

# AVONCROFT ARTS SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORTS

For the

### 74<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**(POSTPONED DUE TO COVID-19)**

To be held at

AVONCROFT ARTS CENTRE

IN THE FORGE

On

MONDAY 29<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2020

7 p.m. for 7.30pm

**(New Date and Time To Be Confirmed)**

PRESIDENT

Mr R Cadbury M.A.



**avoncroft arts  
society**

Avoncroft Arts Society  
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AVONCROFT ARTS SOCIETY - Registered Charity No: 235231

**LIST OF OFFICERS 2017/2018**

**PRESIDENT**

**Mr R Cadbury M.A.**

**VICE PRESIDENTS:**

**OFFICERS:**

Chairman	Mr A Turpin
Vice-Chairman	Mr P Baker
Treasurer	Mr R M Norton
Secretary	(Vacant)

**TRUSTEES/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

**Mr A Turpin, Mr M. Norton, Mr P Baker, Mrs L Mc Dermott, Mr B Stanton, Mr G Crooks.**

**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE:**

**Chairman, Treasurer and Vice Chairman.**

**SITE FACILITIES MANAGER**

**Mr T Day**

**ADMINISTRATOR/ART CLASSES & WORKSHOPS**

**Mrs J Crabtree**

**ACCOUNTS ADMINISTRATOR**

**Mr M Scrimshaw**

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MEMBER GROUP CONTACTS (or telephone the office on 01527 833829)

Painting Section - Painting Tutors

**Mr R Crabtree**

**Mrs L Blakeway**

**Mrs P McGregor**

**Mr T Clarke**

**Ms J Selcuk**

**Mrs C Ellitts**

Pottery Group/Clay Modelling/Raku - Tutors

**Mrs J McMillan and Mrs J Millward**

Art Textiles – Group Rep

**Cathy Hunt, Mrs V Richardson**

Adventures in Embroidery – Group Rep

**Mrs S Russell**

Folk Dance Group

**Chairman. Mrs Jean Sillitoe**

**Treasurer. Mr P Lines**

**Secretary. Mrs E Stanton**

Leisure Painting

**Contact office**

Sugarcraft

**Pat Williams**

**AVONCROFT ARTS SOCIETY IS A Registered Charity – No. 235231  
and an associate member of Bromsgrove Arts Alive**

## **Avoncroft Arts Society – Chairman’s Report 2020**

This year I have the unusual task of writing my annual report for an AGM which cannot yet be scheduled due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic and the lockdown measures imposed upon us all.

The latter half of 2019 and the early months of this year saw the Society continue to successfully provide a range of classes and activities to inspire and entertain us all in the pleasant surroundings of our site in Stoke Heath.

The Friday morning painting class previously tutored by Judith Selcuk had to start this academic year without a tutor while the Trustees took the necessary steps to find a replacement. Interviews took place in January and the position offered to Charlie Ellitts who accepted. I would like to welcome Charlie to our roster of art tutors and hope that she enjoys her time with us. Judith continues to take her class on Tuesdays. All other classes and groups continue to meet regularly as before. Thanks to all our tutors and group contacts: Richard Crabtree, Terry Clarke, Pam McGregor, Jane McMillan, Lou Blakeway, Judith Selcuk, Janet Millward, Pat Williams, Sue Russell and Cathy Hunt.

The Trustees Committee continues to meet regularly to keep Avoncroft running smoothly. I would like to welcome Lesley McDermott to the Committee. Lesley is a member of the Tuesday painting class and has a background in education. Val Rees has resigned after a number of years on the Committee and Brian Stanton has given notice that he wishes to stand down as a Trustee when his current term ends. I would like to thank them both for their contributions to the running of the Society. This will leave us with only 5 Trustees after the next AGM unless other members come forward during the nomination process.

Thanks to Mike Norton (Treasurer), Peter Baker (Vice Chairman), Gary Crookes and Lesley McDermott for their continued contributions to the Committee. Thanks also to Liz Stanton who has been taking the minutes at Committee meetings. Liz has also given notice and a new minute taker will be needed soon.

The Office continues to be efficiently run with Joyce Crabtree looking after all aspects of membership and class administration and Tim Day coordinating all site related matters. Martin Scrimshaw has continued to streamline our banking and has been instrumental in introducing new ways for members to pay for classes. Payments can now be accepted by on-line transfer, card payment or GoCardless (direct debit). Thanks to all 3 for their efforts this year.

No major repairs or refurbishments to the site have been necessary this year. It continues to look very well kept. Our chosen cleaning and gardening contractors (Wisteria Cleaning and Garden Services) remain with us and we are very happy with the work they do. Tim has been investigating ways of improving the car park surface as this has been identified as the next major refurbishment project needing to be done.

