



The Basel

Newsletter of Rugby & District Art Society

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The President writes:

Hello Everyone

I trust that you are all coping well with the current difficult situation.

Following governmental decree our regular meetings are still on hold – we'll let you know when they can be resumed. The talk on the Frogmore Paper Mill due for May 6th has been provisionally re-booked for next year, and the June 3rd meeting with Stephen J. Wood still seems unlikely to go ahead as scheduled. When things become a little clearer we will be looking into subscription fees and how to recompense paid-up members for lost meetings, and also taking steps to reassemble our programme of monthly get-togethers and other activities.

Meanwhile here's another newsletter to help you to while away the long hours (well, a few minutes anyway). If you know of a member who is without a computer then please print out a copy and pop it round to them. We want all members to feel included – not just those who are computerate (as a well-known technophobe I say this with feeling!).

I know that some of you have already been frenziedly wielding your paintbrushes, pens and pencils during the period of incarceration, so we have decided to offer a small prize (gasp!) for the best painting (or other artwork) of

a view from a window of your abode (could be just sky, I suppose) to be judged when we return to normality. Details are currently a bit vague, but that's no excuse - so get working now! (I see rainbows are very popular at the moment). We will also be looking into ways of making a display of choice items of art produced by members during this period.

At the moment any way of keeping in touch is useful, and this newsletter is one way; there are others, of course, as the members on Facebook and Twitter will attest, but we hope to see you all in person again as soon as possible. Until then, keep exercising your artistic skills and stay safe.
Paul Torr

Help!

It is quite likely that another edition of the newsletter will be needed before we get back to normal, so if you have anything of interest (pictures of home haircuts?) please send it to the editor or myself, with your name so that we can give you due credit. It would be nice to have a greater variety of writing and imagery to reflect the unusually broad scope of our membership, of which we are very proud. It doesn't necessarily have to be directly art related – a bit of gossip or lively news is always entertaining! So keep up the good work! Then tell us about it!

Roy Foster offers some light relief



Recycling cuttings in the garden...



If you have tried do-it-yourself hairdressing or had a family member wield the scissors, don't just chuck the clipped hair in the bin. Throw it on the garden for the birds to collect. Apparently they like to incorporate human hair into their nest-building. Good news – grey or white hair is always welcome.

Roger Griffiths reports that he has paintings in a virtual exhibition at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists until June. You can access at <http://rbsa.org.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/remote-access-a-virtual-exhibition/?fbclid=IwAR3YVTeMwxjFMXc7tm1voqzk-eZfHUpnOZ1NtPYifU7TFmurMhX3gd-J9fk>.

Roger has also developed an impressive virtual exhibition of his own work that you can walk round and go up to framed paintings on a gallery wall. Find it via his website rogergriffiths.co.uk

John Lines reminisces...

I've spent a lifetime observing the world but now with the time to think I have realized how much my painting lifestyle has changed in that time.

If you painted 'on the spot' that used to be what it was, now it's been gentrified to 'plein air' after the French impressionists. It's just as difficult as ever it was but still good fun.

When you painted in a village street there was usually just a couple of poles that carried all the cabling needs of its population. These days there's many poles with a fantastic array of wires leading off in all directions. You can hear the phones ringing in nearby houses and there's also little black things that you clamp to your ear and shout into (often while walking into painters perched on their little stools).

While painting in Woodford Halse a week or two ago, every house had a black satellite dish all facing the same way like a row of fat coal miners. The wonderful heavy chimneys on houses frequently carried every type of TV aerial you could think of. 'Experts' used to turn up at my exhibitions to inform me of all the different aeriels there was and how the ones I painted had a bar or whatever missing.

When painting from the top end of Cambridge Street I remember worrying about the wide road dominating the picture area, but how I could rescue the composition by adding a bread van coming up the road. Now cars are

parked on both sides of the street like two strips of shining metal, difficult to paint and get right.

