The Bulletin



Friends of
Bristol Art Gallery
May 2018

Issue 202

www.friendsofbristolartgallery.co.uk



Chairman's Letter

T H E C H A I R M A N

Photo by Ann Keenlyside



Dear Friends,

Here I am approaching, unbelievably, my 38th letter addressed to you all. Bulletin 165 dated February 2009 reminds me I had unexpectedly found myself Chairman of this lovely charity, the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery. My final word in my first letter was 'Our committee is fantastic and great to work with'. I can truthfully say that it still is. Together we have achieved so much.

But therein lies the rub. We have failed to recruit enough younger members to join us. Two years ago a forward planning group from your committee came together to try and find a way to resolve this. Sadly it is a problem which is being widely experienced, no matter how interesting or worthwhile the charity may be. Finally we came to the conclusion that we were indeed fortunate in having a sister charity already supporting the Museum and Art Gallery and that after our 70 years it was obvious sense to combine.

You will find enclosed with this Bulletin a letter from Sue Thurlow welcoming you to FBMGA and a membership application form.

As you will have read in the last Bulletin the final closure of FoBAG will be 31st July. We must continue enjoying our contacts with each other and with the Museum as we have always done. Our final AGM is on 3rd July. Please join us then. Laura Pye, who is the head of Culture in Bristol and therefore of the Museum service, will be there with her plans for the future and which are very exciting. As usual the curators will be demonstrating some of the items we have helped to finance. We look forward to seeing you there.

With very best wishes,

Joanna

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**Disclaimer; The Friends of Bristol Art Gallery are not responsible for the content
of the documents supplied by FBMGA**

Cover Photo: Portrait of Anne Hewer, founder of the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery, and her children, 1954
by Henry Lamb MC RA, oil on canvas

Presented 1917 in memory of Professor T.F.Hewer and Mrs Anne Hewer OBE, by their children, Charlotte Evans, John
Hewer, Richard Hewer and Susan Higgs (K6507)



NEWS

Quarterly Report & Upcoming Events from BMGA

Correction to the report which appeared in both Friends' newsletters last time. Changes to the curatorial and documentation teams introduced from April 2018 have seen Sue Giles and Frances Davies – not Frances Coles – moving to concentrate on the British Empire & Commonwealth Collections. My apologies to both Frances Coles and Frances Davies for this slip of the pen – Ray Barnett

Service-wide developments

Blaise, Red Lodge and Georgian House museums reopened for the new summer season on Easter Sunday (1 April). All three sites had benefited from their annual spring clean whilst closed to the public. In addition, redecoration works had taken place to improve the appearance and visitor satisfaction.

We are delighted that the Bristol Archives were awarded Archive Accreditation in March by The National Archives who administer this scheme. Set up in 2013 the scheme parallels the Museum Accreditation Scheme administered by Arts Council England. Achieving the award is recognition that Bristol Archives is:

- Externally recognised for good performance in all aspects of governance and management, collections management, and provision of services to all users
- Sustainable and robust, ensuring the long term acquisition, preservation and accessibility of our archive heritage
- Adaptive, relevant and resilient in a changing internal and external environment
- Clear about their mission, ensuring effective planning, decision making and optimal use of resources
- Responsive to all their stakeholders and trusted in the management of their unique collections
- Supported by expert staff within clear and effective governance structures

In addition we are pleased to announce that a new City Archivist has been appointed and will take up post in the summer, details to follow in due course.

The end of March saw Bristol Culture moving out of St Nicholas Church. The church has now been handed back to the Diocese and the Church Revitalisation Trust who open it in September as a refurbished place of worship. All museum artefacts have been removed with the exception of the Hogarth triptych which remains in situ on loan. Agreement has been reached so that the painting can be opened up for the public to see on specific days during the year, once the refurbishment has been completed. Details of public viewing days to follow. The Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) has successfully relocated to behind the scenes at Blaise Castle House Museum.

From the start of April, Bristol Culture has taken over running the following Council owned properties with regard to events and functions: The Pavillion (Canon's Marsh), Mansion House (Clifton Down), City Hall conferencing and Passenger Shed (Temple Meads).

Staff news

We were saddened to hear of the death of the previous Director of the Art Gallery, Arnold Wilson (who took early retirement in the 1980s). An obituary is on page 19 of this edition of The Bulletin, written by Karin Walton.



New exhibitions

Opened on 31 March at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery 'The Vanity of Small Differences' showcases Grayson Perry's bold tapestries that look at taste and class which are being shown alongside not one but two versions of A Rake's Progress by William Hogarth and a more modern day version by David Hockney from our collection.

