

AGM REPORTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2025

Chair's Report

This is the conclusion of my second year as Chair, and my final year on the BA Board as my six -year tenure has come to an end and so I am compelled to leave! More about that shortly.

This year the Board has had two focusses: our 50th anniversary celebrations and the reshaping of the administration of our organisation. I will touch on both of these activities.

Like any milestone birthday, we've tried to make the most of it! You will be hearing more about the various events that we've laid on in both the Secretary's report and a special 50th Anniversary Showcase feature in the Autumn Day, following on from this AGM. I hope that each of you has been able to join in in some way or other, either listening to one of our many online talks, participating in the Big Weave, enjoying reading the special anniversary edition of the Journal or, most recently, submitting a photo of your work into our online members' exhibition. We've tried to provide something to appeal to everyone, wherever you are in the world.

One more anniversary treat is on the cusp of being launched and that is our new "British Basketry" website. I have mentioned this previously and it is a fitting end to our 50th year to announce this amazing new online resource. Sarah Hatton is going to tell us more about it in the course of the morning.

In terms of our efforts to reshape the administration of the BA, this has occupied much of our collective minds over the last 12 months. We kicked off with your contributions to our member survey last year, followed by more interaction and feedback at various events over the following months, coupled with outside business advice. This has helped us shape a plan which we hope will see the BA become more efficient, more dynamic and be able to offer more to you, the members, without compromising the energy of those members who currently volunteer to keep the BA running. We believe that we no longer need 10-12 people at Board level so will be asking you to vote in favour of reducing the number of members on the Board from 10 as a minimum, to a more manageable five. In the promotion papers for this AGM, I provided more detail about all these changes and provided you with details of the candidates we now wish to put before you as your new Strategic Board going forward. I hope you will support us and give your vote to these new candidates in a few moments. And rest assured, those of us who are retiring from our positions are not disappearing into the sunset; we will be supporting the new Board in whatever way they feel is appropriate, and will very much still be on hand for you, the members.

One of our first changes was to solve the issue of how much time Board members spend on day-to-day admin jobs, so in an effort to cope with mounting workloads, we recruited two part time paid members of staff. Some of you may have already come into contact with either Sally Reay, our Admin Officer, or Katrina Green, our Finance Officer both of whom joined us in the summer. Sally and Katrina have made a major impact, taking day-to-day work away from our Treasurer, Pru Todd, and Web Administrator, Sarah Hatton, to allow them to focus on the core parts of their roles.

Aims and Plans for the coming year

One of our new Board's roles will be to identify new areas of untapped opportunities – and one obvious area is to create a broader, more inclusive, volunteering programme within the organisation to involve more members in existing and new initiatives – as the saying goes, "team work makes the dream work"! We want to offer more training for both the hobby maker and those in business; more connections with related crafts organisations, possibly funding for new projects; possible regional hubs offering events that are near to you so that you can link up with local members. We are open to new ideas and initiatives and your new

Board will want to hear what you want, so please come forward with your thoughts and suggestions!

Now onto other news of the year . . .

We resumed our Summer Meeting this year, after a break last year. On 28th June about 70 members congregated at the Welbeck Estate in Northamptonshire where we were able to enjoy two significant basketry exhibitions in one day – the closing day of

Basketry: Rescuing, Reviving, Retaining, a *touring exhibition showcasing the designs, skills and techniques of traditional basketry in the British Isles* at the Harley Gallery, and our ‘in-house’ display of the 50 Big Weave Baskets, one of our 50th Anniversary celebratory projects. Summer Meetings are one of the few occasions when members can get together in person and many remarked how they appreciated catching up with old friends face-to-face. This is something we would like to encourage, and you too have said so in our survey last year, so we are going to focus on that in the coming year, hopefully with an emphasis on regional events and gatherings. Watch this space!

I mentioned the Basketry: Rescuing, Reviving Retaining exhibition at the Harley Gallery. You may recall this exhibition was initiated by our Traditional Basketry Project (TBP) group, and it started its life at the Tear Up Exhibition in August last year, before heading to Ruthin in September 2024 until January of his year. The Welsh contingent then exhibited at Craft in the Bay in Cardiff for two months before the whole exhibition headed to Harley Gallery in April until June. Helen Voce, who we engaged as our Project Officer, superbly overseeing this exhibition, summarised the success of this touring exhibition in a document with quite mind-blowing statistics which I'll share with you here. Alongside the exhibition itself, 188 associated basketry events were run alongside with over 500 participants, and the total number of visitors across all the venues was a staggering 38,205! Can you believe it?

BA Residential Schools

Around the time of the last AGM we held the Autumn School, for the first time at Waterperry House in Oxfordshire. This proved to be a delightful venue – a beautiful house, in lovely grounds, with most participants enjoying smart single en-suite rooms.

