

PRISM

December 2020

News of art & events



www.stalbans-artociety.org.uk

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COVER STORY

ASPECTS OF THE ABBEY

By Linda Cavill



I was thrilled to win The St Albans Trophy for my painting of the interior of the Cathedral. Over the years I have painted many exterior views of this lovely building but had never worked out how I could successfully depict the interior. All those high arches, doorways and windows are a bit overwhelming.

Having created a series of montage paintings of Venice made me consider trying to use a similar approach for the cathedral interior. I took many photos, some looking into the highest points and I then played around with layout. I wanted to achieve the sense of the soaring archways and the shafts of light which come through the windows.

Using a portrait format I divided the paper into several sections with very narrow masking tape, working with a limited colour palette of black, white, red and yellow and using acrylic inks, printing rollers, collaged paper and a water sprayer, I created the background. I then removed the tape and chose elements from my photos for each section. The detail was achieved with pieces of card dipped in the ink.

I was very pleased with the painting as I felt that I had managed to capture the atmosphere of the interior.

Enclosed in this issue:

Booking form for Susan Chester workshop
Booking form for Judit Matthews workshop
Booking form for Mark Warner workshop

THE CHAIRMAN WRITES...

St Albans Art Society is firmly placed to march on for the foreseeable future



Covid-19 continues to play havoc with us all and particularly in the world of art, with galleries closing worldwide and thousands of local art societies, such as ours, ending their existences, many of which having been around for nearly a century. Despite all of this, St Albans Art Society, which has survived thick and thin in its 125 years history, is firmly placed to march on, for the foreseeable future.

There are significant reasons for this. We have a strong and enthusiastic membership, a keen committee and money in the bank, thanks to sound housekeeping, particularly in the past five years. But sometime early next year, the committee will restore the membership fees and may need to consider whether we need to increase them following loss of revenue caused by Covid-19. It must be said that our fees are among the lowest of any art society in Hertfordshire.

And so I intend, in this penultimate** Chairman writes column, to try to dispel all the gloom, doom, and anxiety spreading. We have now restored the committee to the level laid down by the rules and I am confident that the new faces – new Secretary Margaret

Channon refers to the changes in her report in this issue on page 4 – will also add strength and depth to our activities, At the time of writing this, we are investigating the possibility of using the Zoom app, now used by millions of organisations worldwide. The committee, but not sitting as an official committee, trialed Zooming, which we found successful.

In the meantime, many of our members have used the lockdowns to abandon today's problems and reached for their paintbrushes, I included. As soon as I open the door to my studio, everything else shuts. What a wonderful world this art business is and perhaps even more so with the stunning and glittering autumnal colours out there for all to see. Do remember that come next May at the annual meeting, you will have the chance to bring along one of your canvases completed in the dull days. For now, happy painting!

Edward Bevin Chairman

**The Chairman has told the Committee that he will resign at or before the May AGM in 2021.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Members' input is very popular so please carry on sending in your articles for inclusion in the magazine and your feedback.

For contact details of Janet King - Editor - see your membership card.

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Hello Everyone,

It seems all change of late and now we are unfortunately facing another lockdown due to an increase in Covid 19, but very hopefully, we shall be over the worst by Christmas. There has also been a lot of changes on the Committee in the wake of Sandie's resignation. We appreciate the many years Sandie has served as our Secretary and Vice Chairman (see the Chairman's tribute on the back page of this issue) and hope that she will remain a member of the Society and visit our lectures once we get the all clear to meet again. Our former Treasurer Tracey Gent has left the Committee and become a mum to daughter Alanna. - see page 12.

Valerie Chivers has offered to be our new Treasurer and **Margaret Channon** (that's me) has offered to be your new Secretary. **Clare Timmis**, who is new to the Committee, has offered to be Minutes Secretary.

Sally Griffiths has offered to be our new interim Vice Chair and will also continue to manage future workshops.

Iris Green and **Kim Lawrence** are organising our future lectures etc., for 2020/21 which we hope to have for next season.

Gordon Bridges, also new to the Committee, is our man for IT and Website Management.

Janet King our PRISM Editor and **Janet Blackham** our Membership Secretary retain their present roles on the Committee. **Edward Bevin** also remains as our Chairman.

After all this, we are only an 'Acting Committee' as all these changes will yet have to be approved formally by the Committee, and also by the Membership at the next AGM.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a much happier New Year.



