



DAN AGM EDITION – Chair’s Report



Another unusual year! Your committee has maintained monthly meetings, the majority of which have been on Zoom and a wide variety of subjects have been covered including John Sewell, a recent intern at the Barber Institute promoting artists in his virtual exhibition space, a talk by committee member **Claire Hilton** on Therapeutic Art and Art Therapy, a virtual visit to **Colin Jack’s** observatory where we were treated to a close look at the moon and Jupiter, and the virtual “Call My Bluff” contest against Droitwich Probus 87. Some of our Zoom meetings were recorded, always with the knowledge of participants, which means that you never need to miss a meeting.

We have continued to take an active role within the arts community and the highlight of our year has definitely been the creation of a community hub in the centre of the town. **Rhys Jones** has worked tirelessly on this project from the initial negotiations with MAPP and liaising with the centre manager culminating in a wonderful community arts space. Rhys was supported by several members of DAN when it came to preparing the space for exhibiting and meetings – thank you for this help. We had an excellent response for a request for bunting representing all the skills within DAN which was an interesting talking point for visitors. The Hub opened its doors on the 25th June when local MP Nigel Huddleston visited and was very impressed with the space. Covid-19 delayed the formal opening until 13th August.

The space was sufficiently large and airy for social distancing to take place and as soon as it was legal to do so it was used for meetings, workshops and of course for exhibiting the wonderful work of DAN members. It also providing a platform for live music from our talented in-house musicians. We were obviously far too successful in making The Hub attractive and welcoming as it soon took the eye of a business wanting to rent the space. However, we have been offered another unit in the town centre and hope to be up and running again in the spring. The Hub was a great success and I have no doubt that our new home will prove equally successful.

Very sadly one of our particularly talented and supportive members, **Graham Wilson**, died in November last year. His great sense of humour and huge variety of artistic skills together with his support and friendship will be very much missed. We are planning a retrospective exhibition of Graham’s work and we will also be awarding an eponymous annual trophy.

Some damage appeared on the Historic Droitwich Mural and **Kate Pullen** very kindly came forward when a request was made for a ceramicist to return the mural to its recently renovated glory. I contacted the original designer, Phillipa Threlfall and she was happy for someone local to take on the repair but thought that getting accurate colours would be very difficult and would be happy to offer advice. Kate had no problems and when I sent photos of the completed work to Phillipa she was very impressed and said she could not have done it any better herself - praise indeed.

Our bank account has been moved from HSBC to Metro Bank which avoided the imposition of charges by HSBC. This new account allows our Treasurer to see transactions at the click of a mouse, and makes it much easier to pay members when they make sales at one of our exhibition sites.

Easy Fundraising. Please consider using this when you are buying items on line as it is an easy way (as it says in the title!) to raise funds for DAN at no cost to you.

We donated £30 to the British Legion Poppy Appeal and a Saturday workshop open to the public in The Hub was followed by our October DAN meeting at The Hub where we prepared two wreaths. I laid one on Remembrance Sunday and we have one ready for later this year and we will of course give another donation.

DAN continues to sponsor the Karen Moore Creative Writing Competition at Droitwich High School which is becoming a valuable part of the school’s curriculum. The number of applications is increasing – over 60 last year – more boys are now taking part and the overall standard is excellent. It is definitely a very worthwhile project for DAN to sponsor. Karen Moore and I do the initial judging and then an external judge has the final say. It was great to have the opportunity to display the work of the winner and the three highly commended pupils at The Hub during the summer holidays.

Towards the end of last year exhibition spaces in the small local venues became available and we are negotiating some additional spaces and await confirmation from the owners. Park's is under new owners and they are happy to continue to display art work.

Art on the Station is an exciting project but I have been disappointed with the lack of interest in submitting work to be displayed. There has also been a poor response to the request for ideas for the programme. The committee has plenty of its own ideas but hoped you would like to have some input for 2022. We plan to have meetings on alternate 2nd Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the year and hope this variety will allow more members to take part in meetings. This is your society and your committee want you to feel an integral part of it.

