

Events

All Sunday sessions will be at Tinwell Village Hall. The workshops are between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. I am trying to get away from Portrait/Life a bit this time and, to that effect, have arranged for two sessions to help us make our landscapes more convincing and one to help us use oils successfully.

February 12th:

Drawing buildings in a townscape, with an emphasis on correct linear perspective. This will be led by Jane Sharp.

It would be advisable to bring a photograph to work from, as the location does not lend itself to this subject. Jane's work will be familiar to many of our members and, whatever the subject, it is always firmly based on accurate drawing.

March 11th:

Oil-painting workshop with Mike Todd. Those who wish to attend should bring a sketching easel and basic oil-painting equipment: brushes, a few paints, palette, and so on. The day is intended as an introduction to using the medium for those with little or no experience. It is not really going to appeal to artists already familiar with the medium. It would be good to have an idea of numbers, so please ring Mike Alabaster beforehand: 01780 763806.

April 15th:

Another workshop designed to help artists with making buildings look convincing in a landscape (too often an obvious weakness in an otherwise-satisfactory painting). This time our President, Nic Hart, will be showing us how to make them look convincing. His own paintings always seem to include exquisitely-drawn buildings.

May 15th:

Nothing settled as yet, but it is hoped to have another Portrait or Life session. Hope to have details in the next newsletter.

Coach Trip March 25th:

Coach trip to the new David Hockney exhibition at the Royal Academy.

Leaving Oakham at 09.00 and Stamford bus station at 09.30.

Returning at 18.00. Cost: £12.

Please send cheques, made out to "wvas", to Mike Alabaster,

37, St Leonard's Street,
Stamford,
Lincs
PE9 2HL.

We are advised to book our tickets for this Show.

Special Note to associate members

Hello... are you out there...

Just because you don't get to exhibit doesn't mean you can't take part. I am an associate member and have been producing this newsletter. Our Treasurer is an associate member as is committee member Sylvie Stanway. Please Join in.

Huw Wigmore

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Welland Valley Art Society Autumn Show 2011



We had 181 entries from 52 members and it was good to see several newly selected artists submitting work. The selection panel chose 136 pictures and 21 sculptures for display and Catherine Headley (our guest on the selection committee) chose, as winner of the Gladys Teesdale prize, Helen Jayne Gunns watercolour collage "Lily pond". Catherine also commended three very different styles of work by Sheila Beckingham (Welsh Doodle), Julie Wade (3 Pots) and Edith Moore (Pansies).

Visitor numbers were much the same as usual at around 2,000 and about 200 of these voted for their choice of best exhibit. Once more Ken Burton swept the board clean with 25 votes for his painting of "Montmatre" and a further 15 votes for 2 other pictures. Other works catching the public's eye were "Sea Lavender" by Vanda Richards and Phyllis Vaughans sculpture "Tribute to Aime". There were a lot of favourable comments about the standard and variety of the work on show.

I wish I could report good sales but we only sold 10 exhibits and a few from the browsers amounting to a meagre £1500 (less than half the amount for last year). A sign of the times! So well done those of you who did sell.

I would like to say thank you to all of the helpers on handing in day. It is incredibly daunting to see the sea of pictures stacked around the wall at 10.30 and wonder if we will ever get them selected, hung and labelled in time – so if any of you are keen to come and help next year – please let me know.

Chris Illsley – Exhibition Secretary 01780 766889

AGM 13th March 2012

7:00pm for a glass of wine, meeting starts at 7:30.

Lots to decide this year, a number of committee members will be standing down and we need replacements. No skills required, bit of enthusiasm would help.

We have been losing money on the last few exhibitions so your subscriptions may have to rise; this might be delayed if we have a bumper Spring exhibition. SO please come along and meet the great and the good of the WVAS and you might even join them.

Need a new newsletter secretary

I will be retiring from the post at the AGM so we need an embittered hack to take over the reigns. As this will be my last epistle may I take this opportunity to thank all those who helped with news and encouragement, it's been character building!

Now to anyone thinking of taking over I offer these words of wisdom. The day of the four times a year epic is over. Since this organ is our main means of communicating with the members and lots of the members are either unable or unwilling to visit our website on a regular basis, what we need is short pithy single A4 news sheets perhaps once a month. Too often news has filtered down to the news floor too late to be of any use to anyone. Classic example being:

Show me the Monet BBC 2 looking for amateur and professional artists. Applications open at 9:00 on Monday 12th December 2011 and will close when we have received 3,000 applications or on Sunday 8th January at Midnight whichever is sooner.

Visit the website: www.showmethemonet.tv

To view a clip from the last series: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00h3x3w>

Rebecca Ingram: Tel: 020 3189 3250
Email: Rebecca.Ingram@luckydaytv.co.uk

Even if I had produced our regular November Newsletter (apologies to you all, you don't want to hear the excuses) the news arrived too late and by the time this newsletter reaches you, all is done and dusted. Now if you visit the website... and send any and all news you get to committee members, we could all have a shot at fame and fortune.