Margaret Channon Secretary

SAAS online NEWSLETTER

Until recently, **Sandie Ford** sent out the SAAS monthly online NEWSLETTER. However after many years on the committee, she has decided to resign. **PRISM editor, Janet King** has now taken on the added role of publishing the SAAS online NEWSLETTER. If you have any material you think will be of interest to other members about your art activities, please contact **Janet King**

Royal Institute of Oil Painters Exhibition 2020



The October Newsletter mentioned that member **Clive Patterson** had a painting selected for showing in the Royal Institute of Oil Painters at the

Mall Galleries. Due to the November Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, this exhibition was unable to go ahead in the gallery, but was formatted as an online exhibition instead. Well done, Clive.

Jan Munro's online short course 'Autumn Landscape in Watercolour'

Jan Munro has been busy making a series of short videos of herself painting an Autumn Landscape in Watercolour. They are available to purchase and keep for £30. Visit her website www.janmunro.com. On the menu bar is a page called 'online courses'. Click on this and you will see a taster for the Autumn Landscape course. If you are interested, you will need a password to access the course. Email Jan to arrange a bank transfer and then you will be given the password.

Member Clive Dolphin experiences online Life Drawing

When the lockdown started I already knew a large number of models and life drawing organisers. Most of them were self-employed or freelance. With the lockdown they lost their income source and most of them got no help from the government. It was a brutal position and one I was keen to help people recover from.

Over the course of barely a month people started organising life drawing sessions online. The technology to do teleconferencing, the now infamous Zoom was combined with online ticketing platforms to allow people to dial in from their homes see a model on screen and draw the model.

At the beginning I saw life drawing organisers, models and artists I knew. This rapidly changed as we

became aware that online everything is global. I started seeing models and attending sessions run all over the world.

How does it all work?

I find sessions that are recommended from friends or on social media. I follow a link to the organisers site and book a ticket on their web site. Just prior to a session starting I get an email with a link. I click on the link and Zoom starts. I'm looking at a screen with the organisers greeting people as they join. At the start time the view changes to the model and the organiser gives the timing for the poses.

I have come to love this format. I have drawn

across Asia, Australia, America (north and south), Europe and made many friends across the world. I have produced hundreds of drawings and paintings from online sessions since March. All this as well as supporting models and

organisers I know in the UK, and now the world.

In summary the world of life drawing has transformed itself. There is now far more life drawing happening

over the internet than in person. The experience, whilst different, is still a valid artist experience. I believe that online life drawing is something that will be with us for some time to come.



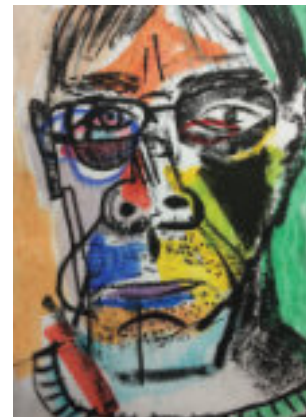
The Discerning Eye 2020 Exhibition

A show of small works independently selected by six prominent figures from different areas of the art world: two artists, two collectors and two critics.

Well done to member **Brian Innes** who has had his artwork 'Self Portrait' (left) selected for the *Discerning Eye Exhibition* sponsored by ING, the Dutch financial institution. His selected piece of work was done in dry point with chine colle.

For the first time this year the exhibition is being held virtually and will run until 31 December 2020 showcasing the selected works with commentary and introductions by the selectors and a new platform for viewers to buy the artwork directly. .

www.discerningeye.org/exhibition/intro.php



Winter Programme of events for 2021

Covid-19 continues to play havoc with the Society's programme of events. If government guidance permits, we plan to run these three Saturday workshops.

However, due to covid-19, to ensure spacing guidelines the number of students will have to be restricted. Also, we can INITIALLY only offer each member one of these workshops to give everyone a fairer chance of being successful.

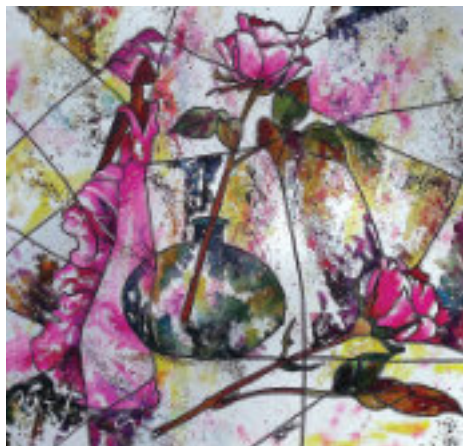
If however, you are keen to attend more than one of the workshops, you can apply for your second and third preference, but you will only get a place if there is a space.

