

Henley Art & Crafts Guild Newsletter July 2025



Welcome!

I'm finding it difficult to believe that this is the fifth edition of our HACG newsletter. It is only believable when I realise the number of amazing workshops I have attended and how much my skills and knowledge of craft work have improved (or maybe not in the case of painting) that I realise how important HACG is in many ways! As I have given up my floral art speaking, teaching and demonstrating commitments, HACG workshops have really helped to fill an artistic need for me.

The Spring exhibition was brilliant and our chair Simon Pink has recorded his thoughts on the event below with some pictures.

During the West Berkshire & North Hampshire Open Studios in May, I popped over to Simons studio and really enjoyed seeing his colourful art work and beautiful garden. Even bought a painting!

Please, please, please, let me have some articles for this magazine. I'm sure some of you have visited galleries, museums and exhibitions which others would love to hear about.

Also remember our craft coordinators, Ros and Ruth, and our art coordinator, Eileen are always happy and eager to hear of new suggestions for future workshops.

Simon's report...

Our Spring Exhibition proved a resounding success, drawing more than 3,000 visitors over its two-week run. The spring exhibition showcased an impressive array of artwork, including striking paintings, ceramics, sculptures, cards, prints and carved wooden vessels all beautifully created by you – our members. In total 71 members entered over 450 separate items, which is the most in HACG's 72-year history!



A highlight of the event was the lively private view evening, where guests enjoyed wine, conversation, and the opportunity to purchase unique pieces directly from the artists.



This year's exhibition was judged by Shelagh Casebourne, who faced the difficult task of selecting winners from a high standard of entries. The award for Best Wall Art went to Kasha Lunt for her piece "Three Cormorants", while the Best Craft in Show was awarded to Diana Cole for her ceramic sculpture "My Love".



It's superb to see so many of you exhibiting. I'm very proud of what we achieve each year with both our spring and winter exhibitions.

Art is a wonderful way to bring people together, I know many of you have formed lasting friendships through our exhibitions and year-round workshops, which I think is fantastic!

Just a quick note to say that our Annual General Meeting (AGM) is coming up on Tuesday 5th August at 7:30 PM at Dunsden Hall. We'll go through the usual committee bits we need to do as a charity, and I'll give a short talk followed by a Q&A, last years was a hit, so we're bringing it back!

Please come along for a relaxed evening with drinks and nibbles, it's a great chance to catch up and share ideas.

Kind regards,

Simon
Chair of The Henley Art & Craft Guild



Ros Hatt & Ruth Hampton – Joint HACG Craft Workshop Organisers

We met at Kendrick secondary school in the 1970s, both from Tilehurst. We started as the craft workshop organisers in January this year.

Ruth

I studied Art & Art History at Goldsmiths College, London. I went on to work in interior design, living in London, up to when I had the first of my three children.

Since doing my degree, I have continued to paint – always in oils and typically large (1m+) canvases. I love to capture the colours of sunrises and sunsets, especially combined with water. Several London restaurants have commissioned my work; a memorable one was a favella on a 20ft wall in a Brazilian restaurant in Leicester Square when seven months pregnant – one of my more excentric projects!

I took part in art trails in London and have exhibited in the Henley Arts Trail for four years since moved to Henley in 2019 and joined HACG.

Ros

I started sewing around nine years old inspired by my mum. Somehow, I went to South Wales to do a degree in Computer Studies ... having never seen a computer in my life!

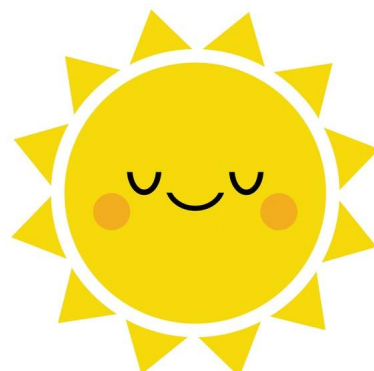
I’ve had a small collection in a local fashion show & made bespoke items for clients, all whilst working in IT. I started a silver jewellery evening class around 2010 and got hooked. I now have a studio at home and have exhibited in both HAT and the Open Studios West Berks/North Hants. I have had my items in hotel display units, a beauty salon, and cafes.

I rarely sew now as multiple sclerosis has affected my dexterity BUT I still like to try other crafts like pottery & learning to paint in acrylics and water colour.

Our friendship has taken us to festivals, holidays and other fun times. But neither of us can remember quite how we ended up as the HACG craft workshops organisers! Perhaps we just put our hands up/down at the wrong time? Still, it gives us an excuse (not that we really need one) to meet for brunch to plan sessions.