The same venue is being used this Autumn, 24-26 October 2025, with tutors: Lisa Aitken (neolithic weave); Alice Fox (Garden Fibres and Cordage) and Rachel Hutton (Willow shopping trolley or log basket)

The 2026 Spring School is about to be announced – the dates are 6-12 April, right before Easter, and once again it will take place at Harrogate Ladies College in Yorkshire. There will be seven tutors, of which I will be one!

Lewes Basketry Festival “Under & Over” has become a regular in the basketry calendar. It took place just a couple of weeks ago on 18 October and the BA was present with a stand selling books and promoting ourselves to a new audience of mostly novice basketmakers and weavers.

To round up I'd like to talk a little about our relationship with the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers as some members, quite understandably, and particularly the newer ones, openly wonder who is this “Worshipful Company” and what on earth do they do for us? A very valid question! You've heard from Mark Cooper today, the newly appointed Prime Warden (head of the organisation) about his views on our relationship. The Basketmakers' Company is one of many worshipful companies otherwise known as livery companies, in the City of London. Their links with the trades after which they are named is now somewhat historical, but they continue to play a big part in the governance of the City of London. For us, the WCoB has made great efforts to maintain links with the trade of basketry and through their substantial charitable works, are financially supporting the BA, our members and basketmakers outside the BA, to a tune of £60-£70,000 pa! Directly with the BA they pay for seven bursaries to attend our Residential Courses, they award £4,000 pa by way of the Walmsley Bursary to applicants needing financial support for basketry projects, a total of

about £6,000 in prize money for the Basket of the Year competition; two funded studio places at Cockpit Arts in London; grants to events like Tear Up and Lewes Basketry Festival to allow them to run; not to mention various financial assistance to projects that we the BA run, like our recent Big Weave project and professional development courses for basketmakers. And this year, the £5,000 Roy McLeod award to the BA in celebration of our 50 years. In fact any one of you with a basketry or weaving project in mind who needs financial help can apply to the Charitable Trust with a brief outline of your project, and if your plans are deemed sensible, it is most likely that you will be helped. If you need to know how to approach them, just let me know.

So that is what they do for us – there is an awful lot for us to be grateful to them for, and with our current close links, there is no reason for this to diminish.

I would like to end with a round of thanks

To the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers: – Sasha Keir who is our 'link' - She is both one of the trustees of the charitable trust and also chair of the WCB Trade Committee. As many of you know, she works so hard to maintain and develop relationships with the BA and basketmakers up and down the country.

Thanks also to Ann Clark, departing liaison officer and Karen Wright who replaces her. Julian Adams the outgoing Prime Warden for his support.

The Charitable Trust for all the amazing financial support that they direct to us rather than going to other good causes!

All the **unpaid volunteers** in the BA who work on committees or run discreet areas of work:

- Geri Clark our archivist
- Julie Livesey our librarian
- Dawn Ohlson and Iris Hawkes who run our book sales
- Clare Revera retired, and now Mary Lewis and the team on the Traditional Basketry Project
- Angela Edward and her team on the Bursaries sub-committee, Angela will be handing over shortly to Tina Huber
- Mel Hart and Anne Otley and all the volunteers who organise both of our Residential Schools
- Kim Winter and Anita Lomas who produce our Journal
- Sally Reay and Katrina Green, our two new part-time paid staff.

And finally, to the outgoing Board Directors:

- Rae Gillott, our President and Membership Secretary – who'll be carrying on in these roles, just no longer on the Board
- Pru Todd – our Treasurer
- Fiona Arnold our Company Secretary
- Anne Otley, vice Chair
- Angela Edward, our retiring Bursaries Secretary
- Anna Stickland who responds to all the queries coming in via the info@
- Sarah Hatton who has been our web-admin for several years and is retiring but will still be involved in the new British Basketry website
- And finally, Mel Hart and Rachel Hutton

And a final word from me: I never had any intentions of joining the BA Board until, like most Board members, I was invited, or was I pushed?! And I certainly had no aspirations to take on the role of Chair, but again, as has often been the case in the past, "someone had to do it". Having said that, I can honestly say I have enjoyed my two years as Chair and the four previous to that. I have appreciated the involvement in everything that we do, getting to know so many people who make this organisation tick, meeting members who I would probably never have spoken to otherwise. Volunteering is empowering, enjoyable, sociable,

keeps you active, allows connections to be made, widens your knowledge. Let me encourage you to volunteer within the BA – and don't worry, you won't be duped into becoming Chair – it looks like we've got that covered!

