



Officers and Committee - 2020

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Jessica Saraga
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Also

Website entries Raymond Ore
Hire of Hooks Bob Sleeman
DVDs : Ken Head
Refreshments :
Website: Raymond Ore
<http://www.croydonartsociety.org.uk>

Welcome

Hello everybody, and a very warm welcome to our latest CAS Newsletter; the first of 2020. We find ourselves, at the start of the spring and summer season, in unprecedented times as this Covid-19 virus pandemic brings so much distress and disruption to normal life. But as a result, we probably have more time at ease, so please enjoy reading on to find out our latest news

Editorial

Following a very lively AGM we were delighted to welcome Neil Collins into the role of Chairman and thank him for rising to the challenge of the position. At the same time, we offer grateful thanks to Anthony Waldbaum for his sterling service as Chairman over the past four years (doesn't time fly) and for the fine shape he has left the Society in for proceeding forward into the new decade. It seems an understatement to say that Neil has taken over at a challenging time, not only with this wretched Coronavirus episode, but also at a time when some fundamental issues are being worked out in CAS generally. In a real sense circumstances have conspired to require almost a reinvention of our Society. But I'm sure that we will find a way to progress forward under Neil's Chairmanship, and with the support of the Committee and the help and enthusiasm of you the members, we can be successful in continuing to present and cultivate fine art in Croydon and perhaps also to a much wider audience in London and the nearby southern Counties.

Thankfully this pandemic will eventually pass, but at the time of writing, it's very unclear as to how, and more importantly when, things will return to a form of normality, and as to what that normality will consist of. In the meantime, things must proceed in some form and your CAS Committee have been searching for ingenious ways and means to continue and to respond to the situation in hand, but more about that later in the Newsletter.

At present the whole country is in a state of 'Lockdown' which in large part looks very much like house arrest. So we are gifted with ample time at home, which we may hope to spend in increased time at the easel, but at the same time the social isolation may militate against creativity. So I personally am looking forward to the end of lockdown and perhaps the chance once again to go sketching.

Phil Sadler

NEWS OF MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERS

Two new applicants for membership submitted their work for selection and membership was offered to both candidates.

We are pleased to welcome Mike Johnston and Moira Keenan and hope they will enjoy the many activities of the Society.

Lockdown

The Coronavirus episode seemed to have come into our general awareness in distinct phases. At first, we were washing our hands and singing happy birthday, but very quickly things progressed as there was a slow dawning that the country was dealing with a very serious threat.

There was of course some response required by CAS and this led the Committee to have detailed discussion as to what that should be: Inevitably it was the full curtailment of all activities involving gatherings. It then became a question as to what was possible given the limited opportunity available.

Being deprived of social contact is particularly challenging even for a reserved person and so it is not surprising that many will have delved, further than they normally might have done, into the realms of 'online' contact, via social media and conferencing platforms. Whilst such contact doesn't take the place of real social contact, it does manage to meet the rather lower aspiration of being better than nothing.

Whilst we are in our straightened circumstances, members' news as we know it is understandably scarce. But although not flying around to exhibitions or setting up one person shows, members are, I guess, still keeping busy and most probably 'cooking' up things to be ready to go when the restrictions are finally lifted.

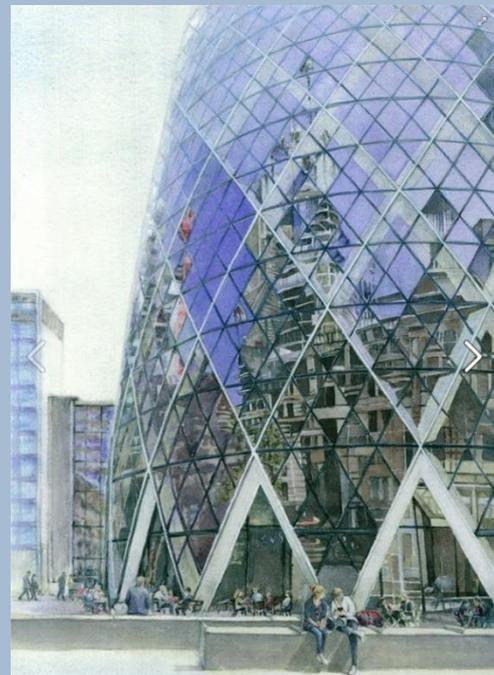
So if I may contribute my own news it would be that I've had the new and novel experience of taking part in many online meetings, with varying degrees of success. Some with very good results linking people in different countries and giving an insight into lockdown conditions overseas, and others, where the connections haven't been so good and people have just sat looking at a gallery of parties, with their voices being distorted and images running in stop motion. Very frustrating, but I suppose it's a start.