On each booking form, please indicate in the box your order of preference 1, 2, or 3.

LECTURES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Our lectures programme continues to be thwarted by covid-19 and number restrictions prevent us from holding an actual meeting at Marshalswick Community Hall. Consequently, the committee is considering preparing an online/zoom programme of lectures and demonstrations and with this in mind we are asking the membership if this is something they would like and would participate in.

We will only proceed if there are enough members interested and committed to online zoom programme meetings. If you would like us to pursue this approach and you are interested in joining in such lectures, please affirm your interest by contacting our new Programme Secretary **Iris Green**, using this email address below.
studio@stalbans-artsociety.org.uk



VIBRANT STILL LIFE IN WATERCOLOUR

Tutor: Susan Chester

Saturday 30th January 2021

Create a simplified, abstract, vibrant still life using, varied watercolours. Susan is one of our talented SAAS artists, who lives and paints in Bovingdon Hertfordshire. Susan often changes colours to create a 'sense of the moment'. Her paintings are influenced by The Impressionists and the vibrant colours and shapes in stained glass windows. Susan aims to take away the fear of working on a large sheet of white paper and to give confidence in drawing with a heavy black marker pen.

She will set up a simple still life and demonstrate how to draw with a marker, adding the skill of mixing watercolour paint on paper/wet in wet. With lots of splashing, aiming to achieve a vibrant semi-representational painting.

The participants will produce this vibrant, varied coloured painting without too much fuss taken over the drawing – letting the paint do the talking!

WHIMSICAL WILDLIFE ILLUSTRATION WITH PEN, INK, WATERCOLOUR AND COLLAGE

Tutor: Judit Matthews

Saturday 27th February 2021

Judit is a Hungarian born illustrative artist, working as a professional artist for about 10 years. Her work has appeared in several publications including The Artist and the Leisure Painter magazines. She has appeared on Channel 4's Watercolour Challenge and been named Landscape artist of the year by the Surrey Life magazine. She has exhibited around the country including annual open exhibitions of the Society of Women Artists and the Society of Graphic Fine Art.

Judit will begin with the importance of composition, followed by a short demo on composition and techniques. She will also demonstrate how to simplify shapes, create pattern while including humour and narrative. She will develop animals and figures through pattern and colour and will provide supporting photographs for inspiration. Judit wants to inspire people to achieve an illustrative painting with a mixture of design and quirky artwork.



EXPRESSIVE SEASCAPES IN ACRYLICS

Tutor: Mark Warner

Saturday 20th March 2021

Experiment with line, colour and contrast within a seascape acrylic painting

He adores using colour while interpreting the light, weather conditions and a love for the materials. He makes sketches created outside as well as notes and photographs taken on location then worked back in the studio.

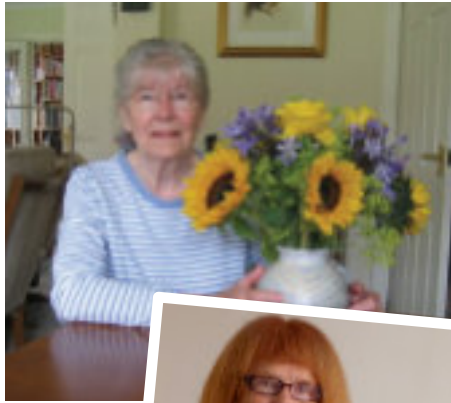
Sketching is at the heart of his work. This is integral to the development of a piece, many times forming part of the painting itself. His distinctive use of line and colour has aided his sweeping use of perspective and atmosphere.

Mark exhibits in both England and Wales and has many works in private collections.

Mark starts by explaining his approach to painting with examples of his distinctive style and an initial demonstration enabling participants to experiment with colour theory, use acrylics in a variety of ways and how a drawing can influence a painting.

Flowers for the two Janet

Janet Blackham and **Janet King** have organised the Annual Exhibition for the Art Society since 2015. Prior to the 2020 Exhibition they announced that they would both be stepping down from this role and 2020 was to be their final year. However, covid-19 prevented them from running the show this year and things are still uncertain for 2021. The committee is keeping their fingers crossed that the Exhibition won't be a victim again. As yet, a new organiser hasn't been appointed.



As a thank you to the two Janets, in recognition of all the hard work involved, the committee presented them each with a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

Both Janets say they have enjoyed organising the Exhibition, but think it is time for somebody else to take on the role and bring some new ideas. They would like to thank all the contributing members who have always willingly volunteered to help and make each Exhibition a great success.