The Society has been badly affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic measures introduced by the Government. All classes were suspended from March 20<sup>th</sup>. It was decided by the Trustees that for the remainder of the academic year at least tutors would still receive payment for the classes they would have taught.

Joyce and Martin can largely perform their regular duties from home leaving Tim to keep an eye on the site with regular visits. All external site bookings (Keep Fit, Verve Kick Boxing, Bromsgrove Photographic Society and Probus) have also been suspended losing the Society a good deal of its regular income. The Avoncroft Nursery is continuing but on a reduced schedule initially supporting those parents who work in key roles.

Bromsgrove District Council have cancelled our business rates for 2020/21 and have given the Society a grant of £10,000 as per Government guidelines. Richard Crabtree and Judith Selcuk have developed on-line tutoring offerings using ZOOM and many of their regular members join them each week. The Avoncroft Folk Dance Group have suspended all activity on site.

As of today, it is uncertain when the Society will be able to get back to regular operation. It is hoped that classes can restart in some form in September. Finally, I would like to thank all members of Avoncroft Arts Society for your understanding and support during these abnormal times and wish you are all safe and well.

Tony Turpin  
10<sup>th</sup> June 2020

### **Art Tutors/Group Reports 2020**

**AAS Administrator –Joyce Crabtree.** The Society has 164 members attending our 16 art classes, with 8 tutors who each offer diverse teaching methods and learning/social experiences within their classes. We generally do not need to advertise and have always been able to fill a vacant space. Whether members are working, self-employed, unemployed or retired, we try to find a place for everyone, by providing evening and daytime classes and weekend workshops. We have all had to find new ways of working, within the Government guidelines during the COVID – 19 crisis and continue to work behind the scenes.

We received news that two of our members have passed away and condolences on behalf of the Society, Tutors and friends have been sent to their families. Condolences have also been sent to members who have experienced loss within their own family, during the centre closure. The Tutors were tasked with keeping their classes/groups together through social media/telephone and on-line, in many cases this is how news has filtered through. They have encouraged, informed, and inspired members during this time maintaining their continued links with Art and the Society.

I, like many members, have missed the social interaction with the many friends I have made within the society and have been happy to offer them support where it has been possible. In return I have welcomed the support I have received from many members. I, and other members, also joined local and national support groups making Scrubs, face masks and headbands for frontline workers.

**Art Richard Crabtree** – The feedback I have received from members regarding my Art Classes, is from September 2019. All classes have been well attended and enjoyed. Many people have been coming now for several years and have been enjoying the friendly atmosphere at Avoncroft arts society. As we continue to welcome new members to the classes and the Society, I have been fortunate to welcome several new members into my classes this year and they have fitted in well with existing members.

I have covered many aspects of painting and drawing in all the classes which has been met with a positive response. I always endeavour to cover areas of art education which are most pertinent to the majority whilst still attending to individual requirements.

The COVID – 19 outbreak has had a devastating effect on the Art Society, its workforce, members and Trustees with the overnight closure of all activities. To help continue with my classes, I set up Whats app groups and on-line Zoom classes for all my groups. From the total number of members over my 6 classes about 60% have enjoyed this facility to enable them to keep in touch and continue with their art.

My main concerns were to keep the groups of members in touch with each other and give some sense of normality by holding classes at the usual times and days they would normally meet. Also, to help lessen the financial impact on Avoncroft Arts Society by asking members taking part to pay for their Summer Term which the majority were happy to do.

The on-line classes have worked well within their limitations, but I look forward to being able to return to some sort of normality, hopefully in the very near future. Working alongside the Arts Society, carrying out and providing Covid-19 Risk Assessments to get the classes back, when the Government Guidelines allow.

Richard

**Art Pam McGregor** – We began in September, revisiting for some, new for others, watercolour techniques as most of the class hadn't worked with the medium for some time.

#### **Term 1**

The first half term the subject matter we used to explore the techniques were flowers, bird's and a winter scene. We also gave people an option to design their own Xmas card so they would have time to have it printed. In November we looked at Japanese style watercolours and created a painting introducing pen work. The members could then choose an image of their own to do in the same style.

#### **Term 2**

In the first part of the term the class was introduced to Cubism with the idea of creating their own original cubist painting. I was amazed to see the high standard of painting and such variety and originality that was produced. The beginning of the latter part of the term was spent exploring the techniques of using oil pastels. The class had an option of using a portrait or landscape as an exercise. They were then encouraged to do an oil pastel painting of their own choice, which some had started, unfortunately it was interrupted by the Corona Virus lockdown.