Going back even further, one of my favourite painting spots was at the bottom of Murray Road where I watched spellbound as the BTH hordes poured out of the tunnel making for the Midland Red buses lining the road. I was the butt of many 'helpful' arty remarks as I tried to capture this wonderful scene, backed by huge hoardings promising that Horlicks would banish my 'night starvation'. Sadly, the workers are long gone, together with the hoarding and the massive engineering works.

The alleyways between Bath Street and Claremont Road were another choice painting spot with minimal travelling involved. The backs of the terraced houses, with old sheds, workshops and the odd sofa strategically placed all found places in my paintings. There was no parking restrictions, no double yellow lines and you could happily paint until it was dark without worrying that you'd face a parking fine.

Artist's materials have also changed; no more emulsions of bits of hardboard as canvasses are good and inexpensive and there's a huge variety of brushes. The only downside, I think, is that the quality paint is not what it used to be and, of course, three times the price.

However the world is still there to be painted so, whenever it's safe to do so, go out and paint it!



Heather's Kingfisher

Heather Lyons reports that she has joined Jean Haines online art school. A special deal gives her access to all Jean's tutorials with updates and feedback. Heather has completed one of her first assignments of a Kingfisher and considers doing it was a nice change from gardening and decorating.

Jean Haines at watercolourinspiration.com

From Jan Watts

Leslie had a great idea. We had a 'remote' paint in, she in her studio and me outside in my 'loggia' (grand, eh?) both seeing and hearing each other on our Apple iPads. We painted for a couple of hours. I'd never have kept to it on my own. I can recommend it, brownie points for Leslie! Here is my effort, a moose we were very excited to see when we were in Yellowstone.



From Colin Bywater

Spring & Summer Greens (Not the eating variety)

Who hasn't had difficulty mixing the right greens for spring and summer landscape paintings?

Here's a few tips:

In spring we see bright new growth with strong clear colours. A Lemon Yellow and Cerulean Blue mix is a good place to start. Modify with white to lighten when using oils. Add a tiny amount of Alizarin Crimson to darken, or Cadmium Red where a little warmth is needed.

Summer brings more subdued greens. Mixes based on Lemon Yellow plus Ultramarine Blue can be appropriate here, as are Cadmium Yellow or Lemon Yellow plus Viridian. Beware the Viridian, it is very powerful. Cadmium Yellow and Ultramarine Blue can be useful but will always produce a dull green as both contain red which neutralises the green.

In landscapes the light is generally from the sun, which usually provides a warm light and cool shadows. For the shadows, rather than use black which deadens, take the colour of for example the tree or plant (local colour) that casts the shadow. Mix a shadow dark from that local colour plus Ultramarine Blue plus Burnt Sienna. An alternative cold dark would be the local colour plus Alizarin Crimson plus Viridian.

Contacts

R&DAS Facebook page. You need to set up an account (free and simple) then you can access members posts and join in discussions.

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Jim Watson editor: jimartwatson@btinternet.com

The Bard of Bath Street, our multitalented president, Paul Torr, tells a colourful story of old Vienna...

Never Trust An Artist With a Cigar

Sir Henry Postlethwaite RA
Liked smoking six cigars a day
While wielding his distinguished brush
As nicotine gave him a rush
That helped, he said, him to attain
A sense of colour in his brain.
T'was true his use of colours bright
Was what brought him his fame alright.

His palette covered every hue
From daffodil to duck egg-blue
And lots of colours in between
Like cherry red and Lincoln green
And more exotic ones as well
Like peacock blue and tortoiseshell
Gamboge and lapiz lazuli
Were all laid on and left to dry

He liked to use nut-brown or grey
When crafting subjects old or gay
And one appropriately called madder
Was good for painting something sadder
Some were his favourites - some weren't
He liked those with the prefix 'burnt'
Like Burnt Sienna and Burnt Umber
And others that I don't remember.

His skill soon earned him national fame
And many clients rushing came
In supercars (or some by diesel)
To be portrayed upon his easel.
He loved to lavish bold brushstrokes
On portraits of young gels and blokes
And also the occasional oil
In honour of a minor Royal

And all the while he puffed and puffed
Then sent away his clients quite chuffed

The upshot of all this was rational
His fame became quite international
And European beauties begged
For portraits of themselves bare-legged
And all the toffs were pleased to say
"It's by Sir Postlethwaite RA"
So Henry served the great and posh
While raking in shedloads of dosh.

