

The *Easel*

THE NEWS & VIEWS OF THE BROMLEY ART SOCIETY



The Floor Sander's Daughter
John Marshall

In this issue:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| The Bells of St Mary's.....p.5 | 'Cardiff? Why Cardiff'p.9 |
| The Picasso Museum in Malagap.6 | The Floor Sander's Daughter.....p.12 |
| The Mall Gallery.....p.8 | Whistler and the Thames at Dulwichp.14 |

WINTER 2013



Bromley Art Society bringing artists together since 1947

Honorary Committee Members

Pat Tucker

vice chairman

leslie_tucker@madasafish.com

Allan Davies

chairman

allan.davies@btinternet.com

Penny Elliott

monthly programme organiser

penny@99sunnydays.co.uk

David Goodier

vision and sound

davidgoodier@btinternet.com

Derrick Waller

Committee Member

Christine Richards

secretary

christine.r@which.net

Liz Crossingham

treasurer

crossinghamliz@hotmail.com

Brenda Sayburn

membership secretary

davidsayburn@talktalk.net

Julie Collins

Ripley workshops

julieann54@hotmail.co.uk

Arthur Brown

exhibitions

browna59@sky.com

Ailsa Chapman

editor, The Easel

ailsa.chapman@btinternet.com

Adrian Fowle

webmaster

adrian@fowle.co.uk

www.bromleyartsociety.org.uk

Membership of Bromley Art Society

Membership of Bromley Art Society commences on 1st January each year.

FEES for 2014 - Single £18, Joint £25, Student (under 23) £5.

Membership Secretary - for contact details see above.

Membership includes receiving *The Easel* every quarter, monthly meetings to enjoy super demonstrations and professionally delivered illustrated talks, plus invitations to show your work at our exhibitions.

Bromley Art Society is where friendships may be cultivated, especially at the weekly workshops at Ripley Arts Centre (every Wednesday).

Our monthly meetings usually take place at 8.00 pm on the first Friday of each month (except January and August), at Shortlands Golf Club, Meadow Road, Shortlands, Bromley, Kent BR2 0DX. Tel: 020 8460 8828. Please visit **www.bromleyartsociety.org.uk** for further information.

Editor's Sketch

Welcome to the 'new look' *The Easel*. As well as a new editor, yours truly, we also have a new design and format, which I hope you will enjoy reading just as much as the previous one. *The Easel* is now produced mainly as a digital publication, but for those members of BAS who do not have email, you will still receive a printed paper copy so that you don't miss out on what's going on at BAS.

Firstly, I would like to thank my predecessor Allan Davies for all the hard work he did as editor of *The Easel*. I understand he was at the helm for about 10 years - a mighty feat of endurance indeed!

By way of a brief introduction to myself, I have been a member of BAS for a few years, although I confess not a very active one apart from my online gallery which I update every year, and exhibiting at one or two exhibitions. I have also written a profile on my BAS online gallery, which you are free to read at your leisure, to save space in *The Easel* for more interesting subjects!

Please continue to send in your news, views and opinions on what's happening at BAS or the art scene in general, or perhaps you have some artistic technical hints and tips you would like to share with us. Are there any new members who have joined during the past year? If so please send us a profile with some photos of your work, and we'll include you in a future edition.

All copy (Word documents) and pictures (JPGs) should be emailed to me (details on page 2) by the copy deadline.

In the meantime may I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Happy Painting!

Ailsa Chapman

The Easel is published four times a year and is distributed to BAS members.

The copy deadline for the Spring 2014 edition is 7 February 2014

Chairman's Blog

Dear BAS friends and fellow creative beings,

We are now in the 21st Century and using an up-to-date means of communication. Hurrah for Ailsa! Hurrah for the Silver Surfers! Hurrah for brilliant stewarding of our pennies! Hurrah for Adrian and the BAS web presence!

We have enjoyed a super year of exhibitions and friendship building: the monthly meeting venue has been a joy, and Penny's programme of speakers/demonstrators has been a delight.

The only difficulty has been with the state of our finances and that is being efficiently managed to resolve an unhappy situation as quickly as possible. There was no Treasurer's Report at this year's AGM in February. Be assured that there will be a report at the next AGM. In the meantime, let us all enjoy the fruit of Ailsa's creativity with a keyboard.

Enjoy Christmas and all the opportunities the season brings to express ourselves using all that we have in our creativity kits.