Ed

EXHIBITIONS

CAS Online Exhibition: It's a very new avenue for the Society to go down as we embark upon running our very own online exhibition. It is entitled 'Into the Light'. Online viewers will be able to perambulate through our pictures, as it were, with the click of a mouse. They will be able to read a short bio about the artist and about the subject of the picture. The Exhibition title 'Into the Light' invites multiple interpretations, of course not only restricted to the lighting effect in the image. I think we can look forward to being surprised and delighted seeing the various treatments chosen to meet the brief. We are currently looking into how we might be able to sell online. More about that another time.

Margaret Eggleton : Congratulations to Margaret who had her painting, "Gherkin Reflections" accepted for the RI Exhibition at the Mall Galleries 2-17 April



Have you been hung recently?

If you have taken part in an exhibition or Art event recently, whether online or not, please let us know and we can include your experience in the next newsletter. The submission details and deadline dates are in the bottom panel of the last page in this newsletter.

CAS 130th Annual Exhibition

19th November to 7th December 2019

The Croydon Art Society 130th Annual Exhibition was held in November in the Clocktower. The exhibition commenced with a very successful private viewing on the evening of Tuesday 20 November 2019, opened by the Worshipful Mayor of Croydon Councillor Humayun Kabir. During the very lively private viewing the Mayor presented the Society's awards. The Joan Kinder Salver was awarded to Yellon Huang, the Constance Cooper Trophy went to Henry Jones, and the Joan Sewell Award was won by Jackie Flaherty. Congratulations to them for their excellent work. The evening, progressed, the wine flowed, and it was all in all a very enjoyable and worthwhile private view, We ended up having sold 4 works over the evening; a great start to the exhibition.

During the exhibitions three-week duration, we had a total of 894 visitors viewing the works and chatting with stewards about the pictures and about the Society. It is always encouraging to hear such interest from our visitors and to see the abundance of appreciative entries written into the comments book.

The final statistics for the exhibition were that of the 150 works submitted by 49 members we had sold a total of 15 works. On top of these 105 greetings cards were sold, and no less than 44 calendars. Although the exhibition was up for a total of 18 days, viewing was only possible for 14 of those due to essential maintenance within the clocktower facilities.

It is noteworthy that this exhibition may well be the last one to be held within the Clocktower area, at least for the time being. The Croydon Council is now changing the function of their exhibition spaces to cater for larger and longer artistic events, each with a more focussed emphasis. Whilst this doesn't necessarily preclude CAS from taking up a spot within these new arrangements, the requirement of *longer* makes it more difficult for us to take part, bearing in mind limited resources in manpower and stewarding. After all we do need some time left over to spend at our easels!



Our President, Roger Lewis
welcomes the Mayor



Yellon Huang receives
The Joan Kinder Salver



Henry Jones receives the
Constance Cooper Trophy



Jackie Flaherty. receives
Joan Sewell Award



Art in Isolation

When Neil Collins took up the role of Chairman I don't think he could possibly have foreseen the current circumstances. But Neil has certainly risen to the challenge in giving firm leadership in our response to dealing with the situation. As well as leading the discussions, concerning solutions and ideas, he has also taken to writing a very lively two weekly Bulletin entitled 'Art in Isolation'. I think I speak for all the membership in thanking him for his commitment and dedication.