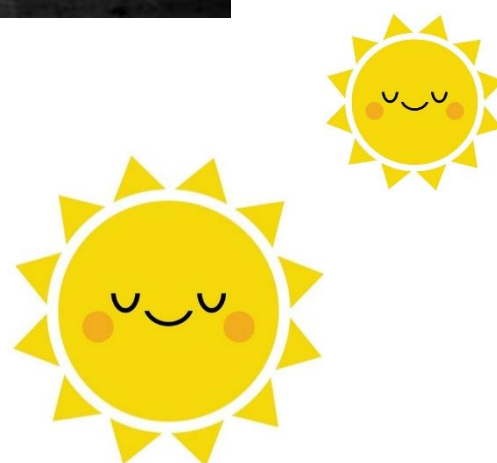


Ruth (left) & Ros at Wimbledon 2024





Debbie Davis
 Barbara Carr
 Jess Stevens
 Louise McCartney
 Janet Richardson
 Melanie Player
 Ann Lawrence
 Tom Smith
 Karen Clifton
 Fehmida Shafi
 Moira Holloway
 Jo Lillywhite
 Julie Brown



And new member Barbara Carr wrote about her first HACG workshop...

Watercolour portraits as a theme provided a great introduction to HACG! An inspirational day led by a highly competent tutor Liz Baldwin. I was welcomed by fellow organisers and participants. The step-by-step demonstrations and useful tips helped me to produce a vastly improved portrait from my recent attempts.



Past workshop - Paint your own house in pen and watercolour.

I have for a long time, wanted to paint, and to achieve my goal I have followed YouTube, tried classes and generally aimed to achieve some sort of level of skill in painting.

I had not realised this would be quite so difficult, good artists make it look so easy and even classes which said they accommodated complete beginners really expected a bit of knowledge. I was the type of beginner that needed to know what kind of brush to use and how much water to paint with

However, since joining HACG and with a bit of practice I am beginning to get the hang of it and am producing art which I do not hide in a cupboard!

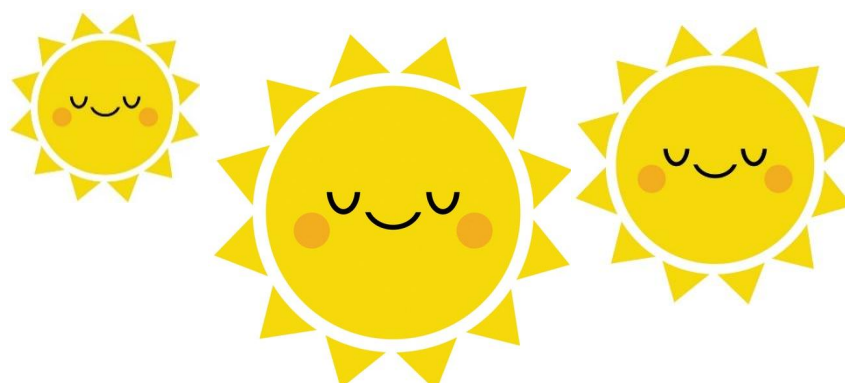
Instrumental in this has been attending Janina Maher's classes and the recent Paint Your Own House in Pen & Watercolour in June achieved a reasonable result. My husband's comment was... it looks like it's falling down!

However, a friend framed hers and gave it to her husband for his 80th birthday, can't say better than that. Her house - somewhere in Emmer Green is shown below...



Janina has so much knowledge which she willingly shares with everyone and to be honest if I don't get anywhere under her tutorage I never will. Very much looking forward to future classes with Janina.

We have some really amazing workshops coming up over the months (after our summer break). So, keep an eye out on our website. A couple which I know many of you are desperate for is oil painting for total beginners and acrylic painting for total beginners, the tutors for these workshops will talk and demonstrate you through everything you need to know as a beginner from different canvasses paper, paint types, brushes, techniques and so on.



Local Exhibitions

Daphne Wright exhibition Deep Rooted Things at the Ashmolean Museum.

The fourth in the Ashmolean NOW exhibition series, where contemporary artists are invited to create new work inspired by the Ashmolean’s historical collections.

Admission is FREE

This exhibition focuses on sculptures by Irish artist Daphne Wright and has been curated by Ashmolean director, Xa Sturgis.

Conceived in partnership with the Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin, the exhibition will feature several new works which consider the tradition of still life and responds to the sculptures in our Cast Gallery

Daphne Wright works in unfired clay and jesmonite and has long experimented with casting.

Central to the exhibition is Sons and Couch, a life-size sculptural artwork cast in jesmonite of the artist’s sons, made especially for this show. They have featured in their mother’s moving and personal work since an early age. This sculpture of them as young men was created with their agreement and collaboration.



Reading Charity Art & Craft Fair 2025

The Art and Craft Fair will take place again in October 2025 at Leighton Park School.

The majority of the funds raised at the 2024 event helped provide healthy meals for families struggling from food poverty or food insecurity within our local community. This year the main beneficiaries will be the Royal Berkshire Hospital Charity and a project supporting local food banks and food share groups.

To date, over £70,000 has been raised in support of local charities
Preview evening

Friday 24th October 19.00 –21.30hrs

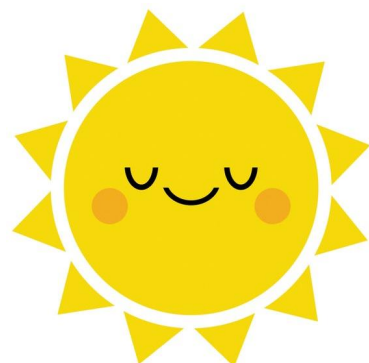
Public

Free entry

Saturday 25th October 10.00 –17.00hrs

Sunday 26th October 10.00 –16.00hrs

Please feel free to donate on entry to the Fair.