In Sweden, Germany and France
His fame continued to advance
In fact so many now were asking
He thought of trying multi-tasking
Or seeking a nice place to go
Where he could find a studio
And advertise for ladies fair
That he could paint, both clothed and bare

Vienna was the place he chose
Through which the river Danube flows
Where life has never been too frantic
And artists still remain romantic
Where lovely ladies liked to pose
Both naked and within their clothes
While painting them his eye did rove
And thus he came upon his love

Her face, seen in a certain light
Was practically Pre-Raphaelite
Her curves were perfect, without doubt
In right proportions in and out
Her hair of lustrous golden brown
Upon her shoulders tumbled down
To match her hair there was her name
His favourite colour he would claim

Yes, there in old Vienna town
He met his love Sienna Brown

Inspired despite her maiden's blushes
He set to work with eager brushes
And just make himself more eager
He double puffed upon his cigar
Unfortunately sparks ensued
Which lighted on the lady nude
The consequential words of ire
Were worsened as her hair caught fire

The flames rose high into the air
Until Sienna had no hair
But just in time Sir Henry caught her
Doused her with a pail of water
Anticipating yet more trouble
He gazed upon her blackened stubble
And, though he loved her, he just knew
Inevitably she would sue

And so it proved. She went to court
And cleaned him out and left him short.
What he had left was just a joke
Some paint, a brush and one last smoke.
He picked them up, and glad to say
He threw the damn cigar away.
But nobly as the English will
He started once again from nil

Sir Henry Postlethwaite RA
Had lived to fight another day
Though he produced some damn good stuff
He really missed his cigar puff
He changed his style to abstract whirls
Which meant he never needed girls
And every colour he could find
Explored the angst within his mind

But since that night in old Vienna
He's never used the Burnt Sienna

From Jim Watson

Part of a feature on reducing stress during lockdown in the Times Saturday April 29 by Yale professor Sophie Swietochowski:

Drawing for 45 minutes

Psychologists say putting pen or pencil to paper can boost happiness by distracting the mind from worries by forcing it to focus on the present, while also reducing stress levels. There are a huge number of art and drawing apps that can be downloaded for your phone or tablet. And don't worry if you're not artistically talented, a study in the journal *Art Therapy* found that 45 minutes of general arts and crafts lowered levels of cortisol (the stress hormone) in three quarters of participants. Try the Autodesk sketchbook, which is free for iPad and Android, and works on mobile and tablet devices.

In my experience just drawing for 45 minutes (or even 45 hours!) doesn't necessary improve your mood – but what you produce on the paper might. Temperamentally, I'm rarely pleased with any 'art' I create and my happiness level only increases if I dump it in the bin. However, as I produce work commercially for books, magazines and private commissions, deadlines don't give me the luxury of doing it over again. What's done is, for better or worse, done. Months later if I see the work printed in a book or hung on a wall I often think it's not as bad as I remember and the frustrations and disappointments of producing it were worthwhile after all.

So if you do work you're unsatisfied with, hide it in a drawer or cupboard for a month or two then take it out and appreciate what you achieved earlier. If it doesn't make you happier, you can always chuck it in the bin.

Telly Stuff

Grayson Perry's Art Club

Channel 4, 8pm Mon 4th May and iplayer. Always interesting and informative.

The Joy of Painting with Bob Ross. Mon-Thurs at 7pm on BBC4. Repeats from the 1980's with big hair and landscape painting tricks.

Life Drawing Live returns to BBC2 on May 12th after a successful run in January.

Car battery tip from Listers of Coventry. If your car has been standing unused for a couple of weeks the battery may be running down. Start your car and let it run for 10-15mins to recharge. No need to drive it anywhere. I always thought you had to take it out on the road but apparently not. Listers are the experts. JW