At the time of writing there have been two editions of 'Art in Isolation' which should have reached you by one medium or another, and very interesting they have been. The first edition set out the main aims of CAS during the incident. Just as a reminder these were:

- 1) *Make sure all our members have a lifeline, a person to contact should they need it, even if it is just for a chat about art or the weather.*
- 2) *Keep our members regularly advised of what the Society is doing in the light of the crisis and how the following months are likely to pan out*
- 3) *Give everyone something of a challenge during the period of isolation with a specific end goal in mind.*
- 4) *Longer term - fully exploring "on line virtual exhibitions. This might be the way forward for us even without the virus making physical exhibitions impossible.*

Of the many things that have been included in Neil's Bulletin, one of the most exciting is the 'Into the Light' challenge. The title lends itself to wide interpretation and should yield a good variety of compositions. The deadline for submitting work for this is 1st June 2020. It may seem a long time off now but I'm sure it will stealthily creep up on us and end up with an unseemly rush to finish our work and photograph it for submission.

One of the bugbears, I find, in submitting work online is the necessary chore of photographing our masterpiece. It is something of an art in itself and even after much application and diligence, in my experience the final result has the potential to be very unpredictable in terms of quality and fidelity. Many of us are probably reasonably accomplished at the task, but is it only me who find it a difficult and painstaking process to end up with an image which is only just about true to the original? I have a few processes that I use which may be helpful to others and I mention some of them here at risk of teaching my grandmother etc. Anyway here goes:

1. Take the photographs outside and out of direct sunlight, avoiding insects taking a starring role.
2. If you haven't got a tripod it helps to stay your camera on a single pole. I use a broomstick.
3. The photographs taken outside will probably have a cold bias and may require white balance adjustment to warm them up especially if you painted them in a warmer light.
4. It really is essential to have some sort of basic photographic processing software in order to extract a usable, rectangular, non-crooked and colour balanced image. There are a myriad of software available for this task, a lot of which is free to download, but do take abundant caution to avoid viruses (no pun intended).
5. Be aware that your picture viewed on your own computer screen may not be rendered the same on another screen. Quite what a non-expert is supposed to do about this is beyond my knowledge, but I do recall when it has been explained it sounded very expensive.

What's on Your Easel

During our period of confinement there is, of course, the possibility that so much 'stewing in our own juice' could impede the inspirational spark. As an antidote to this the call went out inviting members to share what is currently being worked upon; what is, as it were, on our easels.

The first to respond to the call was Andy Laidler who was working on two paintings:

Picture 1; Somewhere on Leith Hill (from photo and sketches). I liked the geometry of the scene and wanted to experiment with a quite limited palette using thick (acrylic) paint, applied with brush and also palette knife. I think it's partially successful, with a nice depth, but as usual the bold singular palette knife strokes I dream of turned into a slightly overworked concoction.

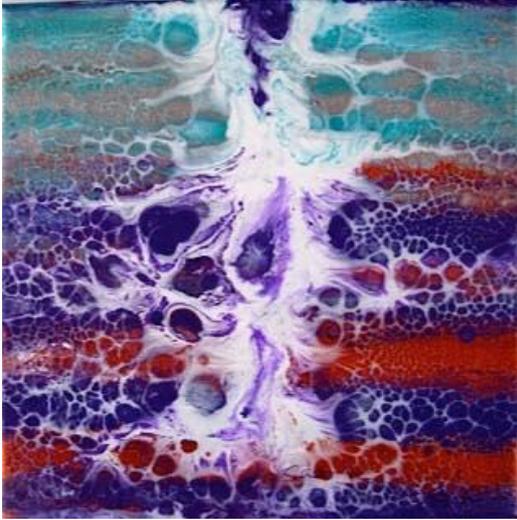


Picture 2. A friend of mine owns some land near the Moray Firth. He asked if I could paint a landscape, Moray Firth in the distance, fields tended by monks and being looked out upon by Mary Queen of Scots. An unlikely scenario but a challenge! Well it's driven me nuts, trying to get a composition that looks vaguely plausible. This is where it's at at the moment (after many revisions), blocked roughly in, and still not looking quite real. Monks too big/ small? Her arm wonky? Wheat sheaves too big? All good fun.

Thank you Andy. I particularly like the Leith Hill picture. It's amazing what surprises can happen when you try out a different palette

What's on Your Easel

Sandi Gray, was next to send in her works in progress. Sandi is working on some vibrant acrylic paintings:



I particularly like No 4 : It has some echoes of Van Gogh :

Phil Sadler is currently getting bogged down in a picture of the navigation of the River Wey. Phil writes: "This area around Woking is one of my favourite haunts offering an abundance of riverine subject matter. With this particular painting I think I've gone far too green and far too detailed,. It may come together and hopefully won't end up on a bonfire in my back garden".