Reading Museum



If you want to combine art and exercise why not try the walking tours organised by Reading Museum? Tours for example...



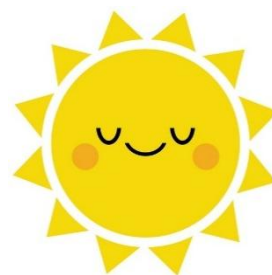
The Reading Abbey Quarter tour, The Bayeux tapestry tour (a facsimile of course) and the Oscar Wilde tour.



For more information google What's On at Reading Museum.

Long standing HACG members, Belinda and Hugu Fitzwilliams are having an exhibition of their amazing work. Pop along and see wonderful paintings and hand-crafted wooden items. I know your support would be really appreciated.

EXHIBITION INVITATION



Saturday 16th . & Sunday 17th . August 2025

Paintings, drawings, prints, sketch books and woodwork

Belinda & Hugh Fitzwilliams



11.30 am– 4.00pm each day

**We would love to see you, Do drop in
It's OPEN HOUSE**

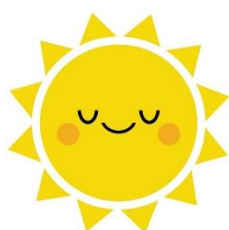
**The Old Barn, West End Lane, Warfield, Bracknell RG42 5RH
Refreshments available**

Belinda: 01491 571193 Hugh: 07776160812

Email: handbfitzwilliams@btinternet.com



Proceeds to Jealott's Hill Community Landshare CIC



The Nettlebed Art & Craft Show is just around the corner, many of our HACG members will be exhibiting their work there, so please pop in and support them. While you're in the area, practically next door to the exhibition is the Nettlebed Creamery & Cheese Shed. It's the perfect spot for lunch and is a great way to sample their delicious cheeses and chutneys before browsing the exhibition and perhaps purchasing some beautiful artwork.



Nettlebed Art & Craft Show

71st
Show

2nd and 3rd August
Nettlebed School
Sat 11-6pm Sun 10-4:30pm

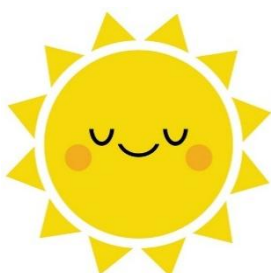
 Follow us on Facebook
Nettlebed Art & Craft Show



In aid of local charities
nettlebedas@gmail.com

Refreshments available
www.nettlebed.org

Artwork by
Mark Wood



Arty Things to do in London

Design and Disability - A new V&A exhibition showcases the contributions of disabled, deaf and neurodivergent people to design history.

The event is part of a broader movement to celebrate disability in art, encouraging dialogue and understanding while challenging stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding disabled artists.



The objects displayed range from photos by Simon Way of Jaipur Foot who make free prosthetic limbs for millions of people across India, to the McGonagle reader an audio-assisted voting device to help Blind and low-vision people vote independently.

Others include the Woofer Vest by Deaf Rave, a vest embedded with vibrating tactile discs which translate sound into a tangible experience.

Beyond the objects exhibited, Design and Disability also features several design stories, such as Why 'Positive' Change can Threaten Disability Rights, which explains how certain initiatives such as the introduction of paper straws can negatively impact disabled people with high support needs.

This exhibition comes at a particularly poignant moment, as the UK government recently announced plans to cut disability benefits by £5billion per year.

The exhibition runs from 7th June 2025 - 15th February 2026

Ever thought of enjoying a day in Hampstead, its full of art to satisfy everyone's taste.

Hampstead's links with creative thinkers across geographies and centuries make this inner London neighbourhood an ideal destination for a day of culture More than 75 commemorative plaques adorn Hampstead's streets, and its museums, galleries and historic houses cater to all interests.

Contemporary artists are nurtured by Camden Art Centre, housed in the former Hampstead Central Library, opposite Finchley Road and Froggnal Station.

About a 10-minute walk away is the Freud Museum. The dining room and conservatory, where Freud, his wife, Martha, and children gathered, hosts Freud's daughter and pioneering child

therapist Anna Freud's painted Jugendstil furniture. Across the hall, the study contains Freud's famous couch, covered with Oriental rugs, and a plain, folded cover at the end, as if ready for the next analysis.



Five minutes away, on the edge of West Heath is 2 Willow Road, the innovative and influential modernist home from 1939

The living room contains Max Ernst's painted stone Pebble (1934) and two early works by Henry Moore: the sculpture Head (1938), and a drawing. Goldfinger bought the Moore works for £50. Every room has inbuilt storage, enabling only art and aesthetic objects to be left on display.