Finally, I would like to give a huge thank you to all the committee members for their exceptionally hard work and support for DAN over this last difficult year. There has been a great deal of thinking outside the box to make sure the Network has continued to thrive and through the excellent Newsletter and our constant meetings we have done our best to keep you entertained and informed. I am sure we are all looking forward to a more normal year ahead when we can eventually return to meeting face to face and participate in music, workshops and wide-ranging conversations. Warmest good wishes to you all, Helen

DAN AGM Report

Members met on Zoom on 20th January to hear reports from the Committee on the achievements and work of our group over the year and also to elect the Committee for the next year.

We are delighted to welcome **Derek Webster** to the committee. Derek says *"I was born in Liverpool at an early age. In junior school I was lucky enough to be in a class where five or six boys loved drawing. We all drew birds mainly until Tommy Metcalfe brought in his drawing of Ursula Andress in her bikini from Doctor No. This widened our artistic horizons. I really enjoy studying art history and now retired, can set about becoming a better painter. I paint in acrylics and still love pencil drawing."*



All committee member were voted in en bloc. Members are advised that the committee still has opportunities to join them and if you are interested, please contact Helen [here](#).

A message to the AGM was received from **Mike Johns** and **Ian Peden**: "I would like to say how much we enjoyed playing in the Hub although it was a bit lonely at times. We can be heard in the Baptist Church on the 1st Saturday in each month where we try to create a relaxed musical atmosphere at the Lions Booksale. We look forward to hearing about the new Hub in due course."

The AGM was followed by a very interesting 'Show and Tell' section, which allowed members to describe their new projects in the New Year.

DAN Provisional Programme for 2022

We intend to hold the first part of the year on Zoom in the hope that we can resume face to face meeting later.

- **Wednesday 9th February** – Wendy will show us an underpainting using her new Art Graf pigment blocks and after experimenting beforehand, will share with us her findings. **Wendy Simmons**
- **Thursday 10th March** - Looking Sketchy
- **Wednesday 13th April** – Sculpting workshop
- **Sunday 10th April** - Photo walk at sunset. Meet at 6.45 Chapel House **Rhys Jones**
- **Thursday 12th May** - Art demo. **Colin Jack**
- **Wednesday 8th June** - En Plain Air followed by visit to pub
- **Thursday 14th July** - Art demo with **Lyn Davies**
- **August tbc** - Visit to Museum of Carpet, Kidderminster
- **Wednesday 14th September** - Poetry Evening lead by former Worcester poet laureate **Nina Lewis** and International poetry winner **Colin Jack**
- **October 19th/20th** - Published crime thriller author **Carla Buckley**
- **Wednesday November 9th** - Workshop. Christmas wreath for door. **Amanda Coldridge**
- **Thursday 8th December** - Play reading and light refreshments

There is also an Art Auction to be discussed and organised. You will remember our Art Demonstration by renowned artist Tom Shepherd last March when we were treated to a watercolour demo. The subject for this demo was a green winged macaw which Tom chose because it had a bit more of an unusual pose. After the demo Tom donated two of his wonderful watercolours to our group with the understanding that some of the proceeds would go to boost our coffers and a donation made to charity. We are not able to offer any details at the moment but watch this space!



FREE ART MATERIALS with Creative Friends! Sign on deadline extended.

What is Creative Friends?

Looking for something to do during the winter months? Want the flexibility to create where and when it suits you? Want to express yourself creatively that brings a purpose? Then this project is for you!



Age UK Worcester and Malvern Hills invites you to join an exciting FREE intergenerational project that allows you to connect creatively with others from your local community. Whether you are an individual, community group, care home or school, everyone can become a Creative Friend.

Age UK Worcester & Malvern Hills are delighted to partner with Spare Room Arts, Worcestershire County Council, Action For Children and Starting Well Partnership to launch the Creative Friends project. This project connects different generations together to provide companionship and meaningful activities this winter.