### **During the Lockdown**

I have set up Whats app groups for both classes where the members can stay in touch with each other as well as myself. I have set themes for the members to work to, sending references for them to use if they choose to. April was the theme 'Childhood memories' and beginning of June 'Holiday moments'. Since March members have been sending me artwork, they have produced which I have collected and each month I have sent out an email showing the 'gallery of the month'. This has been really good as it has helped motivate people to have a go at home.

I have been there to help support them whenever they have needed

Pam

**Art Lou Blakeway** – The year started off very well, we welcomed new members to the classes. I also had a few members leave due to changes in circumstances but on the whole the classes are well attended and lively.

Both classes are always keen to try new mediums and techniques and I try to nudge them gently out of their comfort zones, often with exciting results.

We have covered a variety of genres, beginning with landscapes with a focus on drawing and painting techniques and looking at artists such as Joan Eardley, Kyffin Williams and Sheila Fell. After Christmas, we explored drawing and painting techniques and using various surfaces.

Unfortunately, the term was cut short due to the lockdown but we have continued the classes through WhatsApp and email, where I send everyone a worksheet via email and then we share our pictures through WhatsApp where we can discuss the work and share ideas. It also allows the group to keep in touch as a whole.

This half term we are taking inspiration from Grayson Perry's Art Club, shown recently on Channel 4. Each week we make work in response to themes from the show. So far we have covered Portraits and Animals with some fabulous results.

I have had some Thursday group members join the WhatsApp group thanks to recommendations from members of my classes, which is lovely. We've discussed possibly having a Lockdown Exhibition when we eventually return to the Society!

I would like to thank the Trustees for supporting us during the lockdown. It's very much appreciated and I look forward to returning properly, once it's safe to do so

### **The Pottery – Jane McMillan & Janet Millward**

Both Pottery Groups have been well supported and are running smoothly. The Monday group tutored by Jane McMillan has a regular group of long-term members; the Tuesday group tutored by Janet Millward has attracted several new members, some with experience of pottery whilst others are beginners but all working with enthusiasm. Neil Spalding, previously a tutor, continues to support the running of the Pottery by ordering and collecting supplies and running some kiln firings.

Members in both groups continue to make creative pieces using a variety of techniques; the work may be functional, decorative or both! Everyone enjoys coming to the sessions but unfortunately this has had to stop in response to COVID-19. Both groups are friendly, and some members will have kept in touch with other and all will be looking forward to resuming sessions when it is safe to do so.

## **Lectures in the History of Art, Design & Architecture - Jane McMillan –**

This group continues to be well supported with a steady membership of 10-13 people attending for 5 lectures per term. The topic for the Autumn term was the Development of Impressionism then this continued in the New Year to consider work from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The work of both male and female artists is always included but an extra element was added to this series. A suggestion from the group was that we considered women's artworks alongside their other opportunities/constraints and place in society. This was proving very interesting and we had completed lecture 3 when of course the sessions had to be cancelled due to the health concerns around COVID-19. When it is safe to resume the lectures, it would be rewarding to continue with this topic.

There are several groups of friends who come to the lectures and I am sure they will have kept in touch during this time, but I am also sure that everyone will be looking forward to returning to the lectures as we all enjoy the exchange of ideas and discussions around artworks.

Jane

## **Art Judith Selcuk- Tuesday Class Report for Avoncroft.**

This year has been a very unusual one indeed and to try and summarise it is difficult.

For the first half of the year the class covered a wide variety of subjects.

We started with learning core skills in graphite, using subtraction and negative drawing to create snow scenes and landscapes. From these we studied seasonal art with paintings in watercolour, oils and acrylic focussing on the winter and Christmas time.

The Tuesday class produced their own full colour calendar this year with each student having their own month. These were printed at Vistaprint and each member was featured on a full colour spread which looked fantastic. Students also had the opportunity to have Christmas cards printed by a professional printer, these looked absolutely wonderful with personalised greetings inside.

Members have also covered urban sketching and architectural painting or favourite places in their choice of media. Floral studies and garden studies.

The last big project before moving online was seascapes in acrylic which all students were taking part in. This was broken down in tutored steps or members could choose from a selection of images. Unfortunately when the pandemic hit it meant the arts society closed and lessons moved online this did mean that lesson plans had to change.

Lessons then changed to a Zoom online lesson every Tuesday 1-3pm with 8 out of the 11 students interacting and being taught every single week to a structured lesson plan. Students are sent reference photos prior to the beginning of the new topic and a material list or suggested supply list if needed. The 3 out of 11 that are not joining in on Zoom are either emailed the reference photos or are sent a package of photos printed by me to work from and then emailed regularly to see how they are. The Zoom lessons are run on a business package which I fund to allow for longer lesson times.