Launching on 19 May at M Shed will be Bristol Music: seven decades of sound. This exhibition celebrates the vibrant and diverse music scene since the late 1950s. With memorabilia, stories and installations the exhibition aims to take people down a musical memory lane, encourage debate and discuss on what music means to the city and you. The exhibition has been co-produced with an advisory group made up from musicians, writers and venues, UWE students and academics and the public.

Over at Bristol & Art Gallery later this summer will be Fabric Africa: Stories told through textiles. This stunning display which opens on 30 June will showcase some highlights from our World Cultures and British and Empire and Commonwealth collections reflecting on what personal and provocative stories materials are able to tell.

Then from 7 July in our Temporary exhibitions gallery we are pleased to be one of the venues hosting Women's Hour Craft Prize which has been developed by V&A to celebrate the 70th anniversary of BBC Woman's hour. The exhibition will have the work by the twelve finalists who have been selected for their originality and excellence in concept, design and process. Complimenting the exhibition will be a 'make space' with regular events run by local artists and practitioners.

Acquisitions & Archives

The Friends have recently supported the purchase of five sketches by Sir Hugh Casson of the proposed development of a cultural centre around Wine Street, including a brand new museum and art gallery. This centre would have occupied much of what is now Castle Park, and was a major element of the Museum's work throughout the 1960s. It never happened, because of the sudden huge rise in building costs in the late 1960s, and the project was finally abandoned in 1971.

The Friends have agreed a 'war chest' of £1000 to improve the range of advertising items in the Wills Collection and the first of these, purchased on Ebay for £30, was presented at a Friends' Committee meeting in March.

The Museum is also now the proud owner of its own YoBike, the common-user dockless yellow bicycles that sprang up all over the city in 2017. The bike, one of the earliest to be introduced, comes with a record of all the locations that it has visited, data that is generated by the GIS tracking system that allows the hiring system to work. The Friends provided the money to buy the bike.

Ray Barnett



NEWS

Taiwan - A Glass Journey

In March I was lucky enough to be invited to Taiwan to present the museum's Burrows Abbey Chinese glass collection to a conference jointly hosted by the Academia Sinica and the National Palace Museum. The conference brought together archaeologists, scientists and art historians to consider the cultural, economic and artistic exchanges that can be traced through studying glass in China.

The conference coincided with the first exhibition dedicated solely to glass at the National Palace Museum, drawn mainly from Chinese imperial collections brought to Taiwan by Nationalist forces in 1949. The exhibits ranged from glass beads and discs from burials to luxury items made for court use particularly during the Qianlong period (1736-95) such as snuff bottles, jewellery and some superb white glass vases with finely painted enamel decoration. The selection also included European items given to the Chinese court such as clocks, trinket boxes and optical instruments.

I was able to extend my stay in Taiwan thanks to a Jonathan Ruffer curatorial grant from the Art Fund which enabled me to explore a little of the island's glass industry. Although glass beads have been found in archaeological sites dating to as early as the second century AD, these are likely to have been traded from elsewhere and there is little evidence of glass-making in Taiwan itself until the 1880s when several workshops were set up. During the Japanese occupation (1895-1945) further successful factories were established in Hsinchu in the north-west of the island to produce glass such as bottles and other everyday items. Today's glass factories have descended from these and I was able to visit four workshops and factories.

At the Very Luck Glass Company in Miaoli I met the owner, Mr Chiu, a lively raconteur who described his career from his apprenticeship at the age of thirteen and showed us the different furnaces and machinery in his factory. In



Hsinchu I met master glassmaker Mr Huang Anfu who explained the different techniques involved in making the beautiful range of glass objects in his studio from lamp-worked crayfish to a sculpture of chess players. Mr Huang has kindly donated a group of six large lamp-worked beads for Bristol's collection.



NEWS



Also in Hsinchu I visited the Spring Pool company which recycles 70% of Taiwan's glass, where workers were making hand-blown and air-blown glass objects. Finally, at the Liuligongfang factory, north of Taipei I saw all the processes in lost wax casting being undertaken by workers in this thriving glass art company which has upmarket shops around Asia.

The Committee of the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery generously offered to fund the purchase of some Taiwanese glass for the museum's collection. I brought back a range of examples such as a lucky glass orange tree, glass fruit and 'gold' glass ingots to beckon wealth, all of which chime with the symbolism that weaves through our existing collection. A set of twelve hand-worked zodiac animals should prove popular with children at our annual Chinese New Year celebrations. I am still considering the acquisitions of a lost wax cast figure of a devotional figure, either of the bodhisattva Guanyin or the popular Daoist 'Goddess of the Sea' Mazu, both of whom have many devotees in Taiwan.