Be blessed,
Allan

What's On

Dulwich Picture Gallery:

**An American in London:
Whistler and the Thames:**

Until 12 January 2014

The National Gallery:

**Facing the Modern: The Portrait
in Vienna 1900:**

Until 12 January 2014

The Courtauld Gallery:

**The Young Durer: Drawing the
Figure**

Until 12 January 2014

Somerset House:

**Stanley Spencer: Heaven in a
Hell of War:**

Until 26 January 2014

Tate Britain:

**Painting Now: Five
Contemporary Artists:**

Until 9 February 2014

Tate Modern:

**The EY Exhibition: Paul Klee -
Making Visible:**

Until 9 March 2014

The Bells of St Mary's

Well, actually, there only seems to be one bell in this particular St Mary's Church at College Road in Bromley, but those of us who experienced the lovely weekend we spent there in October with our BAS exhibition felt that it deserved fanfares and a peal of bells.

This church has an interesting history and is well worth a visit. The wealthy Scott family of Sundridge Park was the benefactor for the purchase of land and the building of the church which, when the foundation stone was laid by Sir Samuel Scott in 1863, was a simple oblong building of little architectural merit. In 1881, thanks to fund raising and the continuing generosity of the Scott family, the chancel was added. The transepts and tower were added in 1892 and 1900, the foundation stone in each case being laid by Lady Scott. The interior is stunningly beautiful. All the original stained glass windows survive together with the painted chancel, the beauty and detail of which invite hours of study. The Hill and Son organ is reputed to be the best in the borough.

Earlier in the year, this church, celebrating its 150th anniversary, invited the society to hold an arts and crafts exhibition – its first ever. However, we were not to know what a splendid weekend it would turn out to be. Our pictures were displayed all over the church with a lovely space near the door for the craft stalls, next to which was a café, open all day, serving tea, coffee and scrumptious home-made cakes. From Friday to Sunday singers and instrumentalists, many drawn from the congregation and friends of the church (and including the church choir which contributed an hour's spot on Sunday afternoon) kept up a continuous stream of live music. There were also guided tours of this beautiful church. This truly was an arts weekend with a wonderful community spirit.

We were pleased with the level of sales and the interest and enthusiasm shown for our work, and were able to contribute £143 to the church as a result. The weather was truly awful on the Sunday which probably kept some people away, but we had a continuous stream of visitors throughout the other two days. Julie Collins and I were there for most of the exhibition and the time flew by. We would like to thank all at St Mary's for the help, support and welcome we received and Arthur, Malcolm, Julie and Gilly for their hard work in setting up and taking down the exhibition. We very much hope that St Mary's will have us again some time! *Christine Richards*

The Picasso Museum in Malaga

On holiday in Estepona in Andalucia, we went on a day trip to Malaga, and whilst there took the opportunity to visit the Picasso Museum. The museum is housed in a beautiful building, the Palacio de los Condes de Buenavista, quite near the Cathedral.

After going through the usual security precautions, the first gallery was dedicated to a special exhibition of family paintings, prints and photographs. This was the only gallery in which the paintings were exhibited in genealogical order, which I greatly prefer to themed collections.

The earlier paintings seemed to me to be very influenced by Matisse's work of the same period. The works shown included some very fine paintings of his son Paulo, and various wives and mistresses. It was, however, obvious to me that as he became older his work became more repetitious, with many of the paintings being very similar to earlier works. One room was dedicated to drawings and etchings, and these showed what a very fine draughtsman Picasso was. To me these were the best exhibits in the whole museum.



Portrait of Paulo Picasso as a Child.



Acrobat.



Clockwise from above: *Olga Khaklova in a Mantilla*, gallery interior, *Picasso in his studio*.

We then moved into the remainder of the museum, where the works were shown thematically. I do not like this way of exhibiting paintings as it gives little idea of how a painter has developed over his career.

Frankly this part of the museum was rather disappointing, as most of the exhibits were drawn from the family collections. It could be said that these were works which Picasso did not sell. The other point is that these works mainly represented very early paintings from when he was a student and works from much later in his life, when he was drawing from his earlier styles, and not really producing anything new. There were some exceptions, such as a cubist painting *Composition* from 1920, *Acrobat* from 1930, and *Woman with Raised Arms* from 1936. There was also a very fine portrait of *Olga Khokhlova in a Mantilla*.