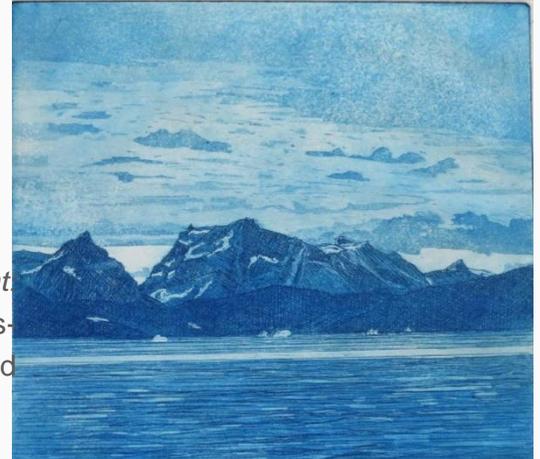


What's on Your Easel

Avril Sleeman has sent in images of her latest works: Avril writes: "These are my latest etchings (from my classes at the Kentwood Centre) and watercolours (from our cruise to see the Northern Lights). The etchings vary from a simple line etching of the Bodleian Library Oxford (one bicycle on the railings, hence the title) to a complex picture of "the Woodland floor" (actually worked up from a photograph I took in Kelsey Park). Most of the images (drawn, painted and etched) are of Iceland, Greenland or Norway; I am just fascinated by rock formations and the effect of water/wind erosion on landscapes. Even the last etching "Impressionist country" shows the eroded valley of the Seine, complete with caves in the rocks above Les Andelys".



Left
Tingvallavatn-
Iceland



Right
Into the wilderness-
Nuuk-Greenland



Left:
First sight of
Norway 8.30am
1.3.20



Right:
6.3.20; 1pm



Left:
A great storm.
1.3.20; 3pm

Below:

Alta's "park" noon 4.3.20

Below:

Sunset on Lofoten Islands 5pm.





Above: Near Alta 11am . 3.3.20



Above: Norwegian coast noon 1.3.20



Above: Near Tromso 1pm. 6.3.20



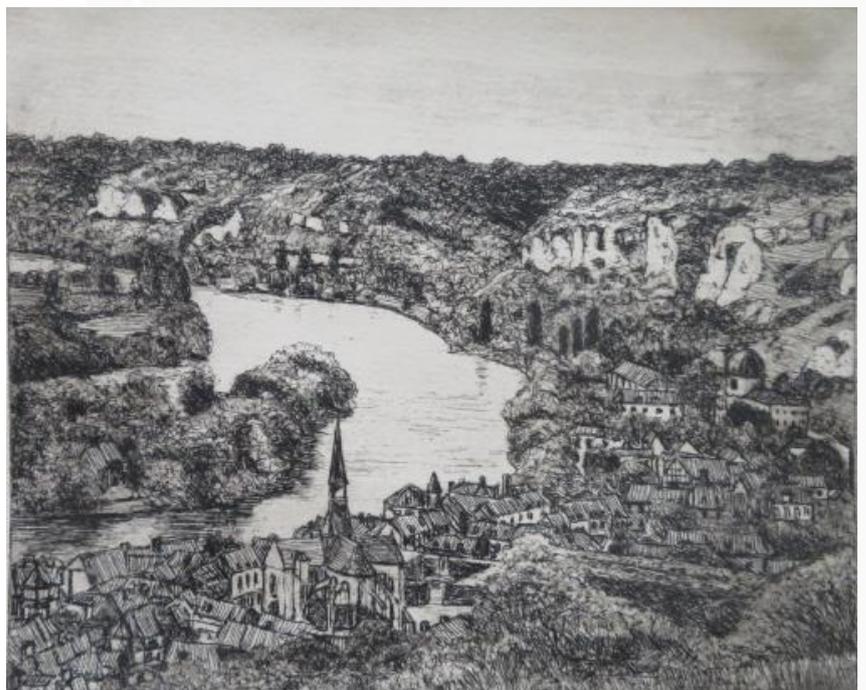
Above: North of Tromso noon 6.3.20



Above: The Woodland floor



Above: Solo study



Above: Impressionist country

Many thanks to everyone who sent in their latest works for this "What's on Your Easel feature".