Huw Wigmore

Help at the next exhibition

For the Autumn exhibition, the report on which is on page 1, we had to rely on spouses, passers-by and hangers-on, *all of whom are not members of our glorious society*, to put the exhibition together. Now if your ears aren't burning in shame, they should be. If you can't be bothered to offer help or stand and be counted when our flagship event takes place you should be asking yourself - Why am I a member of this society - I expect you all to fall on your swords or be queueing to help come the Spring exhibition.

Vermeer's Women: Secrets and Silence

Another fine event that didn't get mentioned in the newsletter. But fear not, Donn Evans has cast his experienced eye over it and we publish, with his kind permission, a part of his report here. To get the full unabridged version, visit the web site... www.wvas.co.uk

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge 5 October 2011- 15 January 2012

The Fitzwilliam, Cambridge, is a medium sized museum which punches well above its weight. It is a treasure house, in the top three nationally for its collections of ceramics, flower paintings, and Renaissance drawings, and several of its precious possessions would be regarded with envy by the world's greatest museums and art galleries.

Thus it is no surprise to learn that the Fitzwilliam has borrowed Vermeer's exquisite masterpiece *Lacemaker* from the Louvre who in turn borrows the Fitzwilliam's Titian, the magnificent Tarquin and Lucretia. *Lacemaker* has never ever been shown in Britain but now can be seen in the Fitzwilliam's current exhibition, *Vermeer's Women*, and although it is no larger than an A4 sheet of paper it is the star of the show. It is one of only four paintings by Vermeer in the exhibition but since the number of paintings attributed to the master numbers just thirty-four, then we are indeed lucky to be able to see four in one display.



The other paintings on show are by Vermeer's contemporaries, working principally in the 1660's, a period when Frans Hals and Rembrandt were in their final years, and with a style and content quite different from these masters. What we can see is a real eye-opener as the pictures displayed allow us to look into the rooms of Dutch houses three and a half centuries ago. The very realism of the paintings heightens the experience of witnessing the daily lives of mid-seventeenth century Dutch women, and this is what the exhibition has chosen as its central theme. Thus the ladies of the house are shown sewing, lacemaking, trying on clothes or jewellery, reading, playing musical instruments or receiving guests, while the women servants sweep the floor, peel vegetables, bring in water and shopping, or deliver letters. They do it all with a peaceful serenity, often with lowered eyelids in an atmosphere of civilised but unglamorous domesticity.

There is a hauntingly ambiguous air about these interiors, but, as always, what we understand is determined largely by what we ourselves bring to the picture. We assume that the people who saw and bought these paintings in seventeenth century Holland, people of some wealth and substance, professionals, and merchants, would instantly take more meaning from them than we would today. Most of their womenfolk could read and write, and many had an appetite for the poetry, plays and novels of their current scene, which portrayed ideals of womanhood in narratives dealing in themes which included harmony in love and marriage, the follies of intemperate behaviour, lovesickness, and the stratagems of discreet love. Most girls and young ladies would have music lessons, and some would learn to draw in artists' studios. The topics chosen by Vermeer and his contemporaries for their paintings of interiors would allude to these familiar themes with an appropriate picture content of ladies, depicted at a moment in a possible narrative, manifest but never too obvious. Furniture, and other household items, musical instruments, food, drink, and views through windows and doorways were always available to illustrate or suggest the episode.. Pictures on the wall may have content which comments on the scene, perhaps representing an ideal offering an alternative way, providing a suggestion or acting as a caution. Mirrors may show an impish smile on a face turned away from the viewer, or reveal another presence in the room. Bird cages may be shown with or without a bird. Could the former mean secret love or honour preserved, and the latter innocence lost or love abandoned? Is an open cage door, or any open door, an invitation to enter?

The painter selects what to portray, and the items represented are potentially meaningful. For example, in picture number 20 of the exhibition, and in the catalogue, Cornelis de Man's *Interior with a Woman Sweeping*, the keys still in an open door may mean nothing "They just happened to be there, and so I painted them". But with a hat, cloak, and sword of a gentleman just lying around, an open book, a crumpled carpet, a wine jug, glasses, an abandoned viol, and a curtained box bed beyond, together would suggest the scene of recent activity, with the actors now out of sight but possibly nearby...

*Donn Evans
December 2011 ©*

Those important dates for the coming year...

January

9th Monday Committee Meeting

March

13th Tuesday Annual General Meeting

April

2nd Monday Committee Meeting
21st Saturday Exhibition entry forms deadline
28th Saturday Handing in and hanging
29th Sunday Private view

April 30th - May 12th
Spring exhibition

May

12th Saturday Spring Exhibition - taking down

June

2nd Saturday Newsletter copy deadline
4th Monday Committee Meeting
9th Saturday Newsletter out

September

3rd Monday Committee Meeting
29th Saturday Exhibition entry forms deadline

October

6th Saturday Handing in and hanging.
7th Sunday Private view

8th - 20th Autumn Exhibition

20th Saturday Taking down

November

5th Monday Committee Meeting
17th Saturday Newsletter deadline
24th Saturday Newsletter out

Displaying opportunity

The managers of the John Clare Cottage in Helpston have approached the WVAS asking if we have any members working in landscape/ nature/ local theme, etc. who may like to display their work in the cafe area over the summer months.

Please refer to www.clarecottage.org for contact details.