As ever, thank you to the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery for your support on this occasion and over the past seventy years in developing the collection for all to enjoy.

Kate Newnham, Senior Curator, Visual Arts



E V E N T S

The Trinity Lecture and Luncheon Trinity College, Stoke Hill Tuesday July 17th 2018, 12:00 noon



Trinity College in Spring Time

Courtesy of www.facebook.com/trinitycollegebristol

Our speaker will be Amina Wright, senior Curator at the Holburne Museum.

Amina will talk about “The Wonder of the Times: Sir Thomas Lawrence in Bath and Bristol”

Early booking is recommended.

Parking is available. Please note there are steps to the lecture room and to the dining room.

Lecture and Lunch Cost £24.00

Booking Form

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The Friends of Bristol Art Gallery Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 3rd July 2018

6pm

Rear Hall, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

All are welcome

Minutes of 2017 AGM and 2018 Agenda included in central inserts

www.friendsofbristolartgallery.co.uk

Day Excursion to London – The National Gallery
Monet & Architecture
Saturday 14th July 2018



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Even though we may have officially 'merged' with the Museum Friends by the time of the visit, I thought you might like the opportunity to book this monumental exhibition while we still have our independence!

You may be surprised to learn that it is almost 20 years since the UK hosted an exhibition featuring Monet's paintings and nothing else. Nor has there ever been a single exhibition looking at Monet's career through the buildings he painted in Normandy, in Rouen, in Paris, London and Venice. It shows how he used architecture to create his compositions, like the famous sequence of Rouen Cathedral in different lights. Of the 75 paintings, there are a number that have never been on show here before.

Unfortunately like the Picasso exhibition, the show's popularity is reflected in the increased price of the tickets, albeit at group rate.

08.30	Depart Clifton Down Shopping Centre
08.35	St. Monica's Bus Stop
08.40	Westbury-on-Trym (by Grupo Lounge)
08.45	Cribbs Causeway Bus Station (Park in K)
12.00	ETA The National Gallery
13.00 - 13.00	Timed Tickets to Exhibition
16.30	Depart National Gallery
19.30-20.00	ETA Bristol

COST: £42 Art Fund Members: £33 NG Members: £22

Booking Form (2)



RESIDENTIAL

Glyndebourne Opera Tour “La Traviata” and Sussex Thursday 11th October - Saturday 13th October 2018



Courtesy of The Daily Mail

You can still book this exciting trip with Tailored Travel as Friends of Bristol Art Gallery! En route we call in at Polesden Lacey (N.T.) and return via Churchill's home at Chartwell (N.T.). A Blue Badge Guide meets us on the 12th to take us either to Firle Place or Charleston Farmhouse (visited in 2014). We have time to freshen up back at our hotel in Eastbourne before setting out for Dinner at Glyndebourne prior to the performance of La Traviata.

Dinner is included at the hotel on arrival. The hotel is York House on the seafront (2 doors from our 2014 hotel!). The price is £399 with £49 single supplement.

If you would like further details, please send a square C5 stamped addressed envelope (brochure folded in two) or oblong DC (folded in 3) also stamped, to:

Margaret Bell, 18 Lime Grove, Alveston, Bristol BS35 3PN.



The Art Friends Schubart Memorial Lecture

25th September 2018, 7 for 7.30pm

Taking place for the last time in the Rear Hall of BMAG, this is an event for all former Art Gallery Friends and Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives (FBMGA) and the public.

Adrian Jenkins, Director of the Bowes Museum, Richmond, Yorks, will speak about the splendid 'St Luke drawing the Virgin and Child' by Dieric Bouts, now owned by the Bowes Museum and currently on loan to BMAG for 2 years.

The lecture will be preceded by the FBMGA AGM. A reception of drinks and nibbles will be provided by FBMGA at 7.00pm and the lecture will start at 7.30pm and finish at 8.30pm. Cost: £5, bookable through FBMGA, or pay on the door.

Lecture Programme

Linked to exhibitions in London. These lectures will take place on Saturday afternoons the studio at M.Shed at 2.30pm. Cost: £7.50 to include tea/coffee and cake after the lecture. All will be bookable through FBMGA.

Saturday October 6th, 2018.

Dr Richard Stemp; Art Historian, Author and TV presenter

'Mantegna and Bellini'; pre-eminent renaissance artists.

Exhibition at National Gallery, shared with Staatliche museum in Berlin, of paintings and sculpture.