All the students in the class painted beautiful seascapes and all emailed and interacted.

The new project for this term is 'Birds of a Feather', this is tailored for all students on and off Zoom and contact is made with all students with 8 out of the 11 on Zoom every Tuesday.

Students are also sent online tutorials, YouTube films that I have produced for other classes and societies and information from other companies, artists and businesses that I feel may be of interest to them or broaden their art education.

The Tuesday class has been a pleasure to teach and a lovely group of friends too.

**Art Charlie Ellits** - I respond to submit a short annual report during my limited time teaching the Friday am class. Unfortunately I only had 3 weeks of classes with members before Lockdown, however, I found members very welcoming, friendly and grateful for the return of a tutor and was excited with my upcoming demonstrations and activities I had planned for them .

I felt given time that this class would have grown, gaining a returning member in the first week or so. The situation is very unpredictable, but I have been keeping in touch with members during this time, offering activities, resources, tasks and such like and the response from members has been wonderful. They have been keeping me informed of their creative endeavors and achievements.

I do hope to return, when safe to do so, and welcome back my class soon.

## **Self-Help Group Reports 2020**

### **Sugarcraft Group – Pat Williams –September 2019 to March 2020**

The stalwart members of the Sugarcraft Group returned with enthusiasm in September and several projects were undertaken until the Christmas break.

The Sugarcraft Group again entered the Quiz this year and once again became the strongest team on the night (placed last, holding up the remaining teams!!!) but an enjoyable evening was had by all.

We completed a small display up to half term in February for any upcoming Exhibition and discussed a larger Exhibition project which the Group started work on.

The month of March brought about a dramatic change with the onset of lockdown due to the current pandemic and Avoncroft Arts Society having to close its doors for the foreseeable future. The Group members have been in constant contact by a WhatsApp Group and a Group Text sharing bakes, stories and thoughts during this unprecedented time. The members are happy and keen to return to the Group as soon as it is possible to do so.

We would like to thank the Trustees and everyone in the Office for the work which is being undertaken to once again bring life back to Avoncroft and that they, Tutors and all class members stay safe and well and we can return with enthusiasm soon.

### **Adventures in Embroidery – Susan Russell**

Adventures in Embroidery. What a strange year. We couldn't reach Avoncroft because of flooded roads, and then the virus kept us at home, most of us being in the vulnerable category. Fortunately, we have had our love of crafts to keep us occupied and there still isn't enough time to complete all of our unfinished projects.

We had taken the idea of birds for our group theme, and this led to 2 and 3D birds appearing. We were working on a joint project of birds on a wire which should all join together when we can eventually meet up. Some of the group with better eyesight tried beading Christmas baubles, and also there has been a Stitch journal challenge to record different types of embroidery stitches. We experimented with soluble fabric to make decorated bowls.

Some like to focus on cross stitch pictures and one member has completed a very old embroidery picture left unfinished by a relative. The group's numbers remain quite constant, and despite ups and downs in health, everyone is very happy to welcome people back as they feel able to return. The friendship and support from the group has always been a feature and this has been particularly important during lockdown, as we share emails, what's app, and photos. Between us we have sewn scrub bags, made masks, knitted jumpers for refugees, made charity quilts, and sewn and knitted for our families. One member paints a flower a day and takes a photo to share. What a lovely record of Lockdown. We are all looking forward to our reunion and a grand show and tell.

### **Art Textile Group – Kathy Hunt**

Art Textiles is a lively self-help group which meets between 10:00 and 16:00 on Thursdays twice monthly throughout the year.

Members have a broad range of skills and interests including embroidery, felt-making, mixed media, patchwork, quilting, drawing and design all of which is broadly textile based. We aim to share our ideas and interests within the group throughout the year.

We regularly schedule 'in house' workshops which occur roughly termly. This year we have explored various ways of finding new inspiration and developing designs and recording ideas in sketchbooks. Although members generally work on their own individual projects, we also generously share our skills and give each other advice and encouragement

## **Avoncroft Folk Dance Group Report 2020**

Average attendance is currently 27. Last year it was 29, and the previous year 26.

