

north devon arts

building the arts in north devon

Chairman's Report – AGM
Wednesday, 8th July 2009
8.30pm at Broomhill

This has been another interesting year for North Devon Arts. On behalf of the group, I was invited onto the steering group for the Ilfracombe Cultural Regeneration project, which, subject to getting funding, will see major developments in the Arts not just for Ilfracombe but affecting North Devon as a whole. With an international standard gallery space planned, catering for local talented artists as well as national and international artists and touring shows, it should prove to be a real destination point for discerning visitors.

Also on behalf of NDA, I have been in talks with the owner of Brunswick Wharf, on Barnstaple's Rolle Quay, regarding turning the redundant building into a multi-purpose gallery, café and workshop space. Although any development is subject to agreement by the Environment Agency as this site is in the flood plane.

Our membership stays buoyant at just under 200 households. Many thanks to out-going membership secretary, Kate Rowley for managing this so efficiently over the last year, we will all miss her charm, her considered ideas and huge input to the committee over the last few years. I do hope Kate will re-consider being on the committee some time in the future.

NDA held an EGM in November last year, where it was agreed and voted for, that we offer Arts Organisations membership of the group. This is now something the next committee need to follow up. Barnstaple School of Art have expressed interest.

This year we are finding more people have visited the NDA website, managed by Emily Garnham Wright and created by Mark Hajdukiewicz, so it is very sad that Emily now wishes to stand down from this increasingly important post. My sincere thanks go to Emily, I know she has always been extremely helpful to members wanting their details and photos on the site, ensuring these went on almost immediately. Emily is willing to stay on the committee and perhaps give web help, if necessary.

Our other major achievement is the newsletter, edited by Linda Hajdukiewicz, and is I believe, one of the strongest reasons people stay with the group. Filled with Arts information, it has something for every individual NDA member. Many thanks go to Linda for getting this and the mid-month email out on time every month. Also, my special thanks go to Linda for just being there! She is always quietly reminding me of certain things, lest I forget! Little nudges that ensure I get things right and on time.

Rosie Burns our minutes secretary, has impressed us by bringing along her laptop to meetings and writing them as we speak! She always has a smile on her face and is full of 'not so quiet' enthusiasm. Great stuff, a big thank you Rosie.

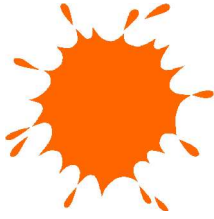
Margo and Tony Benson are our joint treasurers, and what a great job they are doing – both being fastidious in their art-forms, they bring this to the table as treasurers as well. Many thanks to you both.

Publicity has been good this year, Dave Green has ensured prior to and during NDA exhibitions, that not a week goes by without NDA and its members being in the local media Arts pages, thank you Dave. Dave also offered to send out NDA members press details if they had their own shows etc. which I believe many of you took up his kind offer.

Exhibitions are the main stay of the group. For this I would especially like to thank Alison Nicholson and the team she has gathered around her to help. This task can be thankless at times and extremely stressful just prior to an exhibition, especially if members don't conform to the various regulations set down! But, the exhibitions get better every year and it is this that

www.northdevonarts.co.uk

North Devon Arts, PO Box 291, Barnstaple EX32 2BN. Email: info@northdevonarts.co.uk



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gets the group the good name it has. Thanks go to all the NDA members who have volunteered their time to help set up exhibitions, always there in the background and happy to be asked.

I would also like to offer my thanks to Penny Jackson for her calm considered support and clear thinking, she has been a real asset on the committee and will be missed.

The monthly meetings have continued to have good attendance and we have seen some very special speakers – some being NDA members, others from further a-field. Our three star speakers this year were, Peter Randall Page, Chris Chapman and Tracy Chevallier.

All our speakers were extremely interesting and the two 'INSPIRATION' members' evenings, a great way to get to know your colleagues and what they do. So thanks to the various members who have given their time to be speakers during the year, it is great to hear what makes you tick.

Our involvement continues with the Appledore Festival, where this year we commissioned Rosie Burns to create a 'Fire and Fury' installation over the four days; which had lots of visitors joining in. Judith Westcott co-ordinated the 'Appledore Shop Exhibition' in Market St, at the last minute, gathering eight artists and makers to show and steward in the shop. Other NDA members did workshops, took stalls or were in the various halls dotted about Appledore.

The NDA relationship with North Devon Festival is ongoing, this year we were in their brochure with the Square Picture Show at Broomhill.

And, once again, we took part in the selection process and provided bursaries and a year's free NDA membership for the artists chosen for the North Devon Open Art Show, held at the Barnstaple Museum earlier this year. Providing more artist bursaries or commissions is something the committee feels could be extended in the future.

The committee have taken the decision to raise the NDA annual fee to £20, with annual postal membership at £30. This membership fee has not changed over the last eight years and it was felt that at £20, still represents extremely good value. It will come into effect from January 2010 when renewals are due, plus new people joining from October '09 will pay the new fee.

The out-going NDA committee have been a very strong and committed bunch, there when needed, putting their views over at the committee meetings and taking on all the various jobs required to keep NDA the foremost Art Group in the area. My sincere thanks go to every one of them.

On behalf of the whole group, I would like to offer thanks to Rinus and Aniet at Broomhill, without their hospitality and help, the group would probably have fallen by the wayside long ago; this is a fantastic place for us to meet and exhibit and it would be great to think members supported the hotel and facilities throughout the year as well.

So lastly, many thanks to you the members, without you NDA would not exist, your support and comments are vital to the success of the group. This AGM is a good time to have your say and you are now all welcome to put your point of view and have a discussion on what you want for the future of NDA.

Stella Levy, NDA chair