Saturday November 17th, 2018. Linda Bolton, Art historian, writer, TV producer, National Gallery, Tate accredited and independent lecturer

'Russia, Royalty and The Romanovs'

Exhibition at Queens Gallery

January 19th, 2019. Peter Scott, Art historian and popular independent lecturer for many galleries

'The Lorenzo Lotto Portraits'; highly acclaimed Renaissance portraits, rich in symbolism, by one of the greatest portraitists of the time.

Exhibition at the National Gallery

Spring Lunch and Lecture at M.Shed to be given by Kate Newnham, Galleries Senior Curator, Visual Arts, at Bristol Museums. Date and Title to be finalised.

April 13th 2019. Gayna Pelham, Artist, Writer, National Gallery and Courtauld Lecturer.

The EY exhibition; 'Van Gogh and Britain' exploring how Van Gogh was inspired by Britain and how he inspired British artists.

Exhibition at Tate Britain.

In addition, it is hoped that an event will be organised sometime in spring 2019 for a viewing of the Leonardo drawings which will be on tour from the Royal Collection. Details to follow soon.



R E V I E W

All Good Things Come to an End

Dr Dick Iles, my predecessor of 7 years, was a perfectionist. There was no way I would dare follow him. I had previously directed the Thornbury Arts Festival including two painting exhibition scoops from David Shepherd and Beryl Cook. Otherwise I knew little of painters and painting, my festival credentials relying on a background of music and literature.

So when John Crossley introduced Margaret and me to the Friends via a wonderful trip to Verona with Inside Art, including four opera nights and a wealth of art in Mantua, Padua and Vicenza, we willingly joined the Friends with the proviso to keep well away from committees! Yet it wasn't long before my arm was firmly twisted, a trip to Harrogate firmly booked coinciding with the birth of a second grand-daughter, now nearly 22 year old gorgeous blonde.

Dick's ambitious aim was to do monthly trips to exhibitions in London and the provinces or to country houses around Bristol in the summer; and to include two residentials further afield at Easter and in the autumn. He also included 'little known London' which I followed up with visits to the famous Livery Halls including the Goldsmiths, the Fishmongers and the Clockmakers. So many Old Masters from Rembrandt and Velasquez to Monet and Cezanne, new discoveries like Jean-Etienne Liotard and, with the opening of Tate Modern, tentative incursions into Francis Bacon and Georgia O'Keefe – all have come our way.

Residentials have opened up every corner of England from the Lake District to the Weald of Kent, the lowlands of Scotland and wild Wales. Varied forms of transport have included a helicopter flight to the Scillies, river cruises on the Dart and the Fal, a 1912 steam boat on Loch Katrine, a Mississippi Paddle boat on the Broads and innumerable rides on heritage steam railways such as the Bluebell Line and the Festiniog narrow gauge.

Ventures abroad began when John Crossley's French connexions enabled us to design two completely self guided holidays based in Troyes and Rouen. I then went back to Inside Art to commission Jim and Caroline Dales to take us to Utrecht and to Prague before going trans-Continental to New York. We were there just a few months before the horrors of 9/11! Earlier on, there was even a visit to Iran where the Friends were made very welcome. And when the Matthew 'sailed' to Newfoundland for the John Cabot celebrations, there were Friends there to greet the ship on its arrival.

From 2009, Tailored Travel has been invaluable in guiding us around Bologna and the great European Capitals of Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, Paris and the Hague. But it all started with a memorable once-in-a-ten-year experience of the play cycle of Oberammergau.

Throughout my overlong tenure, I could not have managed to cope with all the administrative work that lies behind each successful excursion without the secretarial skills of my dear spouse, Margaret and also in co-operation with the treasury skills of Tony and Anne Merriman. The funds we have raised over the years have equalled the annual subscriptions and enabled us to offer support to all three of the Fine, Applied and Asian Art Curators

when requesting help with their valuable purchases.

May I finally thank all the lovely Friends, including the sadly departed, whom Margaret and I have got to know over the last 22 years. We shall miss you all. But like Nellie Melba and her farewells, we still have one late extra up our sleeves, so join us at Glyndebourne in October!

Maurice Bell



C O M M E N T S

Members' Comments

Comments from our members about excursions and exhibitions.

Charles I: King & Collector

10th February 2018

“Overwhelming! Almost too much to take in in one visit. I’m taking away (in my mind!) Jacopa Bassano’s “The Adoration of the Shepherds” for its rustic naturalism, Dosso Dossi’s “Virgin and Child with Saints” for the remarkable hairstyle of the virgin, and Corregio’s “St Catherine Reading” for the calm beauty of her face.”

