

2016- 2017

YEAR 1



**UPDATE ON
THE FRIENDS YEAR**



**LOOKING BACK
AT EXHIBITIONS**



**PRIORY VOLUNTEERS
TALK ABOUT VISITORS**

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE WILLIAMSON & PRIORY FRIENDS



WILLIAMSON AND
PRIORY FRIENDS

A fabulous first year for the new charity

The work of the Williamson and Priory Friends in supporting the Wirral Museums Service is for public benefit, as defined within the Charity Commission guidance and the Charity has complied with its duty in this respect under Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006. The essential education work of the museums service has strong and compelling public benefit. The work in culture, art, music and heritage has wide beneficial impact in both social and economic terms for the population as a whole and, especially in terms of enhancing well-being, for many people in need.



More inside about the major project undertaken by the charity - the development of the courtyard at the heart of the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum

Eight excellent reasons for being a Williamson and Priory Friend:

- Help safeguard our cultural assets - joining shows that you are part of a caring community
- Receive invitations to private views - be the first to see the latest exhibitions in good company with a glass of wine
- Help fund the stuff that otherwise wouldn't happen e.g. the popular young people's activities and the Sunday Serenades
- Explore cultural venues further afield, in the company of like-minded people, through the Friends' outings
- Enjoy discounts in the Williamson's fabulous shops and café, as well as from other local businesses
- Help to provide moral (and sometimes practical) support to the dedicated and talented staff team
- Be one of the first to know what's on at the Williamson and Priory thanks to regular newsletters
- Help to buy artefacts and works of art to enrich the Gallery and Priory collections



Williamson & Priory Friends



To join the Williamson and Priory Friends, please email wpfmemsec@gmail.com for a membership or renewal form. It is possible to pay by standing order. The Friends' year runs from January to December.

Chair's report

Lawrence Holden

It has been a busy and lively year with a constant 'buzz' of activity at the Williamson and the Priory.

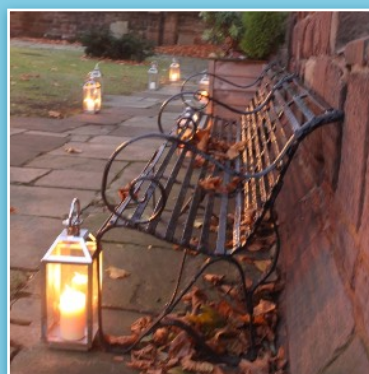
Contrary to the impression many have, the Friends are not responsible for managing either venue. This is the job of the **Wirral Museums Service** and is carried out by Colin Simpson and team on desperately meagre resources. What they manage to achieve is great value for money. Our role, as Friends, is to support and encourage. Activities are backed up by a diversity of 'behind the scenes' support. The contributions of many people with a passion for art and heritage bring a vital spirit to the scene.

Naturally we look ahead. We wish to see both venues playing a fuller part in the culture of our region. We have worked for four years to seek a good framework for this. With **The Green Gallery**, we have proved that we can make things happen and raise money. Activity of this kind is needed on a bigger scale. Clarity on the Council's ambition is also vital. As Wirral's latest reviews and consultations move on we will press vigorously for a good agreement so that we can maximise our contribution.

Many thanks to the many who have worked so hard.



Williamson & Priory Friends



A year of learning through our talks programme, involvement with other organisations and funders and finally, lots of fun with FRIENDS at the Williamson and Priory

Message from the Wirral Museums Service for the Williamson Art Gallery

Jo Burns - development manager

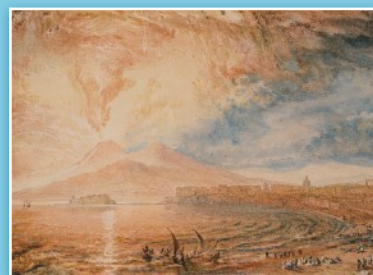
In the last 12 months, Williamson Art Gallery and Museum attracted 5,000 more visitors than the same period last year. We have had more than 40,000 visitors, which is a number that we have not achieved since the 1990s.

Exhibition highlights from the year included Bugsy Malone, our second show from BAFTA and the inspiration for another amazing gala night organised by the Friends. East Meets West, showcasing the work of local textile designer Mr Sushil Datta for the first time. Finally The Dinner Party exhibition had two guest curators and included loans from National Museums Liverpool, The Atkinson, Victoria Gallery & Museum at the University of Liverpool and very many private collections.



During the year, we have made a number of loans including 'The Poacher' by William Henry Hunt to the Courtauld Gallery in London; a George Jardine oil to the Royal West of England Academy in Bristol; Albert Moore's 'Seagulls' to galleries in Amsterdam and York, and a Herbert Davis Richter oil to the Peabody Museum in Salem, USA and the V&A in London.

