

BLUECOAT
SOCIETY
OF ARTS

1930

BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS
LIVERPOOL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE, 1930, AT
3 P.M., IN THE OFFICE OF THE SOCIETY,
BLUECOAT CHAMBERS

SECRETARY'S REPORT, BALANCE SHEET
AND REVENUE ACCOUNT, 31 MARCH, 1930

BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

SECRETARY'S REPORT, YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1930.

TRUSTEES

Sir FREDERICK C. BOWRING	C. SYDNEY JONES
Professor L. B. BUDDEN, F.R.I.B.A.	J. H. LAYTON
Mrs. JAMES CALDER	JOHN MACLEAY
Miss E. G. HOLT	Colonel J. J. SHUTE, C.M.G., D.S.O.
ALLAN JEANS	R. H. THORNTON
Sir BENJAMIN SANDS JOHNSON	J. A. TINNE, M.P.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Sir FREDERICK C. BOWRING

Hon. Treasurer: A. F. SHAWYER

Professor L. B. BUDDEN, F.R.I.B.A.	Miss SYLVIA RATHBONE
Mrs. JAMES CALDER	WILLIAM RUSHWORTH
J. H. LAYTON	R. H. THORNTON
Mrs. GEORGE RATHBONE	F. X. VELARDE

Secretary: W. S. MACCUNN

Bankers:

MARTINS BANK, LTD.,
Water Street,
Liverpool.

Auditors:

MESSRS. CHALMERS, WADE & CO.,
5 Fenwick Street,
Liverpool.

DURING the year which ended on the 31st March, 1930, the Committee held ten meetings with an average attendance of five members and the Secretary.

It is with great regret that I have to report that, owing to pressure of other work, Mr. Sydney Jones found it necessary to resign from the Committee. He was a zealous member of the original Lord Mayor's Committee in 1926 and threw the full weight of his influence into the effort that was then made to save the building; and for nearly three years he has been a member of the Executive Committee. The Society has good cause for being grateful to him for the help which he has given over this long period, especially as he is engaged in a vast amount of important public work which makes exacting demands on his time. I am glad to say that he remains a Trustee.

There have been few changes in the tenancies. The large ground floor room in the south-east corner of the building, which has been vacant since the building was taken over, was let from the beginning of January. The Liverpool Union of Girls' Clubs have taken it at a rent of £60 per annum, together with the first floor room over it at a rent of £25 per annum. The Committee regard these rents as satisfactory, especially as the tenants have spent a large sum of money and have reconditioned the premises, which were in a bad state of repair. The reconditioning and alterations have been carried out by our own architect, Mr. T. F. Shepherd, in a manner that has been fully approved by the Committee and that gives complete satisfaction to the tenants.

The letting of the Concert and Lecture Halls continues good. As you will see later when I deal with the accounts the income from this source shows a most welcome increase. The Rodewald Concert Society have again taken the Concert Hall for their meetings, and dramatic performances have been given by the University Dramatic Society, the Irish Society of the University, and the Sandon Studios Society. It is a hopeful sign that most of the bodies who hired the hall during the previous year have hired it again during the year that has just ended. In view of the purpose to which the building is dedicated one would like to see a higher percentage of concerts and a lower percentage of dances, but that, I am afraid, will have to wait until the tastes and social habits of Liverpool show signs of regeneration.

On the financial side the year has been one of great difficulty and anxiety. At the last annual general meeting I reported that the appeal launched in March, 1929, following the visit of the President of the Royal Academy, had met with a very disappointing response. By midsummer it was clear that no more donations could be expected as a result of that appeal. Various well-known patrons of Art were then approached and an application was made to the Trustees of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, but in no case did we meet with success. The Committee therefore felt that a new effort must be made.

After careful consideration they decided that the new appeal should be on fresh lines, a special committee being formed to conduct it, and the public being asked to give works of art, antique furniture, and other objects of value to be sold to raise funds.