Sarah Edwards is an artist on this new project and introduces Creative Friends. She says *“Anyone can get involved! And we would love to hear from you! Art materials will be dropped to your door and full instruction and guidance given throughout. If you would like to sign up you can follow the link below or you can contact me at hello@spareroomarts.co.uk - I would LOVE to hear from you!”* Contact Sarah at her email address or phone 01684 560666. **DEADLINE NOW EXTENDED FOR DAN MEMBERS, TO 4TH FEBRUARY!!**

POETRY CORNER

Thank you to everyone who sent in their rather splendid poems. Very interesting all!

Hopefully there are more poems nestling in our membership just waiting to be unleashed here, so we are extending poetry corner for another month. I just need one of your poems with your name to show in the coming newsletters, send by email, my address is [HERE](#). **Last day for receipt is 27th February.**

Liz Ross ... saw the request for poems in the DAN Newsletter and thought she would share the attached written recently.

Our house is on fire

Seems our old men dream
dream of gone times not known
their heritage stone safe havens

Seems our young women see visions
upside thinking, re-imagining coming times

Seems our daughters and sons prophesy.....

(Y)our house is on fire
tarry ye not in the gone times
the coming times are here, there
now...and now....and now.....

Liz Ross,

with credit to Acts ch.2 and Greta Thunberg

Clare Knighton ... Here's one I wrote last year, hope you like it, Thanks and happy new year!

All is well

Darkness is just that, dark
But know this, the light will always follow
All is well,
Spring is moments away
New life and colour returns again
All is well,
Night is just that, night
Soon to be followed by the light of day
All is well

Clare Knighton 2021

Karen Read sent in the following poem.

Olympic Heroes

This week's Olympics was gold
 Up with the lark and cold
 Brownlow twin was bold
 Equalling your brother never old
 Droitwich lad and lass were glorious
 Winning medals victorious
 Athletics was awash with rainy starts
 Everyone could still take part
 Covid forgotten as we cheered at home
 Watching under the Olympic Dome
 Five circles all connected
 Barriers of thoughts of race, politics, gender, disability rejected
 United for a moment
 Under beautiful Mount Fuji majestically dormant

Colin Jack says, "one of those poems which wrote themselves. For my dad, when we thought he was dying [he wasn't; the old devil lived another 18 years] about a trip with him to the May Island, off the coast of my home town of Anstruther; about the depth of memories, we all carry with us"

The Herring Gulls

You taught me to pick up crabs. Pull in flickers of silver
 with a bent pin at the pier's end. Which way was the Pole Star
 And how to box the compass.
 [Did every bearing point us to this room?].

Remember the path we took along the cliff top?
 In the distance the herring boats, trailing their flock of gulls
 [Like the past, and me thinking then, how far was the future.]
 Beneath our feet the rumoured bones of Celtic saints
 Buried deep as memories.
 And that one gull circling above us,
 crying a warning, swooping too close for comfort.

Memories trail us, like the gulls in the path of the fisherman.
 They follow us everywhere
 Crying from our wake, stabbing and pecking for attention.
 [They are in this room,
 Though the doctor cannot hear them, busy with his stethoscope.]
 They fill the air with their cries,
 I cannot breathe for them.

Gulls circled the rock pools where you taught me to swim.
 Hold on to me.
 Hold on. I am still not ready for the sea.
 I can swim strongly in the shallows of the here and now
 It is the past which is too deep, and drowns me.

The gull still wheels around our heads
 Father
 On the cliffs in the long grass. And you and I are there
 With the spray and the gannets,
 With the seals and the cormorants
 We are there
 With the dead Saints, and the herring boat's flock.

Stuart Bourne says "I often create an image to 'go with' my writing, which I have also included"

Ask Alice

The rabbit's running, and it's already late,
 No time for choice, or dead belief,
 Just follow the rabbit, feel the heavens
 rotate,
 And in the rejection of choice, find some
 relief

The yearning temptation, to just be,
 To greedily accept the looking glass,
 And in the reflected image see,
 The lost content, which would soon now
 pass.

Such is being, and the command to be,
 Of all that follows stars and dust,
 The light before dawn, which I can see,
 And the atoms dancing in prescient lust.
 Stewart Bourne