On the northern side of the Heath, a route past ponds and woods leads to Kenwood House. Between 1764 and 1779, 1st Earl of Mansfield, William Murray, had Robert Adam remodel the 17th-century building into a porticoed neoclassical villa, with some of the architect's finest interiors. In the 1790s meandering paths and groves of trees were landscaped by Humphry Repton.

Kenwood's many important Old Masters, including Vermeer's *The Guitar Player* (1672), Rembrandt's *Portrait of the Artist (with Circles)* (1665-68), Frans Hals' *Pieter van den Broecke* (1633), and Thomas Gainsborough's *Mary, Countess of Howe* (c1764), were part of the Iveagh Bequest of 1929, which saved Kenwood and its grounds for the nation.



Exhibitions further afield

Yorkshire Sculpture Park

The Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) is an art gallery, with both open-air and indoor exhibition spaces, in West Bretton, Wakefield, in West Yorkshire, England. It shows work by British and international artists, including Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. The sculpture park occupies the 500-acre (200-hectare) parkland of Bretton Hall.

At the moment in the park there is a full range of exhibitions:

Laura Ellen Bacon: Into being. An immersive sculptural installation created from natural materials.



Felicity Aylieff: Expressions in Blue Inspired by the botanical drawing collection at Kew.

Damien Hurst: Ongoing. Three sculptures by the Yorkshire born artist.

The Virgin Mother - 10 metres tall and a powerful presence in the landscape. The sculpture is bronze painted to look like plastic

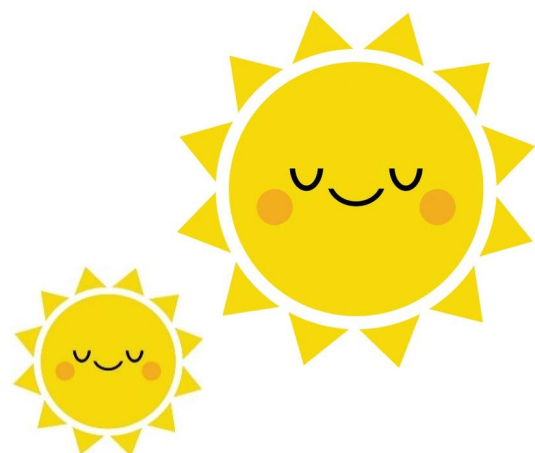


The Hat Makes the Man

This sculpture is based on a 1920s collage by Max Ernst. This is inspired by Sigmund Freud's statement that hats are symbols of suppressed male desire, and imitates painted wood.



Charity is based on the SCOPE charity collection boxes that used to be common on British streets.



TIME FOR TEA



A slightly different quiz for you this time.

The art work is *The Bar at the Folies-Bergere* by Edouard Manet

1. How many gold wrapped champagne bottles sit on the bar?
2. Who is the woman pictured on the right hand side of the image talking to the man in the top hat?
3. Can you find a trapeze artist?
4. Why is this considered a particularly notable painting for Edouard Manet in terms of all the paintings he did?
5. Which composer, a close friend of Manet owned this painting?
6. What element in this painting is thought to represent anti- German sentiment following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71?

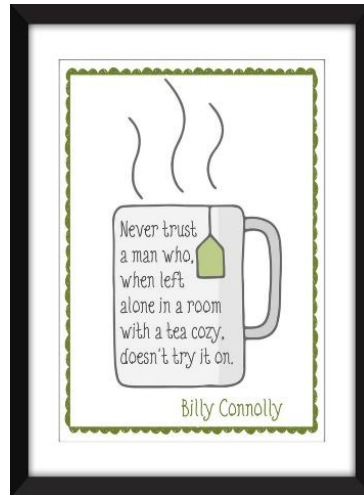
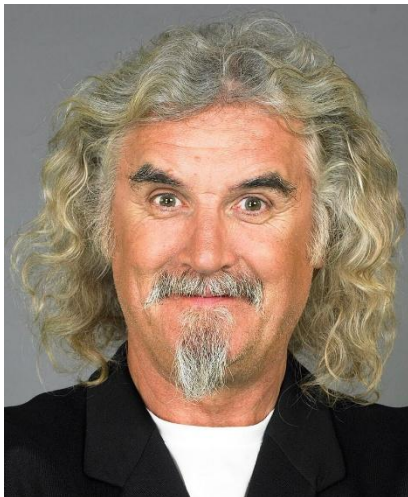


A more conventional quiz on colour



1. What are the seven colours of the rainbow?
2. If you were looking at a colour palette with names like slate, cobalt, teal and lapis what main colour would you be looking at?
3. Which 1980's rock band has a colour and a food in their name?
4. Which four colours does Microsoft have in its logo?
5. Who invented the colour wheel?

6. Sir Billy Connolly – The Accidental Artist



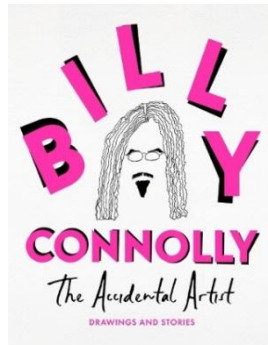
I'm sure most of you know Billy Connolly (The Big Yin) as one of the world's finest stand-up comedians. He has also been an acclaimed actor (remember the film Mrs Brown?) and musician but has now turned his rich talents into visual art. His unmistakable style is charmingly simplistic with his humour communicated through shapes and lines rather than words.