However there were no examples from his blue period, and very little from when he was developing Cubism. There were some examples of his ceramics, but none of them were amongst the fine works that he produced at various stages in his career.

To sum up, I was rather disappointed in this museum, but still think it is worth a visit if you are in Malaga.

Bernard Victor

The Mall Gallery

It has been a wonderful year for exhibitions at the Mall. Each time I visit, I think how lucky we are to have this venue so accessible to us. Membership at the Mall (The Federation of British Artists) is very reasonable and gives free entry and catalogue to all exhibitions. I've certainly had my money's worth this year.

Two of the latest exhibitions were particularly outstanding. I would even go so far as to say breathtaking. Those of us who saw the Marine Artists agreed that there was not one 'duff' painting in the whole exhibition. Special for me were Lorraine Abraham's distinctive bold style, Dawn Cattanach's almost abstract seascapes, Tim Hall's enormous oil painting of Mousehole, Cornwall, Ivan Lapper, David Curtis (ever favourites) and Deborah Walker's Farne Islands. Other notable artists appearing here were Sonia Robinson (striking, colourful, big brush oil paintings of Cornwall) and Moira Huntley, whose work this year in the Pastels, Watercolour and Marine Artists exhibition was less abstract than usual.

Like the Marine Artists, the Society of Wildlife Artists' exhibition 'The Natural Eye' included a large variety of media and styles, including sculpture. This year, this society is celebrating its 50th anniversary and the exhibition was one of the best ever. The subject, wildlife, seems to attract artists with unusual and creative styles and ideas. I was particularly fascinated by all the mixed media work. This is the sort of exhibition that inspires you to be bolder in your own work. I left with a range of new ideas I'd like to try. Now it's just a matter of finding the time!

Christine Richards

"And the first rude sketch that the world had seen
was joy to his mighty heart,
till the Devil whispered behind the leaves,
"it's pretty, but is it Art?"

Rudyard Kipling

'Cardiff? Why Cardiff'

'Cardiff? Why Cardiff', I hear you cry when I mention my recent two day visit to that city. 'Cos it's there' I'm tempted to reply, but really it's because I'd heard that there is a wonderful Art Gallery with magnificent pictures and sculpture.

On arrival in Cardiff we went to the Bay area first as the weather was dry but rain expected soon. There is a lot to see there in the way of dramatic modern architecture, notably the Millennium Centre, home of Welsh National Opera and Orchestra, and venue for theatre and other cultural events. We'd seen pictures of the building but it was good to see it in its waterside setting with the distinctive bronze roof and Welsh slate walls.

Y Senedd is the next-door building, the home of the Welsh National Assembly, and equally dramatic in its architecture which is mostly glass but with a huge funnel of teak rising in the middle of the building up to the roof where it continues in waves and wooden domes. We were able to go inside and look down on the chamber; it was empty as the assembly doesn't sit on Thursday. The effect was of lots of light and wide open spaces - very comfortable.

Back in Cardiff city there are lovely old Victorian arcades with shops and restaurants and also a beautiful galleried market of fruit, meat, fish, bakers and flower stalls. It would be a great and colourful subject for a painting.

Day two saw us at the Welsh National Museum of Art which indeed lives up to its reputation. We spent hours 'ooh-ing' and 'aah-ing' at the wonderful collection. Much of it was donated by the Davies family, notably sisters Gwendoline and Margaret who were inspired collectors. They ▶



The Senate interior.



The art gallery interior.

◀ started with Turner and Corot, then Millet and Daumier. In 1912 they changed to Impressionism and bought Renoirs and Monets, then Rodins, Cezanne and Van Gogh. Augustus and Gwen John's studio collection was bought in 1976. The big names don't end there! Other bequests are Sisley, Claude, Poussin, Hogarth, Reynolds, and Zoffany. Apparently the Graham Sutherland Foundation gave over 600 of his works. It's a wealth of goodies and needs more than one visit to see all that is on show. We were particularly 'taken' by:-

1. A 1st. Century Roman vase in Greek style of huge size (172cm high by 119cm wide) sharply carved in relief of Paris, Helen, Eros and Aphrodite.
2. A Robert Adam designed Organ in wood painted in soft pastel shades, organ built by John Snetzler for Wynn House, St. James Square, home of Sir Watkins Williams-Wynn.
3. *Steelworks, Cardiff by night* by Walden, a dramatic reminder of Cardiff's industrial past.
4. Van Gogh's *Rain in Auvers*.
5. *John the Baptist Preaching*, Rodin's larger-than-life bronze nude.
...and many more besides.