Ed

Evening Activities

As you will be only too aware, our evening activity schedule has been summarily curtailed, with the remaining lectures, practicals and demonstrations being cancelled. We were rather looking forward to a variety of interesting activities but due to the risk of spreading Covid19 at the venue, your Committee responded quickly and cancelled the schedule to eliminate the risk.

The government also took temporary powers to make such gatherings illegal, and so our Monday evening meetings now seem like a dim and distant memory,

It's always risky to gaze into crystal balls, but I would expect some sort of revised normality may descend upon us, which could persist into the short and medium term, and which will still involve some form of 'social distancing' (a horrible term). This being so it would be clear that the evening activities as we have known them may be impossible to reinstate as long as these restrictions remain in place.

Everyone has been wracking their brains to come up with alternatives both for activities and for the Society's exhibitions. I'd just mention in passing that our Denbies exhibition is still planned to go ahead and we are still looking for an alternative venue for the 131st Annual. But as regards alternatives for other activities the options are particularly limited. After all most of life's activities do involve some form of human interaction at a radius closer than 2 metres.

The online options remain available, and these offer a vestige of potential. The drawbacks are that not all of us have the means to go online and once you do get there the experience is, in my own opinion, a bit weird. But it is better than nothing and certainly good enough for routine stuff like formal meetings. The potential for online exhibitions is still there and we will see what sort of success we have with them.

Sorry if all the above sounds gloomy and of course the jury is still out on what the medium-term normality will eventually become. But if you do have any amazing, creative and innovative ideas for alternatives to our evening activities then please feel free to share them



Social Events

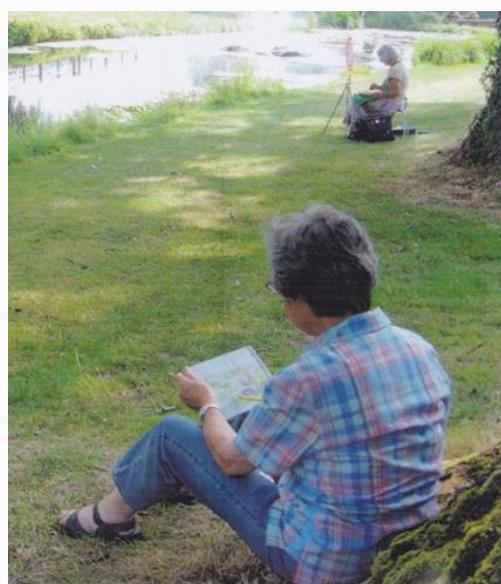
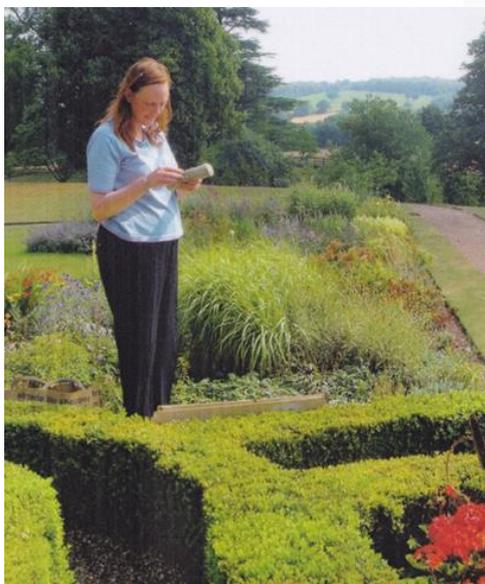
by Bob Sleeman

Looking back in my records I note that in 2002 CAS organised a trip to visit Loseley Park and in 2003 to Penshurst Place. I recall an en-plein-air session at Titsey Place in 2006 I think. The house of course is worth a visit, so non-artist partners were also entertained. These days there is a pleasant café and interesting gardens as well as many walks (<https://www.titsey.org/>) so perhaps it's time for a Social Events Secretary to step up?