Louise Brown

The Basketmakers' Association Ltd

Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31 August 2025

Treasurers Report 2025

It's been a really busy and fun 50th year for the BA. Building on our already comprehensive Members offer, our Anniversary projects have brought Basketmakers together up and down the country, building friendships and forging new connections.

Financially, we are in a much healthier position than last year. Overall, we saw a £35k increase income compared to last year for a number of factors including: -

WoCB

We received very generous donations of almost £15k over and above their ongoing bursary awards. This was largely to support our 50th anniversary celebrations as follows: -

- £5k Roy McLeod award – to be spent in the coming year – ideas from members please
- £1,650 match funding to support the Big Weave project, 1st part completed with the baskets and summer meeting, and more activities to come with an exhibition at the wocb meeting
- £4k match funding for the Professional development course. Unfortunately, not had the resources to oversee the delivery of this. In talks with cockpit and hope to start Jan 2026.
- AND £4k towards the TBP to continue funding the paid staff to undertake a further 2 exhibitions and collect material for the new British Basketry website.

BA income

We raised: -

- An additional £11k from members subs. This was due to both an increase in memberships and by recouping the true cost of postage from those receiving the printed copy of the journal; which most of us love by the way!
- Almost 5k from the highly successful online talks, massive thanks to all those involved in making these projects happen
- Book sales more than doubled with very little extra cost. This is even after paying for storage and insurance so that all the books can be kept in one place helping with logistics and administration.

Better Value

Thanks to the Journal team finding a new printer we've seen better value printing and less increases in postage than our previous provider. All helps to give our members a better service for their money.

Very successful bursary team with a lot of work undertaken to improve how it all works and evidenced by a higher uptake of bursaries year on year since 2022/3.

Better outcomes - Paid staff

- TBP budget spent with incredible results in reaching audiences new and old exposed to the most incredible range of traditional baskets in beautiful places elevating their status from yes, objects for carrying things and works of art and heritage. What a wonderful way to recognise 50 years of the BA, look back in the journal this summer was incredible for newer members such as myself to see this.
- And it's been a time to look forward. Accounts assistant Katrina Green has taken the financial administration of the BA to a new level. She is efficient, organised and super friendly and made my final months as treasurer an absolute breeze. This enabled me to focus on helping the organisation to grow its governance and listen to the members during this time of reflection, evaluation and pondering our development...
- Our new Admin Officer Sally Reay took up position during the summer helping us to develop our Communications with members and beyond. Her work on the new Board Directors recruitment has been invaluable.
- The Webadmin role remains relevant and we propose a role is appointed at 5 hours per week with an interim arrangement of our existing IT lead to run things until this is implemented fully.
- The new board will consider the possibility a Community & Volunteer Manager role to recruit, train and support volunteers, facilitate.

I want to give my personal thanks to the board members who helped to run all the recruitment drives this year. It really is the team work that makes the dream work!

Big Spends

The new 'British Basketry' website development is now well underway with more than half the build paid for. Stage 2 begins soon and we're all excited to see how this new resource will improve and nourish the Basketmaking community.

Look Forward

This is my last year as Treasurer. After 3 years of personal learning, growing and making new friends for life #BFF's it's time for me to step away. I hand over to someone who is not just a great Basketmaker but is the highly skilled, experienced and knowledgeable finance manager that the BA needs to see it launch into the next 50 years!

Pru Todd

Secretary's Report to the 51st Annual General Meeting of the Basketmakers' Association Ltd, 1 November 2025

What a memorable 50th anniversary year. The Big Weave brought people together locally, and later we gathered from further afield at Welbeck for our summer event to admire the craftsmanship of the frame baskets. Each one was different, and every basket a work of art. Thanks to Gordon Brown, who photographed each piece, we now have a lasting record to accompany the makers' books documenting their processes. What began as an idea grew into something beyond expectations – heartfelt thanks go to our President, Rae Gillott, for driving this forward, and to the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers for their generous funding. The summer meeting also coincided with the closing of the TBP exhibition at Welbeck.

Our membership continues to grow steadily, and in this 50th anniversary year it has been wonderful to host online Zoom talks with a wide variety of speakers, along with business-focused events. We were joined by members not only from the UK and Europe but also from the United States and Australia. We hope you have enjoyed these sessions, and plans are underway to keep them going as a valued member benefit at low cost; ticket prices go directly towards paying our speakers for their time and preparation. If you have suggestions for topics or speakers, please do let me know so they can be added to the ever-growing list. We look forward to being joined by Steen Madsen and Eddie Glew to round off the anniversary celebrations.

Since the last AGM, we have held four full Board meetings – in November 2024, and in March, July, and September 2025. In February, we also met in person at Waterperry to review the structure of the BA. This led to the recruitment of two part-time self-employed roles: Admin Officer and Accounts Administrator. We were delighted by the high calibre of applicants, which made selection difficult, but we are very pleased to welcome Sally Reay and Katrina Green to the team. At the time of writing, ahead of the AGM, the final composition of the new Board is not yet confirmed, but we are confident that we are moving towards a strong and sustainable solution.