The Williamson Art Gallery & Museum



An exciting year of exhibitions with watercolours, oils and photography representing local, national and internationally known artists.

Birkenhead Priory - Message from the Priory volunteers

Angela Anderson

In 2017, volunteers at **Birkenhead Priory** welcomed streams of visitors, answered more questions and probably swept up many more leaves than anyone predicted at the start of the year and now the Priory, which used to be described as the hidden gem in downtown Birkenhead, is a secret no longer!

Visitors spanned the globe from New Brighton to New Zealand: a mother and son from Latvia, unaware of Henry VIII and the dissolution of the monasteries, were fired up to find out more after being entranced by the Priory site.

Italians in Liverpool for just one day selected the Priory above all other attractions to visit, and were thrilled with what they saw and, during Heritage Open Week, the Priory was the most visited Wirral attraction after Port Sunlight. In the same month the Archbishop of York chose to visit the Chapter House during his UK pilgrimage.

The Priory was proud to win the North West area's coveted Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Building Conservation category for recent renovation work.

And a new Priory twitter account was launched featuring the musings of the lovable Brother Tom.

But it was the visitors who made the year, including Margaret, aged 94, visiting for the first time since she was a teenage bell ringer at St Mary's Church. She shared her many happy memories with delighted volunteers and staff.

And nine-year-old Emily who brings her family on regular visits to the Priory which she loves so much. She was moved to write:

"Birkenhead Priory is the best place on earth. You are the best, you don't need to change one bit."



Birkenhead Priory & St Mary's Tower



The Priory volunteers and staff are praised continually in reviews on TripAdvisor and clearly, the guided tours add to the visitors enjoyment and understanding of the site.

Education offer through the Wirral Museums Service

Kathy Heywood

This academic year, the learning offer at the Gallery and Priory has continued to grow. We now have a number of different themed tours and workshops on each site, delivered by the learning officer with support from staff and volunteers.

A number of events have also been popular this year, including 1,200 pupils attending Altru Theatre company's 'Wind in the Willows'. Altru return in December for their production of Robin Hood.

We continue to grow the Arts Award offer and to date have helped 158 young people achieve their award from Trinity College London.

This year, we worked with artist Joseph Venning to create the Transformation Station through a project through the Museums Association looking at connecting museums collections with their audience.

For 2017-2018, Animal Encounters exhibition will be a new opportunity to work with schools in close partnership with Chester Zoo.

All fun and games in the education team of one!

Wirral Museums Service education offer for schools



The exhibitions and collections are used as educational platforms to lead special tailored made visits for school parties of all ages.



**Artsmark
Partner**

Supporting cultural education, endorsed by Arts Council England



Friends' Outings- Corinne Whitham and Mike Studley

In its second year, the revived programme of outings by Williamson and Priory Friends (previously Friends of the Williamson and Wirral Museums) to other venues of cultural interest again proved a success. Groups visited Liverpool Medical Institution in May, the Alphonse Mucha 'In Quest of Beauty' exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery in June and took a coach trip to Saltaire UNESCO World Heritage Site in September. Our programme of visits for 2018 is currently being put together, based on the suggestions received from Friends at the open afternoon and social in November.

Sunday Serenades & other concerts - Alison Bailey Smith

The Williamson and Priory Friends, through organiser Gethyn Jones, were pleased to welcome another array of wonderful performers to Gallery Four at the Williamson for the Summer Serenades Programme from May to August 2017. In addition to the many musicians returning to delight visitors, we welcomed many new performers. With classical and jazz music, orchestras and soloists performing every Sunday afternoon for three months, it was a very popular activity amongst our members.

Sadly, costs have risen and donations at the events have not. In previous years, the cost of hosting these concerts has been "cost neutral" for the charity, this year the programme has cost the charity around £1000. We do encourage donations at each event into the donation boxes on entrance or exit. The trustees would also like to see more support of the cafe before the events, as attendees often group in the cafe without making a purchase. All Friends should remember that hot drinks for Friends are discounted by the cafe on production of the green membership card.

Friends Activities



Many thanks to all our performers who were part of the Summer Serenades or individual events like the marvellous piano recital from David Braid from Canada.

Bugsy Malone Gala - Alison Bailey Smith

On the 10th of February 2017, paying guests stepped in to the Williamson to step out for an evening of music and dancing. The Williamson Art Gallery was delighted to be hosting its second exhibition, showing the photographic images taken behind the scenes during the making of the classic film Bugsy Malone.