The first consideration was to find the right chairman for this special appeal committee, and very fortunately we were able to persuade Professor C. H. Reilly, in spite of the urgency and

importance of his other interests, to undertake the task. After the experience of the last few months I am certain that we could not have found a more capable or energetic chairman. The next consideration was to form an influential committee and here again we were fortunate in enlisting the help of an enthusiastic and strenuous band of workers. For some months this committee have been carrying on their work, largely by personal canvassing. In addition, Professor Reilly has stated our case with cogency in the Liverpool press, and in the columns of "The Times" and of "Country Life."

The sum we required to free us from debt was upwards of £20,000, a very large amount. The first response to the appeal was encouraging, many offers of works of art and so on being made, and a considerable sum in cash being subscribed, but recently there has been a marked falling off. At this moment the amount subscribed in money is about £2,900, which includes a sum of £500 that is being paid to us in four quarterly instalments of £125 each, to be used towards the payment of mortgage interest.

Among many generous gifts of money there is one of £103 from the Playhouse Theatre, this being the amount of the house receipts for the performance on the evening of the 18th December. The Playhouse is an example of a bold artistic enterprise that, after many years of anxiety and difficulty, is now firmly established in the life of Liverpool. It was a great source of encouragement to the Appeal Committee that the Directors of that theatre should come to their help with such a generous gift.

The Liverpool Display Association also organised a show for the benefit of our funds, and though the direct profit was less than had been hoped, one result was a gift of a hundred guineas from Messrs. Lewis's, Ltd.

Since the close of the financial year the Playgoers' Club staged a play in the Concert Hall, which was admirably produced and acted, and resulted in a profit of £22 10s. od., which has been handed over to us.

The special gift of £500 of which I have just spoken has been given anonymously. As you will realise when we come to discuss the accounts this generous donation is of the greatest value, as it enables us to meet our mortgage interest during the coming year, and so allows us more time to carry on our appeal, and reduce the debt to an amount with which we can cope successfully.

It is difficult to estimate the value of the works of art and other gifts which we have received, especially as it may not be easy to find buyers for articles which possess considerable intrinsic value. From advice which we have taken I think that we may value them at about £1,500.

The Appeal Committee has had considerable difficulty in deciding on the best method of disposing of these gifts. The first intention was to hold an auction in the building, but, in spite of the generosity of our friends, we have not collected enough to make an impressive display, while the bad state of trade in Liverpool makes it very uncertain if buyers would be forthcoming. Finally it has been decided to send some of the gifts to Christie's and to arrange for Mr. Vernon Gittins to sell the remainder on our behalf. I may say that Mr. Gittins is doing this without charging any commission.

Before passing on to the next point I should like to express the thanks of the Committee to Mr. Sydney Davison, the Curator of the Lady Lever Art Gallery, who has given us the benefit of his experience and expert knowledge.

Within the last few days an interesting and important offer has been made to us. Yet another anonymous friend has offered £1,000 if nineteen or fourteen, or even nine others will give a like sum, the last offer depending on an assurance that £10,000 would place the building in safety. This offer remains open until the 1st of October, 1930. I do not propose to enlarge on it here, as you will have an opportunity of discussing it when we reach the next item on the Agenda.

I must now ask you to turn your attention to the accounts which have already been circulated. The Revenue Account, though there is still a considerable deficit, has some satisfactory features. The income from rents is £1,164 against £1,136 for the year 1928-1929, an increase of £28. The letting of the Concert and Lecture Halls shows the very substantial increase of £106. On the expenditure side running expenses show little change, but rates are down by £26. The amount of £93 for Printing, Postages, Stationery, and Sundries may seem heavy, but the cost of the present appeal to the end of the financial year, about £20, has been written off to this account.