Billy's drawings started by accident. He was on tour in Montreal a few years ago and found himself sheltering from the rain in an art store. He went in to get dry and came out with an armful of felt-tip pens and a sketchbook. He then went straight back to his hotel room and started to draw. He's never looked back.

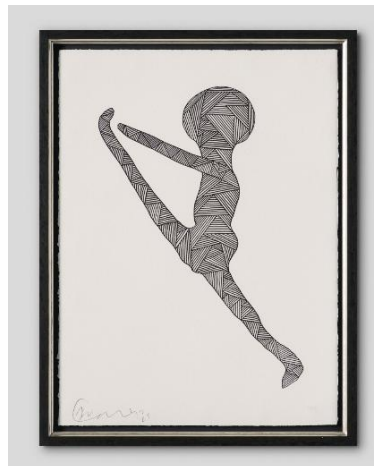
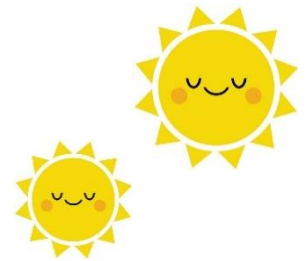
As Billy says 'Art for me bears no relation to comedy or music. My art is pure and unjudged. I am creating it for myself. Art is different- it liberates you. The picture below is called Direction with three figures following their mother along the road. They look fed up but they are not really -they are just together within themselves.



Billy's book *The Accidental Artist* is not just his evocative artwork but is a perfect showcase for the unique imagination of this legendary comedian. Billy offers fascinating glimpses of his childhood and Scottish homeland, and takes us on journeys to far flung places, sharing his lifelong obsession with music wildlife and fashion.



The name of this painting is Pontius Tries Pilates.



Sir Billy, 80, always wanted to give Pontius Pilate a 'keep-fit name', adding the idea came to him when his wife joined a Pilates gym.

He explained: 'I said it would be funny to call it Pontius Pilates, then I thought people would be offended by that, so I fiddled around and I got Pontius Tries Pilates.'

Saturday night by Billy Connolly.



Street Art

The definition of street art is a visual art form displayed in public spaces, often challenging conventional art styles. It encompasses a variety of styles and techniques including graffiti, murals, stencils and installations and can be commissioned and unsanctioned. It is quite difficult to differentiate between street art and graffiti but graffiti was initially word based whilst street art is image based. Graffiti art is where the two overlap.

Graffiti is usually created without permission, and whilst some consider it a form of art it is generally illegal and can result in fines or imprisonment if prosecuted.



Bristol the birthplace of Banksy is considered to be the street art capital of the UK with a vibrant scene that thrives across the city. Stokes Croft known as the city's cultural quarter is a hotspot for murals and graffiti with every wall alleyway and shutter serving as a canvas for creative expression.



Nearly everyone in the art world will have heard of Banksy, the street artist, political activist and film director whose real name and identity remain unconfirmed and the subject of much speculation. I'm sure you will have seen Banksy's work in Reading on the side of Reading goal This appeared mysteriously on the night of February 28th 2021.



Many have speculated that it depicts Oscar Wilde, but the prisoner's face is obscured. Banksy however is willing to sell the stencil used to paint this piece. The prison has been derelict since 2013 and is being sold by the Ministry of Defence. However local campaigners want it to be turned into an art centre rather than be auctioned off to property developers. The sale of the stencil would raise millions of pounds and potentially save the site for future generations.

One of the most famous pieces of street art is entitled Balloon Girl by Banksy. This was first created in London in 2000, and was originally stencilled on the walls under Waterloo Bridge, at London's Southbank. The interpretation of the work varies between a symbol of lost innocence but Banksy is reminding the viewer to hold onto hope even when it feels out of reach.

Reading itself abounds with street/graffiti art and if you were to drive to Woodley under the dual carriageway at 13 Loddon Bridge Rd you will see the evidence of this. Two pictures are shown below.



If you want to travel further afield apparently the city of Orlando in Florida is awash with murals but that then begs the question what is the difference between street art and a mural?

A mural is a painting or other work of art executed directly onto a wall.

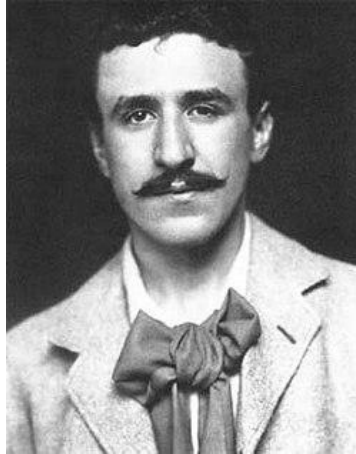
The Milk district in Orlando is home to dozens of murals and street art installations, as is the Mills 50 district. Really every type of art from abstract to thought provoking pieces are portrayed on the walls reflecting the community's creative spirit.



