



# NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2018

The Arts Society Exmoor year seems to have flown by, but feedback from members suggests that it has been a thoroughly enjoyable and illuminating programme of lectures. Several of them were on non-mainstream topics, but I lost count of the number of members who told me they had found those afternoons unexpectedly fascinating. That in moderation is surely what the Society is about, rather than just revisiting and reinforcing familiar things. We also enjoyed two outstanding and fully booked Special Interest Days, an excellent Norfolk tour, and still to come we have a trip to Sherborne incorporating John Makepeace's furniture studio.

### MEMBERSHIP

We believe that we offer great value for money, but in common with most Arts Society branches and with comparable organisations operating in a competitive world and a difficult economic climate, numbers are not quite where they were a few years ago. We work to get coverage in the local media, but we know that by far the best recruiting medium is word of mouth, so please keep encouraging friends, neighbours and newcomers to the area to join (and of course they can try us out through attendance as visitors). Please display at least one copy of the Area leaflet somewhere appropriate or give it to a potential recruit, and ask for more copies if possible.

### SUBSCRIPTION

We held this steady in 2017-18. It now increases by £1 per head for the programme of 9 lectures, plus the quarterly magazine and access to local, regional and national Arts Society events and information. Our subscription is in the middle of the range for the south-west area.

### DATA

Like all organisations we have to ask you to renew your permission to hold and use your contact details under new legislation. Please return the attached form with your renewal document. We really would like to get to the

point where more communication can take place by email and less by expensive postal paperwork (while accepting that some members don't want a computer, and perhaps even envying them a little at times).

### THE COMMITTEE

Jillie Straker and David Hannah have been co-opted with a view to their formal confirmation at the AGM in October, in the Programme Secretary and Special Interest Day roles respectively. Both have already contributed strongly to the planning of next year's programme. We continue to seek new recruits to the committee in the areas of secretarial administration and the organisation of visits and tours. Please come forward if you would be interested in learning more with a view to taking over one of those roles in the course of 2018-19.

### TOURS

The Norfolk tour has taken place successfully, though with fewer participants than we had hoped. In June 2019 (exact date to follow) we are being offered an opportunity to repeat the Purcell Club musical and historical event at Westminster Abbey. Those members who were present in 2015 still talk about it as a unique, gloriously atmospheric and memorable experience, and will I'm sure recommend it to others as well as perhaps wishing to repeat it themselves. It will make sense to build another London tour around it, quite possibly with an emphasis on south east London this time and a focus on Greenwich and Dulwich.

Beyond that, we need to get a stronger sense from members of what would make future tours attractive and viable for a larger number of people. Please talk to committee members if you have thoughts and views on this.

*Continued overleaf*

## YOUNG ARTS SPONSORSHIP

Large attendances at Special Interest Days have again enabled us to carry out our charitable purpose. In addition to further support for the Two Moors Festival and also now for the new Dunster Festival in their musical outreach work with young people, we have reaffirmed our central interest in the visual arts through a link with Contains Art at Watchet. If you are not familiar with this it is an inspiring organisation based at Watchet Marina, currently small in scale but with big plans for expansion which will bring an economic as well as cultural boost to one of the most deprived areas in the country, through the creation of a significant arts centre. I recommend their website and a visit. In the first instance we have given some funding for their professionally-staffed Kids Art Day workshops in July, and their new education officer will bring a school or youth club art project to us for potential support in the course of 2018-19.

## OTHER ARTS SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

If any member is interested in taking the lead in reviving our activity in church recording, or in the development of heritage volunteering or discovery trails for children, please get in touch. Training is provided by the national and area organisations.

Best wishes to you all for an enjoyable summer, and we look forward to seeing you at the AGM and first lecture in October.

William Rees - *Chairman*