Interest remains a very heavy item. You will notice that in addition to the interest on the mortgages there is an amount of £157 for interest on Bank overdraft and overdue accounts. This calls for a word of explanation. In July, 1929, the final payment for the alterations fell due. The amount was £1,629, and was payable within fourteen days of the issue of the architect's certificate. We were unable to meet this account. The Contractors, Messrs. J. B. Johnson & Co., Ltd., agreed not to press for payment if we would pay them interest on the outstanding amount at the rate of 1 per cent. above Bank rate. The Committee could not do otherwise than consent to this. This interest up to the 31st of March amounted to about £62.

I am glad to say that already £1,000 has been paid to Messrs. J. B. Johnson & Co., Ltd., on account, and I hope that the balance will be paid off shortly. The Bank overdraft has been large throughout the year, usually in the neighbourhood of £1,500. I hope that it will be possible to keep it down to a considerably lower average figure during the coming year. You will see that on the 31st of March it was £1,111; at this moment it is £418. In considering this amount of interest you must also remember that for part of the year the Bank rate was very high, and that it is now down to 3 per cent. It will therefore be seen that interest on Bank overdraft and overdue accounts will be very much less for the year 1930-1931.

The deficit is £334 against £614 for the previous year, an improvement of £280, partly owing to the first instalment of the gift of £500, for the payment of interest, to which I referred earlier. Apart from this the excess of expenditure, including interest, over income, would have been £460.

This deficit will be still further reduced for the current year. Revenue from rents should be £1,240, an increase of £75, and it is not unduly optimistic to anticipate an increase in the income from the letting of the halls of at least £25. This would give an increase in revenue of about £100. On the other side of the account I do not think that ordinary running expenses can be further reduced, for every possible economy is already practised. Debt charges, however, should certainly be reduced. As I explained above, the lower Bank rate, the decrease in overdue accounts and the possibility of keeping the amount of the overdraft down, will all help to reduce this item. I think that we may put the reduction at about £100. Beyond this I hope that we will be able to reduce the capital amount of the debt, by the proceeds of the sale of the works of art which have been given to us, and by means of the donations which we

may hope to receive. It is possible, then, that next March the deficit may be not more than £250, or even £200, which will be covered by the remaining instalments of the gift of £500, as these amount to £375.

The Balance Sheet is still unsatisfactory. It is true that, compared with last year, there has been a gross reduction of over £2,000 in the amount of the debt. Against this is fresh expenditure of about £250, to which I will return in a minute, leaving a net reduction in Sundry Creditors and Bank overdraft of about £1,800. But the unpleasant fact remains that our mortgages still stand at £17,600, and that the total debt on the 31st March was not far short of £20,000.

In face of this figure the fresh expenditure to which I have made reference needs some justification. About half of it is due to the payment of the instalments on the Concert Hall chairs, which, you will remember, are being bought in this manner. The Balance, £120, was due to the Sandon Studios Society, who provided a lighting system for the stage in the Concert Hall at that price. When they offered to do this the Committee considered the position very carefully and finally decided to accept the offer as the terms of repayment were favourable and the possession of proper stage lighting would certainly improve the letting of the hall. The Sandon Studios Society are charging no interest on the amount due to them, and repayment of the capital sum is made by reducing the charge for the hall to a nominal figure when they hire it. Thus we will gradually repay the full amount out of revenue. Though we cannot yet obtain a full theatre licence there has, so far, been no difficulty in obtaining occasional licences and now that the stage is adequately lighted we may expect an increase in this source of revenue.