Website Design, Management and Support

Since 1999 **WordsAndPeople.co.uk** have created attractive, fast loading sites with helpful navigation and easy maintenance. We provide a complete end-to-end service including: Brand design, Design for web and print, Hosting, Support and Email.

We have helped a broad range of companies with their visual media since 1999 from: ...Accountants to Acrobats, ...Body Guards to Beauty Salons, ...Corporates and Charities...

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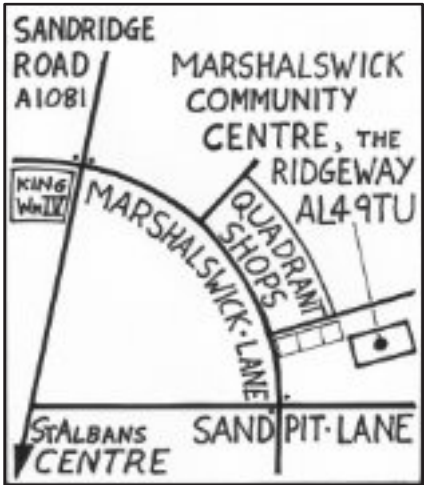


Some of our recent website productions

Logos for various website production clients: Transform Africa (transformafrica.org), Care Expertise (careexpertise.co.uk), Advocacy in Barnet (advocacyinbarnet.org.uk), PSANDR (psandr.com), and Talking Image (talkingimage.co.uk).

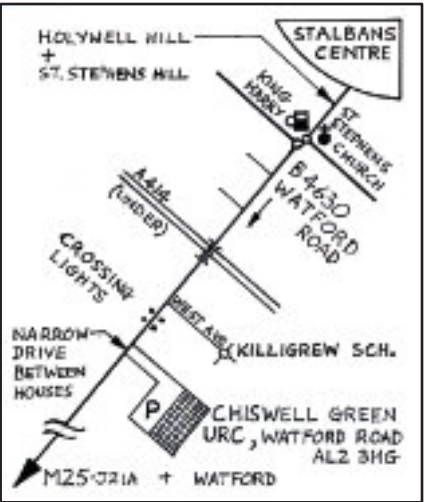
TALK TO YOUR COMMITTEE

- CHAIRMAN**
Edward Bevin
- INTERIM VICE CHAIR**
Sally Griffiths
- SECRETARY**
Margaret Channon
- TREASURER**
Valerie Chivers
- MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**
Janet Blackham
- PRISM EDITOR**
Janet King
- WEBSITE MANAGER**
Gordon Bridges
- PROGRAMME SECRETARIES**
- WORKSHOPS**
Sally Griffiths
- LECTURES**
Iris Green
- LIFE DRAWING**
Kim Lawrence
- MINUTES SECRETARY**
Clare Timmis



VENUE for MEETINGS
The Society meets for discussions and meetings at **Marshalswick Community Centre**, The Ridgeway, St Albans, AL4 9TU. Most meetings start at 7.30pm

VENUE for WORKSHOPS
One day workshops are held at **United Reformed Church**, Watford Road, Chiswell Green, St Albans, AL2 3HG



www.stalbans-artsociety.org.uk
Visit the website or our facebook page for regularly updated news of what's on at the Society.



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This autumn why not plan to produce your own personalised Christmas Cards



to send out to people that mean so much to you. Use your own paintings or prints as a front cover to give your card a unique and personal feel.

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CHAIRMAN'S CRITIQUE

Turner at Tate Britain

There is something magical about this greatest, true professional, English, artist JMW Turner...

One morning during lockdown, I woke early and as I lay awake my mind went back to a torrid meeting I had just chaired in Paris on a sultry, misty early October day. I needed to get out fast and ambled along the Seine and as I approached the mighty Grand Palais, there was a long and deep queue of people stretching like a python entwining itself around the massive building. Near to the main entrance was a gigantic poster, with the words J M W Turner emblazoned on it. All these French art enthusiasts patiently waiting to see one of our country's greatest artists made me feel proud to be English. With the help of my international Press card, I was allowed in.

And now, 37 years after, here he is again on home soil in another retrospective inviting us into 'Turner's Modern World.'

A true professional

This exhibition underlines many of his attributes as a true master. For example, it proves that he was that relatively rare thing among English painters – a thorough-going true professional whose total motivation was above all else, visual. Amateur was just what Turner was not as an artist. He trained the long and hard way, not just in the Royal Academy schools, but also as a topographical draughtsman for the engraver and as a copyist of other works.

