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***SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2015***

Summer began for the Friends with the AGM in April, when I was re-elected as Chair, Philip Hollobone was re-elected as President (and subsequently as MP for Kettering) and the committee was augmented by the election of Maurice Bayes (former borough councillor) and David Brown. We also now have Cllrs Jan Smith and Dave Soans as Borough Council nominees on the committee.

We are glad that Emma Buckler is still the Cultural & Leisure Services Manager, and Katie Boyce the gallery officer, but had to farewell Ellie Baumber as museum officer as she has moved to a good post in Welwyn-Hatfield. Ellie left her mark, as the museum won several prizes in the Northants County Museums & Historic Houses awards, including **Heritage Site of the Year!**

Heritage Map

The hand-drawn Heritage Map of Kettering, which was introduced at the AGM, is now on view in the **Newlands Centre, Kettering railway station, and Kettering Library** (this last provided by the Friends of Kettering Library). A print version has been presented to the Borough Council and there are plans for it to be placed at various other locations around the town. We are also looking at ways to merchandise the map and incorporate it in publicity material about the Gallery & Museum.

Open Studios

 We continue to assist the Borough Council in the restoration of some Alfred East paintings. Our next project is to help fund restoration of paintings by Frank Jowett, who was Chairman of Kettering & District Art Society (KDAS) for several years. Fundraising for this will be by way of a Prize Draw during the **Northants Open Studios Trails** from 29 August to 26 September. NOST has always been a major event in the arts world locally and this year, after a hiatus, is being organised by the Kettering Borough Council.

The NOST includes a **Big Paint** event, a **Little Draw** event, and of course the **Trails,** which take you to artists’ studios all over the county during the following month. A **Studio Award** will be presented for the best studio. **Prize Draw** tickets will be on sale for the whole month, at the studios on the trails and in the Gallery and Museum as well as from Friends’ committee members. The Prize Draw will take place on Saturday **26th September**, when the Studio Award and other prizes will also be awarded.

Brochures about the Open Studios can be picked up at the Gallery or Museum and at venues around the county.

The Friends are helping the NOST in a number of ways, including sponsoring the Studio Award and the Little Draw and organising the Prize Draw, and every member is urged to support this worthwhile activity. In particular, we need volunteers to help on the **Launch Day, Sat 29th August from 11.0am to 4.0pm** at the Manor House Gardens. Anyone who can lend a hand on that day please contact our secretary Barb Lewis on 01536 516955, or by e-mail to [*barbara.a.lewis@ntlworld.com*](mailto:barbara.a.lewis@ntlworld.com)*.*

Talks

We have had 2 evening talks since the AGM – one by Ian Addis on the history of Kettering’s playgrounds and parks, and one by David Boswell on Robert Kitson, a major patron of the arts with connections to Alfred East.

Our talks resume in September, but please note that they will be on the **3rd Wednesday in future, not the 3rd Thursday.** The first one will be on Wed 16th September at 7.30 and will be an account by Sian Brown of her work on the Heritage Map (see below). On October 21st Sandra de Laszlo will talk about her grandfather, the portrait painter Philip de Laszlo. On November 18th Steve Sharpe will talk about local archeological finds.

Outings

The Friends have been out and about since the AGM, with a stand at the Newlands Centre during half term, a stall in the market area during the Ladies Cycle Tour in June (see photo) and a stall at Naseby battlefield during the Naseby centenary weekend in June. We also had a very successful trip to **Stow on the Wold and Upper Swell,** to see some of the scenes that Alfred East painted, and to learn about the history of Stow, including the last battle of the Civil War. This outing was a joint one with Kettering Civic Society and we were warmly welcomed by the Stow & District Civic Society (see photo). We are glad to be developing links with the Civic Society, as well as with KDAS.

Further information on all Friends’ activities and events is available on our website at [*www.friendskagam.org*](http://www.friendskagam.org/)*.* There are links to Twitter and Facebook and to our blogsite at [*www.ketteringartnews.blogspot.co.uk*](http://www.ketteringartnews.blogspot.co.uk)*.* We look forward to seeing you at the Open Studios events and at the talks in the autumn. Meanwhile, we hope you have a very good summer.

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