John Rowe

“What a beautiful exhibition, how much we lost in just 11 years of the Common Wealth. Lovely to see much of it back together and still much in the Royal Collection, but we still need to raid the Prado and the Louvre!”

Elizabeth Holford

Charles II: King & Collector

11th March 2018

“Opulence, pleasure and royal authority. All exemplified in paintings, shimmering silks, silver gilt and gold plate. The excellent talk on Catherine of Braganza was a wonderful treat.”

Muriel Harrison

“I must say that, for me, the Brueghel “Massacre of the Innocents” came as somewhat of a relief after the extremes of Restoration celebration of the return of the monarchy!”

John Rowe



R E P O R T

Residential Trip Report: Hastings, 10th - 14th April 2018

Houses, gardens, churches and galleries, artists, actors and writers, as always with FOBAG journeys, there was so much of interest to see and to learn.

To begin at the beginning: Ightham Mote dates from mediaeval times. From the attractive cobbled courtyard you step into the great hall, where the floor would have been covered in rushes in ancient times. Upstairs the old chapel boasts an attractively framed squint and the new chapel is graced with very special, brightly coloured stained glass windows. The ceilings, the fireplaces and the biblefold panelling all helped to create a special ambience appreciated by us all.



A piece by Gus Cummins

In Hastings' Jerwood Gallery we were introduced to local artist Gus Cummins, who apparently "exists in a space somewhere between the thinking of the surrealist painters and the expertise of the magic realist painters". In fact many of us appreciated his off the wall compositions, but the exhibition of Quentin Blake's

illustrations amused us more with his near monochrome presentations of such things as readers perched in frail trees, addressing an audience of birds. Upstairs there were even more delights from many famous twentieth century artists, just one on display from each. A favourite was one of Maggi Hambling's of an arthritic old woman, who looked considerably older than anyone in our FOBAG group!

Bateman's, was a haven of peace. It was fascinating to listen to the guides as they gave us small nuggets of the life of Rudyard Kipling. As one of the most famous writers of his day, his frustration is understandable as he read the poor spelling in his son's letters, but he was able, after reprimanding John, to laugh about it as well. His life contained sadness with the loss of two of his children, first Josephine, who died at the age of only six, then John, killed early in the First World War. He adored children, but his only remaining daughter, Elsie, produced no grandchildren for him.

Having enjoyed Kipling's garden, we moved on to Great Dixter and Sissinghurst, two very special outdoor environments. At Great Dixter we began in the house, with its impressive great hall and principal mediaeval features, which have remained relatively intact. The Lutyens wing, much more modern, completes the exterior so effectively.



Some wonderful colour at Great Dixter

The gardens demonstrated some beautiful plant compositions, but we were a little early for spring 2018's late start, not helped by the day's lower temperatures. Sissinghurst was in very good form, perfectly weeded, colourful already and promising for the new season. Gardeners here seem to have all the time in the world to answer a stream of questions from visitors. We enjoyed a quality wildlife photography exhibition to finish the day.

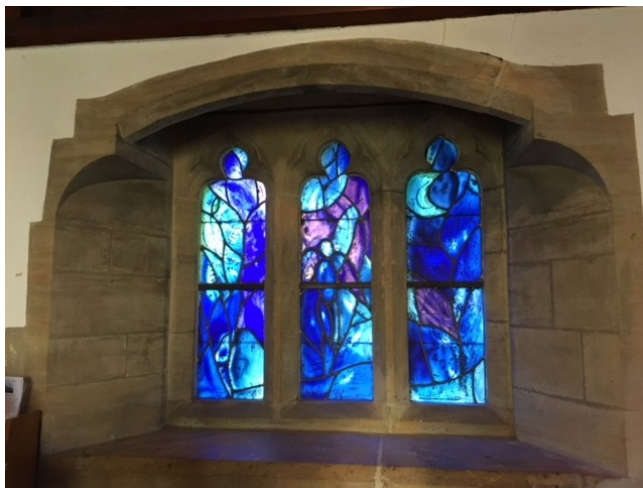


R E P O R T

At Bodiam station we learned about Edith Cavell and how luggage carriages on trains came to be known as Cavell coaches after her remains were transported back from Belgium in just such a vehicle. Following our train journey we arrived at Smallhythe to learn about Ellen Terry, the highly successful Shakespearean actress. The day finished with a leisurely visit to the pretty town of Rye and its panoramic views from the top of the church tower.