The event celebrated friendship and collaboration, with the return of the Speakeasy Bootleg Band, the vocal trio The Night and Days and more, with fabulous catering and a Charleston lesson with Mersey Swing. The event, once all expenses were covered, raised more than £700 for The Green Gallery.

The event would not have been possible without days and hours of volunteer time and the co-ordination and support of the staff.

Williamson Talks - Alison Bailey Smith

The Friends have had a great range of talks tying in with the programme at the Williamson in 2016-2017, including tours of exhibitions with curators, academics and artists. This year, we even had a demonstration of yoga from one of our more agile exhibitors, Mr Sushil Datta who also gave a colourful talk within his exhibition looking at his fabric and wallpaper designs. Many thanks to Dr Hana Leper within the A Room of One's Own exhibition who spoke about female artists who represented the bedsits of Bloomsbury including Vanessa Bell, to Gabriella Warren-Smith and Colin Simpson gave two animated tours of The Dinner Party exhibition with insight from John Gorman. We also thank our own Colin Simpson who spoke about Wallasey surrealist - George Jardine and also gave a personal response to the Williamson's extensive collection of watercolours. The Williamson Talks opened 2017 with a presentation from Stephen Whittle -curator from The Atkinson who spoke about the combined collections of watercolours in Tinted Steam and Liquid Light. We are so grateful to all who have given their time freely.

The Friendly Gala & Williamson Talks



Many thanks to all our talented performers & speakers - we are very grateful for you sharing your skills to an appreciative audience.



Make and Explore -Nicola McGovern

Our Make & Explore workshops for Under 5s, engaged 136 families (180 children) during the period. Targeting families facing disadvantage, many of our participants had not been to the gallery before and have now become regular visitors. We also delivered outreach workshops in partnership with Birkenhead Early Excellence and Foundation Years Trust. Families receive 'Make & Explore at Home' booklets to support development at home. Supported by funding from Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Inside Outside - Summer Workshops- Cathy Warren

The theme for this year's Summer Art workshops was inspired by the development of The Green Gallery. Thanks to a successful application by the Williamson and Priory Friends to the **Big Lottery Fund**, supported by Wirral Methodist Housing Association, more than 400 people of all ages attended workshops led by professional artists in community spaces around Birkenhead, in an empty shop in the town centre and in the Williamson Art Gallery.

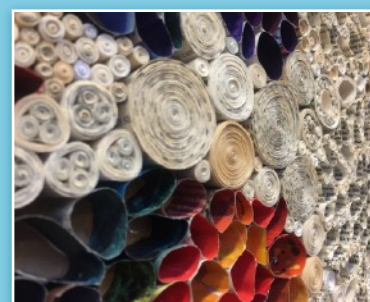
Drop in workshops - Alison Bailey Smith

The Friends were delighted that the **PH Holt Foundation** was able to fund the twice-monthly, free drop in family workshops at the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum for part of 2016 -2017. When the funding came to an end, the baton was taken up by the Williamson and Priory Friends. The project aims to encourage active involvement from all the family, whatever age they are. The Williamson is aware that families come in all varieties. Pamela Sullivan and her helpers are very resourceful and try to use recycled materials wherever possible. Through social media the message is always that, although these workshops are free, donations are welcomed as every penny of extra cash helps to purchase more consumables. The workshops can attract up to 200 people in any one session and we welcome appropriate volunteers who can support the team, as it can be very tiring as well as fulfilling. Pam often has school students completing Duke of Edinburgh awards assisting her with the classes.



Many thanks to all helpers who get stuck in a get messy with the best of them!

Educational support through the FRIENDS



Many thanks to our funders



Purchases and Prizes 2016-2017

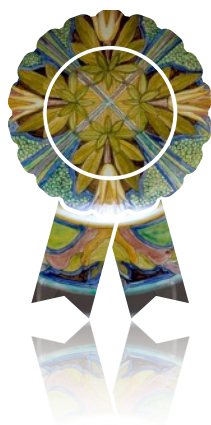
The Friends have funded two purchases for the Gallery this year - a secure box for mail for Friends correspondence and the plants for Wirral in Bloom (for which the Williamson had received an ADVANCED award), to provide additional visual appeal to the green space in front of the gallery. A small working group of Williamson and Priory Friends also provided the expertise and muscle power to plant them along with some young volunteers.

In addition, the Friends provided a prize of £50 for the **Williamson Open** exhibition.

Thank you to our supporters

Many thanks to the **Oxton Artists** (for their ongoing support and donations from their sales at the highly successful annual **Oxton Art Fair**) and to the **Wirral Society of Arts** (for the support from their committee and attendees of their successful member's exhibition).