There is something magical about Turner. Only a gifted artist can have this pulling power, whether he paints oil on canvas, or watercolours. He was much travelled and made a great many journeys, which in the 1800s could be thoroughly tiring and tiresome. He did this to study different

Battle of Trafalgar



horizons, oceans and landscapes, as well as industrial scenes and sites in turbulent times. And he travelled across the length of Britain and following one of his shortest trips, he came to draw the stunning West End of the great Abbey which is now St Albans Cathedral, although sadly, this does not appear in the show.

A key dynamic

But back to wars. Two decades of conflict with France through French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars induced a key dynamic to Turner's work. His canvases during this period seem to show that he faced these difficult times as though he was part of the front line of activities. This becomes clear with his spectacular *Battle of Trafalgar*, 1806-8, with a warship in full action, with threatening skies, turbulent seas and stranded small boats heavy with sailors. Then there's his kinetic *Field of Waterloo*, 1818, in which he demonstrates the impasto technique, where some of his brush strokes appear to be coming out of the canvas. Here we have a spectacle with profound implications. The army is battling against nature, established order is transformed, within a few minutes, into an inferno watched by dark and silent crowds from the other side of

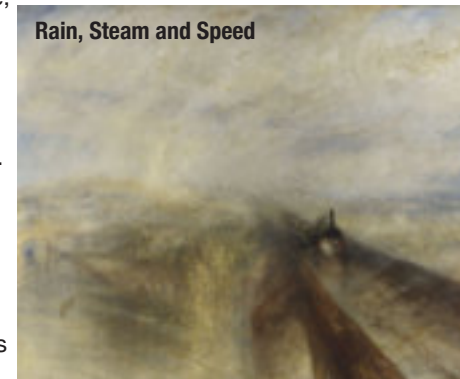
Field of Waterloo



the river. Waterloo is a bleak wilderness of grieving and Turner captures the scene like no other artist. I recall the onlookers at the Grand Palais studying this canvas in seemingly unbelief.

There have always been suggestions that Turner influenced the Impressionists. And if proof is needed, then it is provided by his magnificent *Rain, Steam and Speed*, 1844, just seven years before his death. Here we have the ultimate Turner in this work most easily described as a classic near Impressionist. The dimly perceived Great Western Railway rolling stock appearing from thick smoke could easily be mistaken for a Monet express heading towards the Gare Saint-Lazare at the end of a long journey. Of all the 150 key works in this exhibition, including major loans as well as paintings and rarely seen drawings, and watercolours, *Rain, Steam and Speed* is the one that I go back to and study time and time again. A masterpiece from a true

Rain, Steam and Speed



English artist and thoroughbred. To have the honour of being buried in St Paul's Cathedral, one must be counted among the 'greats.' Turner is one of them.

Edward Bevin Chairman

Turner's Modern World at the Tate Britain Gallery runs until 7th March 2021

The Battle of Trafalgar, oil paint on canvas. Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856. The Field of Waterloo, oil on canvas. The National Gallery, London. Rain, Steam and Speed - the Great Western Railway, oil on canvas. The National Gallery, London.

THANK YOU, SANDIE...



A leading stalwart of the Society stands down

Sandie Ford, a leading stalwart of the Society, who organised two summer exhibitions, collated our online monthly Newsletter and held the post of Deputy Chairman for more than two years, has stood down. In her resignation letter to Chairman Edward Bevin, she said that she no longer had the spare time to continue as a Committee member and Vice Chairman, although she will continue to be a member and will attend events whenever she can. In response Edward praised her for her untiring work for the Society over a long



Sandie, below right, organised two of the Society's Annual Exhibitions in the Old Town Hall

period and her loyalty to him during her work as Secretary and then Vice Chairman.

Sandie, who was a much-respected Head Teacher in Hertfordshire

until her retirement in 2000, has had a great interest in painting and the arts all her life. She is particularly fascinated by the relationship between colours and patterns and tends to choose a different theme each year to focus upon rather than just painting (in acrylic), still life, landscapes or portraits. Her canvases have often been critically acclaimed at Society exhibitions and elsewhere.

Edward Bevin
Chairman



Sandie, back row third from right, with the 2019-2020 committee

...CONGRATULATIONS, TRACEY

The committee and the SAAS membership offer our congratulations to **Tracey Gent** and her partner Andrew on the birth of their daughter Alanna on Monday 9th November.

Until recently, Tracey served on the Society committee as

both Treasurer and Website Manager, but she has reluctantly decided to step down and pass on these roles to focus on motherhood.

We are thrilled for her and wish her all the best on her new adventure as a mum.



Tracey and baby Alanna