

BACUP NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY and MUSEUM

Secretary's Annual Report : 2016-17

The year 2016-17 has witnessed yet more progress in fulfilling the aims and objectives of your Society.

With the Fernhill Project completed to the satisfaction of the Heritage Lottery Fund , we now have the display as a permanent feature of our assets. Indeed , by the time you receive this report , we will have formally launched our next , similar , venture : ' Mrs Ibbitt's 1917 Shop and Parlour 'at our Easter Open Day. Once again , this HLF supported project has been initiated and implemented by your hard working Secretary , Wendy Watters, with the bulk of the required construction work done by our ever resourceful and versatile, Steve Middleton. Steve has also developed our window display area and, along with Tom Lord and Ken Burke, significantly improved our public visibility by the erection of our two new illuminated signs, the artwork for the 'pub' sign being provided through the generosity of Paul Drogan of Superwide.

The Museum has been freshened up with a coat of paint and the whole aspect improved by progressive initiatives in new cabinets, lighting and layout by Curator, Ken Burke, assisted by Alan Hughes, Arthur Baldwin, Ken Bowden and Ken Knight.

A number of very successful Open Days have been held, including a showing of the Battle of the Somme film on its anniversary. A number of these were accompanied by concurrently manning a stall on the Market for bric a brac etc and the associated publicity. The 'Give as you Live' initiative , whereby a percentage of an Internet purchase goes directly to 'NAT' funds , has met with only limited success , with a disappointing take up , but continues .

In November, our first Newsletter was well received and served also to launch our Patrons and Friends venture. By the year end, six Patrons (£120 pa) and six Friends (£60 pa) had signed into the scheme providing a useful supplement to our income (especially if supported by Gift Aid, where possible).

Member Graham Neill very kindly donated his collection of mining memorabilia for sale to support our funds. Unfortunately, shortly afterwards, these, along with other items were the target of thieves making a snatch break in. Much of our loss has been recovered via insurance, but this did not cover the loss of a rifle kindly loaned by Alan Hughes, who has recently been

reimbursed by the Society with a replacement BSA SMLE rifle from 1917 . If the original is eventually recovered , this has been donated to the NAT by Alan.

Richard Kelly of Bristol University expects to provide the Society with additional publicity when he publishes an article to the entomological world after studying our collection of insects etc during a day visit, in consultation with Arthur Baldwin.

Every Committee member has again worked hard during the year. After many years in the job, Ken Bowden is relinquishing his post of Syllabus Secretary after providing yet another season of enjoyable and instructive lectures, and a full programme for the year ahead. Christine Ormrod has put in a big shift as Treasurer, Minutes Secretary and editor of the Newsletter. Marian Connelly continues in her own inimitable way as both Chairman and Social Secretary, ably supported by Janet Entwistle and Eileen Parkes. We are delighted that Peter Hargreaves is able to remain on the Committee along with new member (with a famous father) Barrie Taylor. Steve Walker is unfortunately leaving the Committee and will be missed, but, hopefully, will be around occasionally, joining the ranks of other hard working non-Committee members such as Tom Lord, Irene Pilling and Jennifer Taylor. Our main driving force, as always , is Wendy Watters, who also finds time to provide publicity for the Society via Bacup Past and Present in 'Facebook' and , I understand , is nearing completion of yet another book on local history .

As the appointed scribe for this Annual Report, modesty forbids that I should mention –

Yours truly

Maurice Priest