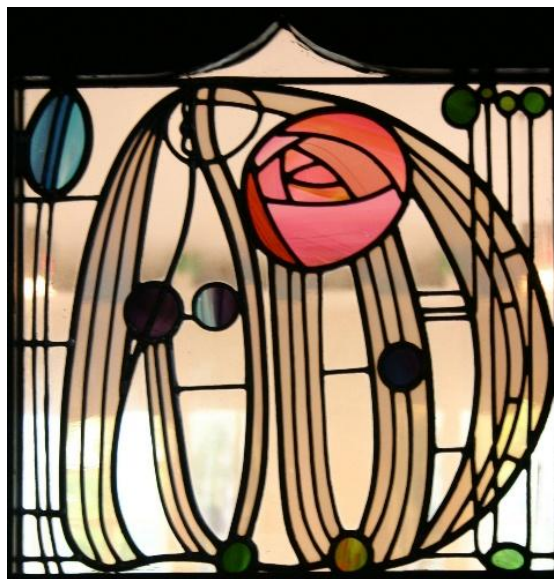
Charles Rennie Mackintosh - Scottish architect designer, water colourist and artist.

Please forgive my highlighting another Scottish artist in the newsletter. I have even more of an artistic interest in this man because during my studies for a C&G in floral art, I spent a great deal of time studying the great man and creating floral designs in the art nouveau image.

Alongside his wife Margaret Macdonald he was influential on European art movements such as art Nouveau and Secessionism.



Mackintosh lived most of his life in Glasgow located on the banks of the river Clyde. During the industrial revolution the city had one of the greatest production centres of heavy engineering and shipbuilding in the world. Along with the industrial revolution, Asian style and modernist ideas influenced Mackintosh's designs, because of its restraint and economy of means rather than ostentatious accumulation.



The picture above shows the stylised Mackintosh rose motif a standard for anyone buying Mackintosh memorabilia.

Whilst in Glasgow I urge you to go on a Rennie Mackintosh trail. Points of interest abound so how about a cuppa in the Willow Tea Rooms designed by Rennie Mackintosh but reopened as a working tea room named Mackintosh at the Willow.



Another iconic building is the Glasgow School of Art again designed by Mackintosh. In 2014 a fire partially destroyed the building and another fire in 2018 left only a shell standing. Recent wrangles with the insurers have cast doubt over the completion of conservation work and consequently the future of the building. A revised proposal is now being considered but it looks as if the work will not be completed for at least another decade.



Mackintosh's later life was fraught with health and political issues. In 1914 he was briefly arrested and accused of being a German spy. He and his wife moved to Port Vendres in Southern France but following a cancer diagnosis he returned to London where he eventually died in 1928.

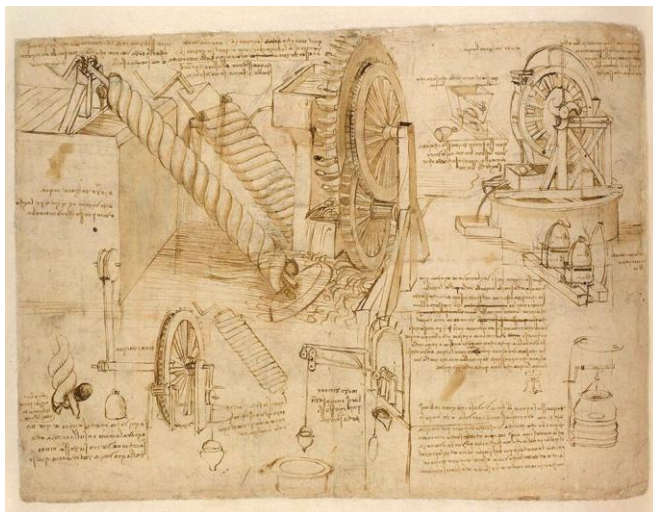
And some more fascinating colour stories:



What on earth has this fish got to do with art?

The picture shown above is a cuttlefish, sepia is named after the reddish-brown pigment derived from the ink sac of the common cuttlefish *sepia*. *Sepia* is the latinized form of an ancient Greek word. Cuttlefish release this ink as a defence mechanism and humans have utilized it for various purposes throughout history including as a drawing material and a pigment. Cuttlefish are a popular snack food all over the Asian world with black pasta being made with cuttlefish ink.