We are grateful, too, for the efforts of all those who have volunteered their time at openings, events or outreach and who have 'cascaded' information about the events at both the Gallery and the Priory on social media.



The Green Gallery - David Ainsley and Jane Horton

At the heart of the Williamson Art Gallery building is a large courtyard which for many years has lain disused and overgrown with weeds, an unused space with great potential.

The Friends have now transformed this lost space into a landscaped courtyard, our '**Green Gallery**'. Soon, all visitors to the gallery will be free to sit amidst plants and trees and enjoy outdoor sculpture. The café will be able to offer seating and tables in the calm of the courtyard, and we will be able to hold small musical concerts. Visiting groups of schoolchildren will be able to eat their packed lunches, wedding parties may take their photographs.

The project was designed by Peter Gommon and David Ainsley. The £50,000 cost of the garden was met by generous donations from nine charitable trusts and an enthusiastic response from Friends and members of the public.

The contributing trusts were:

- Aviva Charities Trust
- Bathgate Trust
- Blankstone
- Leslie and Dorothy Blond Award Trust
- Camden Trust
- The Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund
- JHG Coney Trust
- Postcode Lottery
- Riversdale Trust

We have to thank **Ainsley Gommon Architects** for their patience in running the contract and **Landstruction** for carrying out the work to timetable and within their estimate. Additional financial support and advice was provided by **Wirral Borough Council**.

Many thanks to all our supporters who have given a little or given a larger sum - from a great suggestion - a big project has grown and been made possible by contributions from many sources.



The Quad becomes The Green Gallery



Press officer's report for Nov 16 - Oct 2017

Alison Bailey Smith

The Williamson and Priory have been continuously promoted throughout the year on the websites, blogs and social and print media, including a monthly newsletter. Events are regularly shared through listing services.

This year, I have become a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and renewed my membership of the Arts Marketing Association.

I've been grateful for the support of Anna Pierce Hayes who compiles our press cuttings and posters (please ask to view) as well as our sharers, who cascade our information to the masses.

With more events than ever this year to promote and at least 25 exhibitions, my voluntary role of community relations officer often crosses over with my paid role and it has been useful to get more involved through various networking events for attractions in the Liverpool City Region, creating greater links between the Wirral Museums Service and other organisations in the area. It has been evident recently that we are attracting more first-time visitors for special events or workshops.

Freelance Press Officer for the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and Birkenhead Priory.

Voluntary Community Relations Officer for the Williamson & Priory Friends
Shortlisted as Wirral Tourism Star of the year 2017 Wirral Tourism Awards
Shortlisted Wirral Volunteer Team of the Year 2017 Wirral Tourism Awards

Communications online and in print



Where the money goes:

November 2016 - October 2017- Jane Horton

The Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery and Wirral Museums bank accounts were closed and new accounts opened for **Williamson and Priory Friends**. £28,527 was transferred from general funds and £17,800 transferred from restricted funds.

The Quad/ The Green Gallery appeal was most successful and we raised nearly £35,000 in additional income towards the project. In addition to major contributions from established charities, the Friends and gallery visitors donated generously to the collection boxes at the gallery and through the **JustGiving** website. We will be able to claim gift aid on many of the donations. The Friendly Gala (Bugsy Malone) raised £700.

For the first time, the **Summer Serenades** were not self-funding and showed a £1,000 deficit.

Membership income increased by £1,000, reflecting increased membership numbers and donations made with subscriptions. Most members have declared their eligibility for gift aid and an increasing number pay by standing order. This helps considerably with managing the membership accounts.

The £17,800 balance of the restricted funds for the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation Art Play** programme were carried forward and a small surplus at the end of the planned project (December 2017) meant that it could continue into February 2018. During the year, we received funds mostly from a Lottery grant for the **Inside/Outside** project, and a grant from **P H Holt** for the Family Drop In classes.

All in all, a most successful and encouraging financial year. A summary table is shown above in this report and the full Financial Statements are available from the **Friends** page on the Williamson website www.williamsonartgallery.org (About Friends).

