

## REPORT FROM THE GALLERY UPSTAIRS FOR THE AGM.

For the year 2020

It won't surprise you to know that there was not much activity in The Gallery Upstairs for 2020. The year started off normally with re-decoration of the gallery and re-boarding one of the walls to create more storage. The opening exhibition in mid-January by Broadstone Art Society was very successful, and was followed by lovely exhibition of wildlife paintings by Caroline Winkle. In February the Extreme Team of Liz Magee, Norma Rawlings, Marylyn Cropley and Barry Kavanagh along with Tracey Chambers were lucky to be able to hold their eclectic show, the only shadow being that John Bowen was unable to open it due to his rapidly failing health. Bournemouth Bay were able to fit in their exhibition next, but by the time Optic Nerve with Sally Holland and Pam Marshall opened, the writing was on the wall and the show had to close after a week. And that was that.

During the summer some members of the GUS committee and PEDAS Trustees were able to work on the project Birds of Our Shoreline resulting in the fabulous overhead display in the tunnel leading to the courtyard. Management at Upton Country Park had long thought this was a dark and uninviting entrance, so members of Poole and East Dorset Art Society and the Gallery committee were asked for their help. The resulting display is part of the Upton Country Park Discovery Project.

With the help of staff from "Birds of Poole Harbour", PEDAS artists identified some of the iconic birds of this area, and the project "Birds of our Shoreline" was under way. The artists drew out scale drawings of birds in flight, cut out life-sized outlines on foam board which were then transposed by the group "Poole Men in Sheds" onto MDF and carefully cut out. The birds range in size from the tiny kingfisher to the magnificent black backed gull with its one and a half metre wingspan.

Four more birds are in process of being added, and identification board is being prepared to add to the display. We are hoping for an official launch sometime soon and will keep you posted. Four more birds have recently been added, making a total of sixteen in all.

With great excitement we were able to open again in October with PEDAS's autumn exhibition "A Breath of Fresh Air" and we enjoyed being back in the gallery and getting to grips with disinfecting, recording, marshalling the crowds (well, more than ten visitors) and not recognising people in their face masks. Alas, in rolled the second wave and we had to close again until December when the LEAF Charity Open exhibition attracted many entries and many sales, until we locked the doors once again just before Christmas. The doors would not open again until mid-May, when our exhibition for Dorset Art Weeks kicked off the 2021 season.

Just because the gallery was quiet, rest assured that your committee has not been idle. Much booking, cancelling, re-booking and booking again to be done, and risk assessments and covid safety measures to plan. Negotiations over the Licence to Occupy have been ongoing as you will read in our Chair's report.

The Gallery is fully booked for the rest of the year, mainly giving a second chance to all those who have missed out, and there is a long waiting list for next year to be sorted out. We are keeping our fingers and toes crossed!