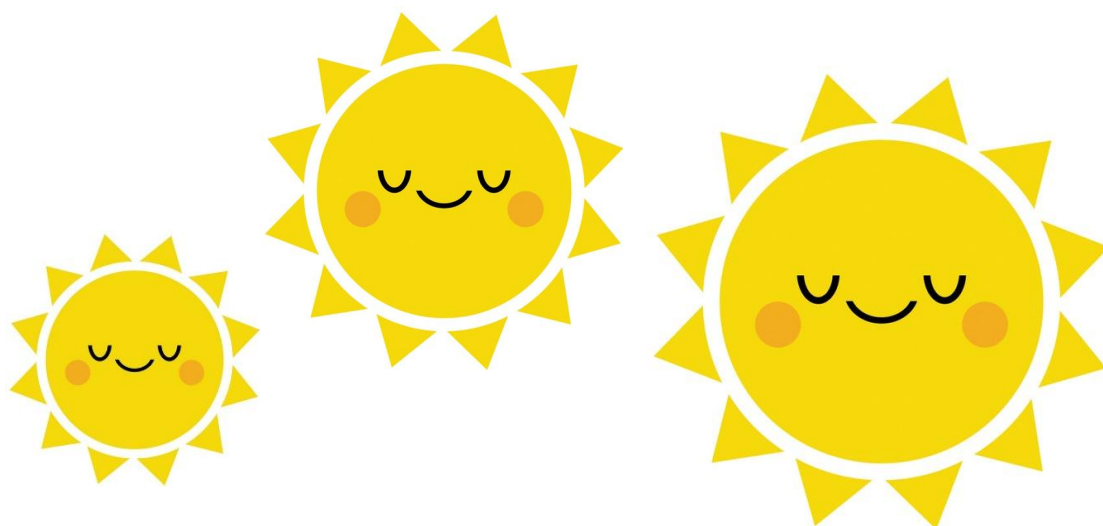
Sepia ink was commonly used for writing in Greco-Roman civilization. It remained in common use as an artist's drawing material until the 19th century. In the last quarter of the 18th century Professor Jakob Seydelmann of Dresden developed a process to extract and produce a concentrated form of sepia for use in watercolours and paints.



These drawings by Leonardo da Vinci shows the use of sepia for writing drawing and as a coloured wash. Used in a palette of many paints in a work of art, sepia colour is a warm and muted brown that gives a feeling of grounding.

Sepia colour is versatile and can take on different meanings but in every case it's a calming hue.

Interestingly the open and closing credits and the Kansas sequences in the Wizard of Oz were filmed in black and white and coloured in a sepia tone.



Simon writes...

Earlier, you may have read my report on the Spring Exhibition. One of our well-deserved winners for "Best Craft in Show" was Diana Cole. Unfortunately, Diana was unable to attend the private view evening where the award would have been presented to her.

A couple of weeks later, I had the pleasure of visiting Diana at her home to personally present her with the award. As soon as I stepped inside, I was completely captivated by the incredible array of beautiful artefacts that adorned every wall and surface. It felt like I had walked into an Indian museum.

Having spent several months travelling across India myself - exploring its art, architecture, and absorbing a culture unlike any other - I was fascinated. I had to ask: why all the Indian artefacts? Where had they come from?

Diana kindly agreed to share her story. As she spoke, I was completely drawn into her remarkable life - though to her, it all seemed perfectly ordinary.

I asked Diana to write a piece for the newsletter to share a glimpse of her time living in India, something that would captivate readers as much as it did me.

Here is what Diana wrote in her own words... enjoy!

The allure of my surroundings has always held a deep fascination for me. After marrying and moving to Bombay (now Mumbai), my artistic expression flourished.

India is a country of contrasts culture and mixed beliefs. Art, music and dance are all mixed up and somehow everywhere.

Living amongst "everything" through the fifties, sixties and into early seventies (not exclusively) memories and feelings stay with you forever. However, at the time one is unaware that you are living through changing history. From Nehru to Indira Ghandi.

Plus, I was lucky enough to be part of a thriving arts group. So, my paintings and sculptor's today are influenced in attitude and colour and retain a dream like quality... from my life in India.

The India of my memory and time living there has of course moved on, with ever changing attitudes. My last visit being in the nineties on holiday. A very different feeling of being a tourist to being a citizen. Indeed, exceedingly different. As a tourist you feel India is a land of dreams... but in fact it is a hard-working commercial jungle! The present overtaking the past. When you get "older" the past feels less rushed... but in this case, it truly was slower!

I painted in oils in India, the humidity caused huge delays in the drying. Lots of opportunities for flies etc. to stick to the canvas. Also, having found what you considered a quiet escape area suddenly you would be surrounded. So luckily, I always sketched as a tourist – you have no alternative.

Jaipur, Rajasthan – Blue City-Pink City – Udaipur (The Star!)

I enlarge on years past. India's population has more than doubled since the fifties, sixties and seventies...

Transport was always chaotic but many road names etc. in cities were English script (and local). Now I'm not sure. Traffic was always giving way to our 4-legged friends, and look after yourself! Bullocks, camels, horses, plus people (of all ages) with babies on their hips. Many taxis were old and untested! But everything used horns... animals alike! Traffic police, on a box used whistles.

In fact, I learnt to drive in Bombay (1956), long before Mumbai emerged and have a full Indian driving licence. Learning there prepared you to drive just anywhere. My husband Gus and myself took part in many car rallies, including the All India Event (8 days) a quicker way to see the country than even an American tourist. From North, South, East and West, NO time for sketching! We travelled in our indigenous Ambassador car nick-named Mr Y! No helpful additions, just cotton seat covers for comfort, I chose English chintz garden flowers, so we drove sitting on roses!