On our journey home, we visited a fascinating hidden gem. In a church on an ancient site, we were wowed by the beautiful coloured glass of artist Marc Chagall. In All Saints Church, Tudeley cum Chapel, Chagall was employed to create a beautiful window of predominantly blue glass to represent the sea, where the

y o u n g
daughter of a
p r o m i n e n t
local family
drowned. To
the south the
colours are
mostly yellow,
l o o k i n g
magnificent as
the sun shines
through them.
To the north
the images
appear in
strong shades
of blue, with
o c c a s i o n a l
hints of other colours.



There was more, too much to fill these pages, but this report would not be complete without a very special note of thanks to Margaret and Maurice for twenty-two years of their successful hard work in organising residential visits for the Friends, and to Monica for giving them support recently. We are all so grateful for those happy times together.

Angie Biggs



NEWS



Seventy years and counting...

Some of us can remember the Festival of Britain of 1951 – just. It looked determinedly to the future and its optimism was echoed in exhibitions across Britain. In Bristol at the City Art Gallery, as it was still called, a large and astute show of Contemporary British Painting

took place including major works by Henry Moore, Stanley Spencer and William Scott. The initiative came from the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery, founded just three years earlier. The Friends were the co-sponsors with the Arts Council of Great Britain and it was the Friends' representatives who selected the works.

Their knowledge and commitment was again evident a decade later with brilliant purchases for the Art Gallery of paintings by Terry Frost, Peter Lanyon, Keith Vaughan and five other major British artists from the funds of the Dyer Bequest. Professor John Steer, successor to our founding chairman, Anne Hewer (see front cover), deplored the absence of a Francis Bacon, 'excluded on grounds of costs'. The Friends were fulfilling their clear and simple aims: to make purchases, 'primarily but far from exclusively' of contemporary art, and to promote exhibitions.

That relatively narrow role was inevitably to evolve and expand. Other sources of support for the purchase of contemporary works emerged for short periods, the interests of the growing membership broadened and even dire necessity dictated change. In recent years much of the refurbishment of the picture galleries, vital relighting, conservation work and much more has been dependent upon the Friends. The support for purchases, old and new, has continued, now well exceeding a million pounds over the seventy years.

But there are now, in effect, three membership organisations supporting the museums service. Our own society was founded in 1948 in support of the Art Gallery. The Bristol Magpies was formed in 1977 in support of the Museum and renamed the Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives a decade or so ago. Finally, the Bristol Museums Development Trust, set up in 2008 to complete the capital funding required for M Shed, now also supports Bristol's museum service as a whole. The Trust has concentrated on corporate membership, its administration and much of its costs are borne by Bristol City Council and its trustees include a councillor and the Head of Culture.



NEWS

The independence of each of the two Friends societies has already been of demonstrable importance. For example, in 2009 the societies joined forces with past members of staff to oppose, successfully, a bewilderingly destructive new staff structure. A little earlier the FBMGA had campaigned effectively for crucial improvements to the architectural plans for M Shed. We must now formally combine. Together, the Friends' independence can be critical in every sense of that word and just as vital to the museum service as their financial support.

If the two Friends societies merge, I am convinced that the sense of involvement in the life of the art gallery, which so many members value highly, will also continue. And the personal contact and encouragement, which the art gallery's curators greatly appreciate, will be maintained.

But Friends' events do present problems. The evening lectures, which are so often directly related to major current exhibitions in London, have been outstanding. Cost savings mean that we are no longer to be allowed to hold evening lectures in the Queen's Road building. The Schubart Memorial Lecture on 25 September may be the last occasion. Re-establishing this impressive tradition at M Shed and elsewhere will not be easy. Furthermore, invitations to exhibition previews have been seriously restricted for several years. Combining the other events - the outings to London and the most impressive expeditions far further afield - with those of the museum's Friends, will not be straightforward. These events have given enormous pleasure and, significantly, they have been a major source of fundraising for the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery for many years. However, the briefest perusal of the museum Friend's newsletter reveals how much we already have in common and I believe that all existing members will benefit from the merger.

Above all, I believe that the museum service, itself, will benefit more from the support of one single and independent Friends group.

On the facade of Bristol's museum service headquarters, the Queen's Road building, are the words Bristol Art Gallery, carved in stone and twelve feet high. Presiding above the pediment and much larger still are the muses of Architecture, Painting and Sculpture. All of us, as members of the Friends of Bristol Museums Galleries and Archives, can continue to be the guardians of that identity and of the vision and purpose behind it.