To return to the financial position. Leaving out of account for the moment the special subsidy of £500, which will enable us to make ends meet up to the 31st of March, 1931, revenue is still inadequate to meet expenditure. The capital debt, though reduced, is still very heavy. Even if the works of art, which have been given to us, are sold for a satisfactory figure, this will not enable us to reduce the debt much below £18,000, and the interest on this is still a good deal more than our revenue will carry. Unless therefore, the appeal for funds is carried on until at least another £8,000 of our debt is paid off, it is clear that in a year's time we will be faced with a very critical position. If we are unable to meet our mortgage interest in July, 1931, there will be no possibility of carrying on, and the money which has been so generously subscribed and the energy and enthusiasm which have gone to its collection will be wasted. Still we have a year in which to avert this disaster. It is not a long period, but if no opportunity is lost it may be long enough to raise the money we still need. It is, surely, worth an effort. So far we have managed to avert destruction from the only old building of architectural value which Liverpool possesses: we have provided a home for artistic societies and for painters, sculptors and architects who, in their several ways, are enriching the life of the city. The work which we are doing is too valuable to be abandoned until every possible effort has been made to bring it to a successful issue.

W. S. MACCUNN,
Secretary.

BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

BALANCE SHEET AS ON 31ST MARCH, 1930

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
CAPITAL FUND—						
As per last Balance Sheet ...	34,998	5	1			
Donations received during year ...	2,292	19	1			
	37,291	4	2			
MORTGAGES—						
1st Mortgage, as per last Balance Sheet ...	9,600	0	0			
Add Accrued Interest ...	132	0	0	9,732	0	0
2nd Mortgage, as per last Balance Sheet ...	8,000	0	0			
Add Accrued Interest ...	110	0	0	8,110	0	0
				17,842	0	0
BANK OVERDRAFT ...				1,111	15	4
CREDITORS—						
For Reconstruction and Alterations ...	881	4	8			
Sundry ...	122	12	7	1,003	17	3
				£57,248	16	9
				55,470	0	11
FREEHOLD PROPERTY IN SCHOOL LANE AND COLLEGE LANE, LIVERPOOL, INCLUDING RECONSTRUCTION AND ALTERATIONS, at Cost, as per last Balance Sheet...	55,400	14	11			
<i>Add Further Expenditure during year ...</i>	69	6	0			
FURNITURE, at Cost, less amounts written off	333	11	10			
RENTS OUTSTANDING AND SUNDRY DEPOSITS	76	11	0			
FIRE INSURANCE, etc., paid in advance	73	12	6			
CASH IN HAND	24	16	0			
REVENUE ACCOUNT—						
Debit Balance as per last Balance Sheet	935	5	0			
Debit Balance, year ended 31st March, 1930...	334	19	6	1,270	4	6

AUDITORS' REPORT.

We have examined the Accounts of the Bluecoat Society of Arts for the year ended 31st March, 1930, and have obtained all the information and explanations we have required. In our opinion the above Balance Sheet is properly drawn up so as to exhibit a true and correct view of the state of the Society's affairs, according to the best of our information and the explanations given to us and as shown by the books of the Society.

(Signed) A. F. SHAWYKE, *Hon. Treasurer.*
(Signed) W. S. MACCUNN, *Secretary.*

LIVERPOOL, 13th May, 1930.

(Signed) CHALMERS, WADE & CO.,
Chartered Accountants.

BLUECOAT SOCIETY OF ARTS

REVENUE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1930

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
To Mortgage Interest	968	0	0			
Less Instalment of Special Donation towards above	125	0	0			
	843	0	0			
„ Interest on Bank Overdraft and overdue Accounts ...	157	13	0			
„ Secretary's Salary	100	0	0			
„ Wages of Caretakers and Cleaners	286	14	7			
„ Rates	150	4	2			
„ Fire Insurance, etc.	88	13	3			
„ Fuel and Lighting	101	13	3			
„ Printing, Postages, Stationery and Sundries	93	7	4			
„ Audit and Accountancy Charges	21	0	0			
„ Repairs and Renewals	27	17	6			
„ Depreciation on Furniture	11	0	0			
	£1,881	3	1			
By Rents	1,164	17	6			
„ Letting of Halls, less Expenses... ..	381	6	1			
„ Balance, being excess of Expenditure over Income for the year	334	19	6			
				£1,881	3	1