

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE 17TH AGM OF THE ARTS SOCIETY GRANTHAM

At the completion of my final year as Chairman of The Arts Society Grantham (as it is now known) I am happy to report that our Society has had another successful season, with almost full membership - which indicates that we are providing our members with a good mix of topics in our lecture programme, visits and study days.

I cannot deny that my 3 years as Chairman have seen unusual demands of your Committee: first, the change of name of our parent organisation required the consequent change of name of our Society and all the associated administrative changes – and, second, planning for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the founding of our parent organisation has involved many members past and present. And finally, we, along with all Arts Societies, are required to recognise that on May 25 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into force.

However, thanks to the efforts of your Committee, I can report that the change in our name – including the name of our bank account - seems to have posed few difficulties for our members; and we now have 70% of the membership paying their subscriptions by standing order. In line with this embrace of available technology, the number of members accessing our website has also grown this past year. As for the GDPR we have adopted new wording on our Application Form and Renewals papers to reflect your Society's commitment to this Regulation.

Tickets are on sale now, for a lunch in the Ballroom on 19th June (after the lecture) to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our parent society. A speaker from The Arts Society headquarters, and a good proportion of the Grantham Founding Committee will be coming along. We are also celebrating this Jubilee with the Anniversary Art Award, where [five](#) local schools have each chosen an outstanding Art student to be presented with a beautiful certificate and a cash prize by your Society.

In Young Arts, this year saw a “first” for The Arts Society – the long-term archaeological dig at Croxton Kerrial has been, with your Society's support, publicised through local events including talks to three local primary schools about medieval life, its society and its artefacts. Also, we helped fund a coach trip to London for a group of GCSE students from West Grantham Academy to visit the Tate Modern and photograph the Christmas lights. This was a most rewarding project, involving a school where many of the students had never been to London before – so I'd like to see our Society involved in similar projects in the future.

Now to Committee news: we have some new faces on our Committee – for which I heartily thank the volunteers - and these changes will be put to the AGM in June. Of particular note is the filling of the positions of Vice-Chairmen and Publicity Officer: I hope you will endorse the Vice-Chairman as my replacement as Chairman at the AGM so I can retire from the committee with a clear conscience. Also, with our Publicity Officer in post, I am hopeful that our Society will receive more publicity locally. Last but not least, we thank Christina Thompson for her sterling efforts as Visits Organiser over the past 3 years; and for her help in finding a volunteer to fill this role in June.

The trip to Barcelona last November was a great success, despite it happening right in the middle of the independence breakaway by the Catalan government. You will have seen many photos both in the pre-lecture PowerPoints and on our website.

As we normally do, this year began with a welcome for new members in the Newton Room in September, followed later in the year by our Christmas celebration. These events are a good way for members to meet other members, and I hope will continue to encourage more volunteering and discussion of ideas for lectures and other activities. Finally, I would like to thank the Membership for your kindness during my tenure: with such support, our Society cannot fail to thrive!