Francis Greenacre
President, Friends of Bristol Art Gallery



NEWS



The Friends of Bristol Art Gallery – An Appreciation

The 'City Art Gallery, Report of the Committee for the years 1946 and 1947' includes a heading of 'Outstanding Events', it states:

Two outstanding events of the years 1946 and 1947 which will have a profound effect on the work of the City Art Gallery, are the setting up of an Advisory Committee..... and the formation of the Association of the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery, which has already achieved a considerable membership and held an important loan exhibition.

The wording of that report was indeed prophetic and over the following 71 years the Friends of Bristol Art Gallery (affectionately referred to as FoBAG, pronounced 'foe bag') has played a highly significant role in supporting the work of the Art Gallery and Bristol's Museums and Galleries collectively. That support has most obviously taken the form of raising funds which have enabled the organisation to acquire works of art directly and, more often than not, has enabled application for additional grants so multiplying the effectiveness of the original award, allowing the acquisition of items otherwise far out of the reach of a local authority's budgets.

That support has been extremely valuable and hugely appreciated in how it has improved the collections held in trust for the citizens of this great city. Collections which are used in so many different ways: through exhibition and display, through loan to other institutions nationally and internationally, which are used for research and reference and which contribute to formal education and informal education at so many levels.

However, the support of the Friends has been so much more than just that. Fund raising has also enabled the refurbishment of ageing galleries and the FoBAG as a whole, and especially

the FoBAG Committee members, have provided advice and support to individual members of staff, the various management teams over the years and indeed to the City Council itself. One consistent feature of the FoBAG Committee meetings has been the attendance of the art gallery curators so that committee members have acquired intimate knowledge of the everyday workings of the staff team, for example, whether tackling ethical dilemmas or debating the direction to take with collecting contemporary art. In return the curatorial staff have been able to benefit from advice and comment and together the result has been a most valuable partnership.

This is not the place to list the many and various items which have been acquired through Friends' sponsorship, or the other specific ways in which the Friends' have supported the museums and galleries, there is plenty of evidence of such support as you walk around our displays or visit behind the scenes. I would though wish to thank everyone who has taken a turn on the Friends' committees over the years, each contribution has been and remains much appreciated by all staff. I would particularly like to pay tribute to Joanna Brown for her leadership in her role as Chair over many years and also to all the current Committee members. They have taken a very difficult decision to merge FoBAG with the Friends of Bristol Museums, Galleries & Archives (FBMGA) (a relative newcomer as they were founded only 41 years ago, originally as the Magpies). Recognising that times have changed and that a new way forward is necessary is a hard thing to do but in the long run will, I am sure, pay dividends. It is very pleasing that several members of the FoBAG Committee will transfer to the corresponding committee of FBMGA and I am very confident that the new joint body will continue the excellent work that FoBAG has delivered across those 7 decades. The work of FoBAG provides an excellent base from which to move forward to continue to deliver the vision of an art gallery within an overall organisation which is world class and a source of great pride to the city.

Ray Barnett
Head of Collections & Archives



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O B I T U A R Y

Arnold Wilson, MA, FMA, FSA 1932 - 2018



'Wilson's Warriors'. Arnold Wilson and the Art Gallery curators on the day of his retirement in 1987.

It was with much sadness that we learned of the death in March of Arnold Wilson, Director of Bristol Art Gallery from 1968 to 1987. Arnold arrived in Bristol in 1962 as Curator of Fine Art having previously worked at Aylesbury Museum and the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. He was a much respected figure in the art world, and made good use of his extensive contacts among museum colleagues, artists, collectors and dealers to negotiate acquisitions and, crucially, to attract the necessary funding. His lasting impact on the collections of fine and applied art, both European and Eastern, can be seen in all the art galleries. Among his triumphs were David Bomberg's *Figure Composition* of c.1913, bought when the artist's radical early work was only just being recognised, Alfred Sisley's *The Entrance to the Village*, Bristol's first Impressionist work, and Robert Peake's *Charles I when Duke of York*. During the 1970s he championed the work of local artists with a regular display on the upper balcony of the Museum. Although paintings were his particular specialism, he was equally at home identifying a Chinese plate or discussing the merits of Bristol porcelain and had a keen eye for contemporary ceramics.

Arnold was a staunch supporter of the Friends. He attended committee meetings and played an active part in their activities, entering with enthusiasm into the entertainments which used to accompany the annual dinners.

Arnold's former colleagues at the Art Gallery remember him with very great affection. He was a generous and supportive boss who shouldered much of the tedious bureaucracy and protected us from the demands of the council's hierarchy – something we only really appreciated after he left.

