

CHAIRS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2018/2019

We have had a year of change, and we hope, progress.

We are trying to improve the range of services we offer to members, which include bursaries, a range of BA qualifications for tutors to use, which have been trialled this year, book and DVD sales including the sales of last year's Rush Book on Amazon, an improved website which will enable members to list details of courses offered by them. The Newsletter goes from strength to strength.

It was with a little sadness that our 20th Anniversary celebration of holding the BA Spring residential courses at the Mount School in York was ironically our last time there, due to changing term times at the School. We are very pleased to have found a new venue for the 2020 Spring courses at Harrogate Ladies College. This is very suitable for our workshop needs, is well located, and has very comfortable accommodation located on the campus.

The BA Summer Meeting this year at St. Fagan's National Museum of Wales the Art Fund Museum of the year 2019, was hosted by Welsh Basketmakers South Wales Group and South Wales Fibre Basketry Group. This was a triumph, with 120 members and guests coming to enjoy the talks and displays, and to do the walk featuring the museum's baskets, which were described in a booklet produced for the day.

The Worshipful Company of Basketmakers, the livery company which has given the BA so much support over the years, celebrated its 450th anniversary with a Basketry Trade Fair at London's Guildhall in February. This was a tremendous occasion, with a large number of basketmakers having stalls and getting together as a group in a way they have seldom been able to do, as well as enjoying the excitement of this wonderful location and the ceremony of a royal visit.

As we write this we are getting close to the date of probably our highlight of our year, the Endangered Baskets Symposium we are running on 5th October, in partnership with the Heritage Crafts Association, which is supported again by the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers. This will be a chance to bring together makers of endangered baskets, to collect data, and to formulate plans for passing on this important intangible heritage.

The basketry community has suffered a particular loss this year, with the death of Colin Manthorpe, a much respected maker who began weaving willow baskets in a Norfolk workshop in 1952. He had been a teacher to a great many of us. If you have not done so already, do read his short autobiography, '50 Years On The Plank'.

On a more optimistic note, the Worshipful Company have sponsored a placement this year at the craft incubator Cockpit Arts, for Alison Dickens, who has described it as 'life changing', and have committed to supporting another place this year. Also, Nigel Grant, the husband of basketmaker Christiane Sands, has just set up new bursaries in her memory, which are going to be divided between students at the City Lit, and other BA members.

Finally, can we thank the BA Board members who have either retired this year, or who will be leaving us at this meeting, who are Nadine Anderson, Co-chair Sue Andrews, Justine Burgess, and Ruth Glasheen. Also the continuing members, Erica Adams, Geri Clarke, Alison Dickens, Mel Hart, Sue Papworth, Clare Revera and Katherine Woodward, plus our President Rae Gillott. Nothing the BA has done this year would have been possible without them.