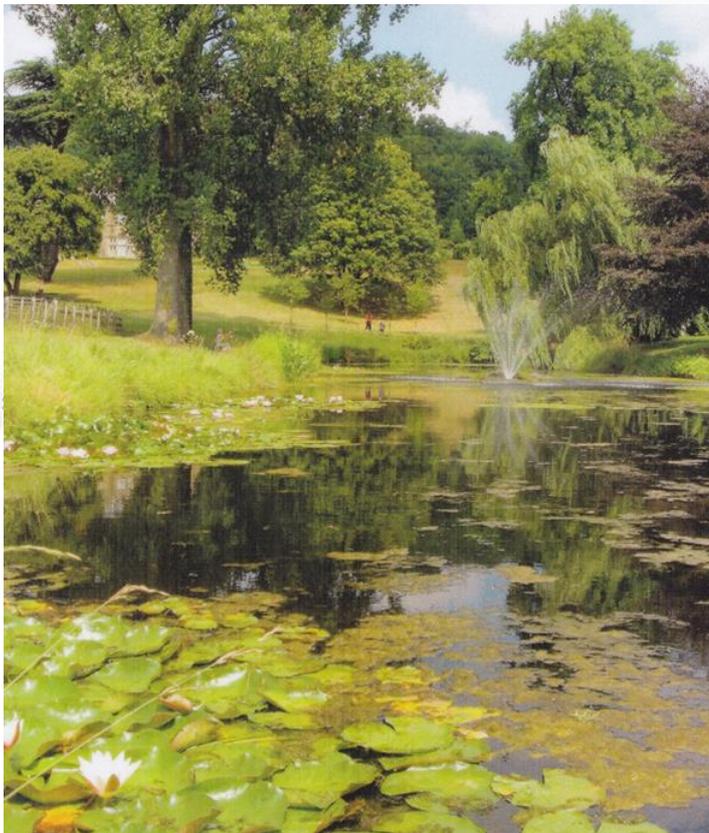
Joan Aeschlimann and Avril Sleeman reflect on the ideal location at Titsey

Titsey is not far from Oxted on the way from Warringham towards Limpsfield and just north of the M25, so we didn't need to hire a coach or organise coffee, lunch and tea as we used cars and did a "bring your own grub". Hopefully such an adventure will be once again possible before too long and perhaps CAS members could enjoy the exchange of tips and tricks and friendly criticism to improve our artistic efforts while "on location".



Susan Skinner and Pat Franco selected different locations, with Joan in her shady spot

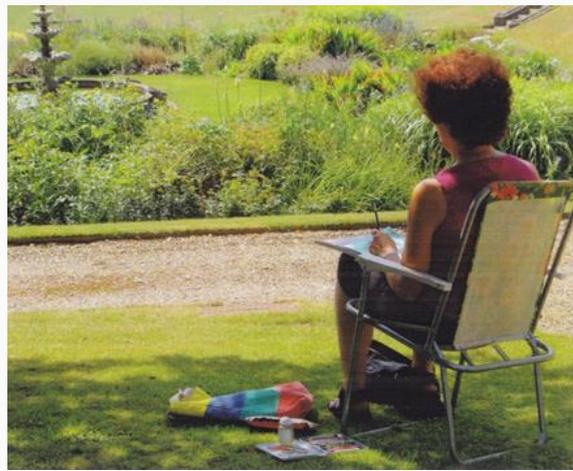
There's nothing like a pleasant day spent in the company of fellow artists relaxing together in our wonderful British countryside. In days gone by I'm told that a group of CAS members ventured across the Channel for painting holidays. The SAA site (<https://community.saa.co.uk/tuition-and-workshop-finder/>) currently has 38 painting holidays for 2020 advertised from Scarborough to Wadebridge, from the Cotswolds to Andalucia, from Kalymnos in Greece to Benllech in Wales or from Oban in Scotland to an old barn in Sussex. Maybe these will be more attractive in 2021 if such ventures are still viable. Avril has found that one of the joys of cruising is a detailed watercolour when moored in a beautiful location or quick sketches as the boat sails up fjords, or as the sun rises or sets over a distant shoreline. While working from a photograph is often a practical solution, I observe that working in situ can be even more satisfying and provides a very memorable holiday souvenir. In fact we have a whole wall dedicated to holiday locations painted in situ over many years but photo albums sit on shelves rarely opened. The framed pictures bring back happy memories and are definitely not-for-sale.