Karin Walton

A Surprise Celebration



On finding that Maurice was to have a birthday during our stay Angie Biggs and I decided it had to be celebrated. Angie arranged for a cake ,and we had many candles, not actually enough but that could have been a fire hazard. So we sang to him on the coach in the morning and again with cake during dinner. *Monica Freeman*



Maurice!

Your FOBAG contingent, would just like to say,
All good wishes, on this your natal day.
To us, you're very special, 'cos YOU extend our minds,
With visits to Great Houses and trips of diverse kinds.
You research our exhibitions, and plan our expeditions -
Coach, Hotel, Itinerary, all most worthwhile,
'Cos you give us so much pleasure,
We go home replete with smile!
Your patience is a virtue, when our time-clocks run amok
Your school-masterly reaction,
Somehow, you've learnt to block!
We've been so downhearted, that this was your swan-song
But suddenly we're singing, 'cos Glyndebourne's come along.
So, all felicitations, we extend to you today
May many Happy Birthdays, in Future, wing your way.
Pamela Halford

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AND FINALLY

Coffee at the Café



That morning in February, members who had come for the C-in-C were caught in the Front Hall by Phil Walker with his camera and were given an impromptu trial run of the newly designed introduction to the building by a member of the Front of House staff – we thought it very good and useful for new visitors to the Museum.

Our next dates are 12 June and 10 July. No meeting in August and hope to start again in some form, in September.

Don't forget you are very welcome to the AGM (our last) 6.00pm, Tuesday 3rd July. (Minutes of the 2017 AGM and

2018 agenda are included in the central inserts of this issue of The Bulletin).

The curators will be present to display some of our acquisitions.
JB

A Thank You to the Front of House Staff

To all Front of House Staff past and present – your helpfulness over the many years of the Friends of the Art Gallery's activities at the Museum whether it be moving chairs, finding someone with a key to the downstairs meeting room, chasing lost postbags full of The Bulletin, rearranging lecture dates at short notice, the list goes on, your cheerfulness and cooperation has always been greatly appreciated by all our members and committee. A big thank-you to you all.

Joanna Brown

From The Editor



Photo by Pam Sayer



T H E E D I T O R

When I first became The Editor of The Bulletin, I never for one moment thought I would be the one to compile and publish the very last edition. Yet here we are.

In my five and bit years working with The Friends, I have met some wonderful people, learnt many very interesting things and have relished gaining a knowledge of the inner workings of our museum and art gallery.

It was a great honour to put together our special celebratory 200th edition of The Bulletin in November last year, and I continue to look at the framed certificate confirming our First Place in the BafM newsletter competition in 2015 with great pride.

Being involved in the appeals and funding we have helped with in the last few years has been an amazing experience, and now being able to wander through the stunningly refurbished gallery suite and think "I helped make this possible" is a very nice feeling. It's a feeling amplified many times over when I find myself in front of Burne-Jones' "The Garden Court", and I think back to the hours I spent fighting with Windows Mail Merge in order to send out the appeal letters, and then the many *many* thank yous for donations. I gaze upon that wonderfully restored painting and can't help thinking "I helped make that happen."

But all of this is eclipsed by something that could never have happened had I not been working with The Friends, and through them, getting to know our wonderful curators.

2015 was Chinese Year of the Sheep. As part of the celebrations of this, Kate Newham and her team created a "find the sheep" trail around the galleries, with clues pointing to various sheep that were already part of our collection and displays. But they were a sheep short.

Enter: one small fluffy sheep from the Sayer Household. With sincere promises from Kate that he would be taken great care of, our very own Timmy the Sheep was on display in the museum for 2 months. I now have a treasured photo of my children proudly pointing at *their* Timmy, sitting in a display case in the museum. In return for their bravery in loaning a treasured fluffy to BMAG, Kate took my children on a very special tour of the gallery exhibitions, where they had her all to themselves. They were possibly slightly too young to fully appreciate the wealth of knowledge they had at their fingertips with Kate's undivided attention, but I knew they were getting an insight to some of our collection that few children will get to enjoy in such depth, and it's something I will always remember.

And so ends the last edition of The Bulletin.

Thank you for your support, your enthusiasm, and your patience with the typos that escaped the proof reading.

Thank you for reading.

Pam Sayer



The retiring Executive Committee of The Friends of Bristol Art Gallery would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to The Friends Members who have shown so much support to them and the charity over the years, and send their very best wishes to you all.

Back row: Pam Sayer, Toby Pinn, Monica Freeman, Mervyn Atkinson, Carol Lear
 Front Row: Muriel Harrison, Margaret Bell, Joanna Brown, Maurice Bell



"Orchard Tambourines"
 Terry Frost

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