Angela Edward and her bursary team have reshaped and simplified the bursary process which we hope will make it easier and streamline applications in the future. Thank you, Angela, for the following report.

Bursaries, Awards and Cups

The Bursaries Subcommittee would firstly like to thank Catherine Beaumont and Mary Herbert as they both stepped down during the year. We really appreciate all the work they did for us.

We would also like to welcome new members Katie Price and Tina Huber. Tina has kindly agreed to take over as Secretary to the Bursaries Subcommittee as Angela Edward is stepping down at this AGM.

We are very grateful to The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers 'Charitable Trust and our donors for their support in funding many of our bursaries.

This year the last of the Christiane Sand Bursaries were awarded and there will be an article in the March Journal thanking Nigel Grant for his support in memory of his wife.

Bursaries awarded during 2024/5

Exhibitions Bursary for groups - £1,000 shared between the two groups

Funded by the BA.

- The City Lit Advanced basketry students for their end of course exhibition
- Anna Pope for Withy Lore

Course Subsidies for groups - four of £250 each

Funded by the BA.

Only 3 were awarded.

- Herts Basketry for Underfoot baskets with Nadine Anderson
- Basketmakers Southwest for Baskets inspired by Kishies with Tim Johnson
- Jenny Gracie for Arm creels with Rachel Bower

Progressive Skills Development Bursaries - two of £350 each

Funded by the BA.

- Stephanie Shaw for weaving ashes urns with Clare Revera
- Sarah Booth for Danish paper cord seat weaving with Rachael South

Progressive Skills Development, Joy Viall Bursary - £350

Funded by the BA.

- Clare Revera for Green woodworking with CardiShed

Christiane Sand Professional Development Bursary - two of £500

Kindly funded by Nigel Grant in memory of his wife Christiane Sand (1956 – 2017)

- Tess Wakeling for Fitching
- Florence Hamer for Scuttle work

Traditional Basketry Project Bursaries - three of £350 each

One funded by the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers 'Charitable Trust and two by the BA.

- Hermione Toulson for the Arbroath Rip
- Angela Sanders for the Sheffield Oak Swill
- Helen Munday for Withy Pots

Spring School Bursaries including the Fred Rogers Award - 6 of £400 each

Four funded by The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers 'Charitable Trust, one by an anonymous donor and the Fred Rogers award which is funded by the BA.

- Stephen McQuaid for Rush Docky bags,
- Anna Stickland for Sculptural willow baskets,
- Helen McLean for Willow frame shoulder bag/creel
- Dawn Ohlson for Willow frame shoulder bag/creel
- Rachael Bearder (Fred Rogers Award) for Willow frame shoulder bag/creel
- Elaine Blackett-Ord for Willow baskets with plaited rush siding

Autumn School Bursaries - 3 of £300 each

All funded by The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers 'Charitable Trust.

- Sarah Sims for Garden Fibres and Cordage
- Jane Kelly for Willow Shopping Trolley or Log Basket
- Megs Bellamy for Willow Shopping Trolley or Log Basket

Awards

The Joy Viall Award for a Westhope student - £50

Funded by the BA.

For exemplary Level 3 work and outstanding contribution to Traditional Basketry.

- Tina Huber

BA City and Guilds Progressive Award for a Westhope student - £500

Funded by an anonymous donor.

For an outstanding student who shows promise to earn a living from basketmaking in the future.

- Dawn Bache

Cups

The Barbara Maynard Cup for City Lit students - £50

Funded by the BA.

In recognition of serious engagement in the course, progressing, and producing consistently good work.

- William Potter

The Barbara Maynard Competition Cup - £50

Funded by the BA, to be awarded at the AGM.

Finally, there are so many people to thank who keep the BA thriving and make it the fantastic organisation it is. I hope I can cover everyone as I acknowledge the Board, who take on multiple roles – from Chair and Treasurer, Bursaries, Membership, Insurance, Members questions to the events team, website and IT: Kim Winter, Anita Lomas, Geri Clarke, Iris Hawkes, Dawn Ohlson, Katherine Woodward, Julie Livesey, Katrina Green, and Sally Reay.

Thanks also go to Clare Revera for her work as Chair of the Traditional Basketry Project, and to Mary Lewis, our new Chair, together with all the members of the group whose invaluable knowledge will feed into the British Basketry website an exciting resource for members to look forward to.

Finally, thank you for your continued support as members. I wish you every enjoyment in your craft in the coming months and years.

Fiona Arnold