Buses were open windowed, crowded local trains likewise. So, I drove mostly myself but sometimes with the company driver, Ransum.

Gus was heavily involved as chairman of the Leonard Cheshire Home, Bethlehem House, so this gave me honourable access to visit in Bombay, many big and small companies' industries etc. to sell advertising space to raise funds for the many activities. Leonard Cheshire himself stayed with us on his various trips... I was so lucky, a truly charming man. Bethlehem House was his very first Home on the outskirts of the city, but now the city has pushed out to the countryside, Sadly.

There are many homes in India so visiting the new "new" New Delhi Home took me to the huge city of Government.

New Delhi is in total contrast to old Delhi, which is very historic. Fabulous narrow streets shuttered homes and shops galore. Shopping baskets carried on heads temple bells, chanting, flower garlands everywhere, saris bright, bare feet, smiling faces, shy smiles and crumbling splendour. After Partition, the Maharajas, princes etc forts and palaces, states broke up and became hotels, places of leaning all needing attention, which in so many cases have turned into a true tourist delight.

I was so fortunate because of Gus, to be invited to our Indira Ghandi's Garden Party, a Royal occasion India Style! Tea was served, no tea bags. And to meet Indira Ghandi herself, the then first female Prime Minister... Queen of India!

New Delhi is a city of huge roundabouts, wide roads, all tree lined and very few 4-legged transport vehicles, very modern, all in glorious honey toned stone. Vast hotels, worldwide standards. But, to see then armed forces on camels on parade (official) is quite something else. Beautiful camels, elegantly groomed and so tall, like their riders, totally breath taking!

Shopping in Bombay in the fifties was bazaar land, souk style, in the city. Then all the famous stores of the past had become offices and broken up into smaller shops. A muddle. It did take some time to adjust to seeing fish market, meat markets with noise and flies, not just enjoying a holiday experience, but that was it. Latterly our Goan cook, Lobo shopped and cooked, which was bliss!

Milk was rationed and of course there was then strict prohibition, black market booze thrived!

Likewise, art equipment then became a case of imports becoming difficult – Then "Camel" local oil paints were different but improving all the time. Oil pastels were good.

Water colours had to be from UK, not too heavy for carry on air travel bags.

But again, India has become totally Indianized. Everything eventually was and is being manufactured to perfection. For example, you cannot improve on Indian Silks – it is truly a country of skills... it was

truly a country of 'do it by hand' - Main roads were created by big stones being broken up by hand, to make little stones. Laid by hundreds of people making just enough to survive.

New generations are creating a huge new world. India is enormous. Manufacturing and factories grow everywhere. Mumbai arrived! Tourism is enormous.

My personal favourite state is Rajasthan. Driving there was magic. It is all on such a huge scale, mountains, plains and roads with a vast array of traffic. Sheer mountain roads with totally unprotected edges! You feel like a big ant taking many chances!

Rajasthan is like Bollywood... but for real!

Music, dance, holy men in beards. The Pushcar camel fair – a tented city in a desert. Please buy my beautiful camel!

It is a moving sea of colour and sound, dust in the air and at night the sky littered with stars, 'jewels in the sky'.

Jaipur, you just wonder how it was possible to build these huge palaces. Amber palace in particular, hanging on the mountains, as if by magic. Huge blocks of stone, bamboo scaffolding with man-made rope. Enormous proportions, blending with the landscape, carved, embossed in jewel stones, steep steps, stone lattice windows, marble floors, elephant transport. Fountains, many now running out of water. Lakes, crows and peacocks and just dogs all sharing, living history, passion and beauty.

Where to end – India has a fairy tale quality, but realistically all fairy tales have baddies! So be it. It is not all cream. With so many different beliefs, religions, mixed societies will not all run smoothly. Despite all, I feel India is one huge proud family.

But, the guild grows, the art continues and the world gets warmer and wetter, which causes worry and distress but the art goes on forever!



Diana painting in India 1972, and the finished painting.



Diana painting above is the Pushkar (camel) Fair, this is still a regular event in Rajasthan



HOW DID YOU DO?



Manet painting quiz

1. Six: Four to the left, two to the right.
2. She is the barmaid also seen in the centre of the image reflected in a mirror. The perspective is unusual.
3. The feet of the trapeze artist can be seen dangling down, in the top left-hand corner of the painting.
4. This is considered Manets last major work.
5. The composer Emmanuel Chabrier owned this painting and hung it over his piano.
6. German beer would often have been seen in a French bar, but the two bottles on sale here are ostentatiously English (bass pale ale), reflecting anti German feeling at the time.

Colour Quiz

1. Red orange yellow green blue indigo violet.
2. Blue.
3. Red Hot Chili peppers.
4. Red Green blue & yellow.
5. Isaac Newton.

Hope you have enjoyed this edition of the HACG newsletter.

Remember this letter is for you so please contribute as much as you can and in whatever way you can.

Have a wonderful summer,

Irene