Summary of income and expenditure account for the period ended 31 October 2017	
Unrestricted	Income 2017
Transfer from FoWAG	£28,527
Admin	£200
Gift Aid	£2,217
Memberships	£6,760
Donations general	£3,929
Priory	£1,069
Hosting previews 2016	£191
Serenades	£2,039
Visits	£640
BAFTA Gala	£1,406
Quad garden	£34,426
	£81,405
	Spend 2017
Admin	£1,740
Memberships	£806
Priory	£371
Gallery purchases	£208
Hosting previews 2016	£1,175
Publicity	£8,887
Serenades	£3,087
Visits	£612
BAFTA Gala	£1,406
Quad garden	£35,857
Inside/Outside	£500
	£54,650
Operating surplus (unrestricted)	£26,755
Restricted funds	Income 2017
Art Play (Paul Hamlyn)	£17,800
Inside/Outside	£8,200
Family Drop in	£3,450
	£29,450
	Spend 2017
Art Play (Paul Hamlyn)	£14,731
Inside/Outside	£8,197
Family Drop in	£300
	£23,228
Operating surplus (restricted)	£6,222

Williamson and Priory Friends

Membership update - Patricia Foden

Number of Members	525
New members	75
Members paying by Standing Order	279
Members receiving information by email (approx.)	404
Members receiving information by post	121
Members agreeing to Gift Aid	340

Geographical location of Members

Wirral	496
Chester	6
Liverpool	13
Other	10

In addition to the discount available at the two sites for FRIENDS, there are also discounts from art supply shops and local framers.

- Jackson & Son –
- 20, Slater Street, Liverpool, L1 4BS
- Rennie's –
- 61-63, Bold Street, Liverpool, L1 4EZ
- Framework –
- 7, The Rake Precinct, Bromborough, CH62 7AD.
- Tapleys –
- 6, The Village, Bebington, CH63 7PW

W&PF
WILLIAMSON AND
PRIORY FRIENDS

**Discounts and benefits for FRIENDS
within the Williamson Art Gallery and
Birkenhead Priory from April 2017**

Oxton Books
10% discount offered to
"Friends"
www.oxtonbooks.co.uk/

ArtFix Art Supplies
10% discount offered to
"Friends"

**Williamson or Priory
Shop**
10% discount offered to
"Friends" when spending over
£10

**The Williamson
CAFE**
50p discount on hot drinks
offered to "Friends"

**Present your Friends membership card
for your discount**
WILLIAMSON & PRIORY FRIENDS
c/o Williamson Art Gallery, Slaty Road, Birkenhead CH43 4UE
Charity Number: 1166363
T: 0151 666 3537
E: williamsonandprioryfriends@gmail.com

It is possible to download
membership forms from
[https://williamsonartgallery.org/
about-wag/friends/](https://williamsonartgallery.org/about-wag/friends/)

Committee members for 2016-2017

Lawrence Holden, DL, LLB, LLD (Hon), Chair

A former senior partner of Brabners, advising charities and public benefit organisations, Lawrence has been Pro-Vice Chancellor of Liverpool University and held other public offices. He is an artist.

Jane Horton, BA, Honorary Treasurer

Formerly Capital Planning Manager for the Royal Liverpool Hospital Trust, Jane manages the Friends' financial strategy, keeping them financially viable and enabling them to anticipate future events.

Mary Compton-Rickett LLB, Secretary

A retired barrister, Mary has had a lifetime interest in the arts in all forms and is an art collector of paintings, prints and sculpture.

Patricia Foden, PG Cert CAMH, Rtd RGN, Membership Secretary

Retired, following 36 years in the NHS in a variety of areas, Pat now enjoys creating fused glass and her voluntary work with the Friends.

Colin Simpson, BA AMA

Colin is the curator of the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum and Principal Museums Officer for Wirral.

David Ainsley, BA Arch (Hons), MA RIBA

A former President of the Liverpool Architectural Society, David is now retired from Ainsley Gommon architects, of which he was a founding director.

John Southwood

John is a former Trinity House Pilot on the River Dee and River Dart. He is a trustee and curator of the Conway Chapel Museum.

Jean Benfield (BA Hons), Minutes Secretary

Now retired, following a career in journalism and the third sector, Jean has had a life-long interest in the arts.

Corinne Whitham, BA in Fine Art, Chair Activities Sub-Committee

Corinne is a retired education professional who spends her time producing her own work and supporting W&PF, as well as volunteering with AgeUK. She is also a committee member of a local U3A

Looking ahead to 2017- 2018



The Charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and registered as such under the Charities Acts.

FOLLOW THE WILLIAMSON AND PRIORY FRIENDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA



ON TWITTER:
@WAGANDBPFRIENDS



ON FACEBOOK:
**[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/
WILLIAMSONANDPRIORYFRIENDS/](https://www.facebook.com/williamsonandprioryfriends/)**



OUR BLOG:
[WILLIAMSONANDPRIORYFRIENDS.BLOGSPOT.CO.UK/](http://williamsonandprioryfriends.blogspot.co.uk/)



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