Artists hiding under trees and at the top of the lake



Which artist is this?



Avril selects something simple

For some members March, April and May 2020 will have been a productive period for art as it is a fulfilling and absorbing pastime that easily fits the mantra of Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives. I have witnessed some patient work on copper plate with sharp tools and an acid bath to produce an etching. Sadly without the etching press located at the closed AE College the finished article cannot be set free to dazzle an audience. The current crisis makes it difficult to plan for an exhibition at Denbies in September or the Annual Exhibition. You can of course project your own "Into the Light" picture for display on the CAS website.

Here is mine – "From the bedroom window at 6:30 am" - but it's a cropped photograph so it doesn't count!



On a Lighter Note

On the pitfalls of undertaking Commission Work: John Taphouse Writes

:A friend of mine, sadly, died a couple of years ago and I offered to paint a portrait of him for his widow. She was enthusiastic about it and she sent me a selection of photographs to work from.

I duly completed the portrait in oils on canvas. I was happy that it was a good likeness, bearing in mind the quality of the photo.

When I presented the finished work to her, I was anxious to see her reaction.

"It's a lovely painting" she said " but it isn't quite him. Can't put my finger on what's wrong."

I offered to try again and she gave me another photo. After several hours of work, I completed opus number two.

I thought that she must like it but she said that she preferred the first one!!!

She took the portrait anyway and a day or so later, she 'phoned me to say that she had shown it to her daughter. She had her reservations but they both agreed that it looked better on it's side!

There's no pleasing some people. However we are still friends. Incidentally I had shown the portraits to other mutual friends and they all thought it was a good likeness

Ken and Sylvia Head have sent in 'A Tale of the Unexpected' (with apologies to Roald Dahl)

In these times when we are discouraged from even walking to the end of our road, we had a surprising postal delivery. A holiday brochure landed on the mat! All the usual exotic places one could visit even as early as June, including Safari holidays in Kenya. The front page sported a large photo of some striped animals crossing a road. Ken pondered on it, and then said "Do you think this an African version of a Zebra Crossing"!!

Advice for Life Drawing

Helen Draper found this useful cutting for practical guidance in our next life drawing evening,

♂ the REAL difference between men & women ♀

by Ann James Massey SWA CP&A

Most people are positive that they know the differences between the sexes, but they usually aren't aware of the *real* difference: the location of the belly button!

A woman's navel is located below her waist and a man's is located at, or above his waist. Essentially this means that a woman's waist is higher in the torso (allowing sufficient space for the womb and pregnancy), while a man's waist is lower (creating a longer back for better leverage when lifting). As a result, a woman's centre of balance is located at her hips and a

man's is at his shoulders. Have you noticed that for the most part, a woman will carry a child on her hip, but a man will carry that same child on his shoulders?

I'm sure everyone remembers the experiment where a woman can lift a chair and a man can't. Place a chair against a wall. Have a man and a woman, in turn, lean over the chair at an **absolute** right angle, head touching the wall, and try to pick up the chair as they straighten up. Ninety five per cent of men are unable to do so. Unless he pushes

back a bit to start the momentum, he is completely off balance and quite incapable of lifting the chair and himself simultaneously. A woman has no such difficulty.

Besides being essential knowledge to the artist, there is another advantage to knowing this anatomical fact. The next time you suffer from gender confusion when you meet someone with scruffy clothes, long hair and earrings, or loose clothing, short hair and a nose stud, you can always inquire as to the location of their belly button!

Here's a view you may be familiar with. Feel free to paint from it as it's my own image of a visit in those times when we were free to travel around the world.



WEBSITE AND BOOK OF ARTISTS

We have now completed a brand new look and feel for the Society's website, yet there are still a great many members, new and old, who do not have an entry on the site nor in the Book of Artists which is on display at every exhibition. Now is a great time to get your name and a few of your pictures added. At present this is FREE to all members so why not take advantage, you are entitled to it.. For details refer to our webmaster Raymond Ore ray@raymondore.co.uk

Get in touch

Contribute to future editions of the newsletter by sending your News/Exhibitions reports and any items of interest.

Please let the Editor, Phil Sadler have your contributions

Deadline: 15th August 2020

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