In addition to our regular Thursday evening meetings we have enjoyed several other events:

- |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 29 <sup>th</sup> June   | Summer Regency Ball at St Martin's Church in Worcester with Caller Brian Stanton and music from Cat's Whiskers.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> August  | A skittles evening and fish and chip supper at Archdales. A fun evening when Brian McMinn won a voucher for free evenings in Sept. and Margaret won ( or should it be lost?) for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year running and her prize was a voucher for free evenings in August and Stewart won the "killer" cash. |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> August | A social gathering at the home of Liz and Brian – dancing and eating.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	Workshop and Playford Ball – Callers David and Kathryn Wright with music from Patchwork.
29 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Christmas meal at the Eagle and Sun
19 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Players Club once again filled the stage with musicians for our last evening.
31 <sup>st</sup> Dec	New Year's Eve Party
4 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2020	Workshop and evening dance with Caller Roy Garrington and music by Double Trouble. Organised by Liz, and plenty of help from Team Avoncroft, we enjoyed a lovely jacket potato supper.
7 <sup>th</sup> March	Spring Dance Caller Trevor Monson with Music from Shane and Julia assisted by Chris.

And then Lockdown!

Tickets have sold well for all these events, several being sell outs, which brings a twinkle to our Treasurer's eye. Liz co-ordinates all these events, allocating tasks, and we owe her a big vote of thanks, as the evenings are well organised, and therefore enjoyed by all.

In addition, I should like to thank Team Avoncroft who just step up to the mark if they see that something needs to be done. Remaining open in July and August now seems to be a given and is appreciated by many who's clubs close at this time. The first evening was very hot, so numbers were reduced, but picked up later, leading to another twinkle in Peter's eye.

A new venture this last year has been "An English Country Dance Experience".

We contacted some of the local social clubs in the area, and were invited to go along to explain the origins of English folk dancing, give a dance demonstration and then get people to join in. We were hoping to perhaps gain more members to join us. While these evenings were fun and enjoyed by all, I'm afraid that we failed in the objective of gaining more members. Some of our members attended a Pensioners Fayre in Bromsgrove, with a similar objective in mind. The hall was crowded, a little interest shown, but no result. Thanks now: to Liz who works tirelessly on our behalf, booking callers and musicians for club nights and the Saturday events.

This is time consuming, and at times, very frustrating. We have a variety of callers, and Liz tries to please us all, but as we all know you can't please everyone all the time. Our committee works really hard on behalf of the group. We have few formal meetings, as a quick word on club evenings or an email conference seems to solve any issues. Many thanks to Dave Tomas, Dave Hill, Chris Boam and Jan Greaves (now known as the fruit platter queen) in addition to Liz and Peter. Peter has been Treasurer for quite some time, a faithful, and efficient custodian of our funds. Looking after our money as if it were his own!

We are very fortunate to have our very own club callers: Laura, Brian, Mu and Annie who always provide an interesting and enjoyable programme. This does not just happen. Planning and practising the moves in the kitchen or with marbles is very time consuming, and we are really lucky to have such devoted people. A special mention to Brian who, last Nov, when the caller was stranded by floods in Warwickshire, stepped in at the very last minute and led a very good evening. Thank you all for taking turns to provide refreshments, and to the committee who open and close the building week by week. We have a lovely atmosphere here, enjoying our dancing, but laughing a lot. May it long continue.

This report was drafted ready for presentation at the May AGM. The existing committee have agreed to remain in post for the foreseeable future, for which we are very grateful. I keep in touch with all our members on a regular basis, by email or phone. And all seem to be well although frustrated at

being so inactive. We are really looking forward to a return to dancing but are very much aware that this will be in the distant future.

Jean Sillitoe (Chair Avoncroft Folk dance Group)  
3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020

### **SITE FACILITIES MANAGER'S REPORT. – TIM DAY 2020**

- Forge, Main Hall foyer repainted. Main Hall Green Room - repair work carried out and repainted.
- Repair work to leaks from roof lights on Forge and Workshop 1 carried out. Repair work carried out to Nursery building roof. General site repairs and external painting carried out.
- Quotes obtained for car park improvement work and work on lining out the Main Hall. Projects will progress if funds allow in the coming months.
- New wooden office door has been fitted and painted.
- The Model Railway Exhibition, usually held annually in December, will no longer take place due to it not being financially viable.
- Vacated Yoga timeslot taken over by Nicola Carless for Pilates classes on Monday evenings.
- Electricians instructed to carry out annual PAT testing.
- Site cleaning and gardening continues to be carried out by Wisteria Cleaning and Gardening.
- Site was closed on 20th March 2020 due to coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (except for the Avoncroft Pre-School Nursery which was allowed to continue to operate to provide childcare for the children of key workers only during the lockdown period). A site COVID-19 Risk assessment has been carried out and necessary safety precautions and procedures are being put into place to ensure the site can be as safe as possible when it is permitted to reopen in line with Government guidelines.