Our visit was enhanced by coffee and lunch breaks in the pleasant restaurant, where our feet were rested and brains were refreshed.

The Victorian Gothic interiors were the highlight of our visit to Cardiff Castle. William Burges was the designer of the interiors, which seemed to us similar to A W Pugin. His Arab room, Library and Great Hall are a wealth



The Castle Motte.

Llandaff cathedral interior.



of Gothic design, bright with colour and detail and not a square inch left undecorated. By now it was pouring with rain so we didn't do justice to the rest of the Castle grounds with its very paintable motte and bailey.

On day three a short bus ride took us to see Llandaff Cathedral, which had been on our 'wish list' for years. It is situated down a steep slope from the pretty village and dates from the 12th Century. However in 1941 it was bombed, but since rebuilt with the notable addition of Jacob Epstein's *Majestas, Christ in Majesty* sculpture atop a dramatic arch between the Nave and the Choir. I love the shape of the arch but am not too keen on the use of concrete, cheek-by-jowl as it with the lovely stone of the original build. The figure of Christ is certainly impressive and majestic.

With the Wales versus England Rugby match about to start we left this interesting and lovely city on the banks of the river Taff. Hoards of fans were making for the new Millennium Stadium beside the river, dressed in colourful and outlandish costumes, mostly red, with daffodil hats and Guinness hats, Welsh dragon flags, and very noisy and excited. As we arrived at Cardiff Station to get the train to Paddington the English fans arrived to add to the noise and excitement. In the light of the match result, I expect Cardiff was alight on Saturday night with elated revellers celebrating into the early hours.

Many readers will already know the delights of Cardiff. However, for first-timers we found it has a lot to offer and we enjoyed our short stay there.

Brenda Sayburn

The Floor Sander's Daughter and her Fortunate Father

Unfortunately I didn't get to see Dee Cowell's recent demonstration but have read with great interest her fine article on portraiture in the last issue of *The Easel*. Like her I share a passion for drawing and painting portraits and have done so for longer than I care to remember.

I always try to carry a sketch book and delight in quick surreptitious portraits of people I see around me. One of the best places to practise this I find is my local pub, where my models/victims are unaware of me drawing them, just relaxed in conversation or even better watching football etc. on the pub TV. And that's the only reason I have to spend such a long time in the pub! (My wife doesn't believe that either.)

I also agree with Dee about doing self-portraits. It's a great cheap and convenient way to practise. My only advice would be, consider the lighting. I'm sure I'm not the only one who on seeing themselves in an unfamiliar ill-lit mirror, thinks, swipe me, (or something similar), I didn't think I looked as old and ugly as that! Then, maybe in a different mirror and place, being chuffed seeing themselves in a more flattering light. Subject lighting is always important to whatever I'm painting. A single natural light source is better than lots of artificial ones, fluorescent the worst. So, if you're about to produce a self-portrait, do yourself a favour with nice, soft ambient light. Vermeer knew all about lighting and he is one of my favourite artists. The way he illuminated his subjects sometimes simply with natural light from a single window I find delightful.

A good friend of mine, Gerard and I agreed a deal late last year: I to paint a portrait of his daughter and he being a floor sander by trade to sand and varnish my hall floor. Not a bad exchange I thought. Of all Vermeer's paintings, *The girl with the Pearl Earring* is probably my favourite. So I sat Gerard's charming 14-year-old daughter, Courtney, against a black background, facing double french doors and asked her to turn her face and look at me over her shoulder. The resulting image was well worth the trouble and some quick sketches and lots of photographs released Courtney from her pose and enabled me to produce at leisure my side of the bargain. You might agree, even though as we try just as hard, some paintings come out better than others. The portrait I did of my friend's daughter, albeit with a bit of help from Vermeer, turned out to be

one of my better ones. Well that's what I think. You can view this portrait, if you like, on my page of our BAS members' gallery.

I have to say, the facility of having our own BAS online gallery is just great. It's like having your very own one-man (whoops), one-person permanent exhibition. And so easy to upload/delete etc. No other local art club as far as I'm aware can boast the same. Can't think why everyone in the club doesn't have one.

Now for something really amazing! My friend Gerard, the very same floor sander and dad of Courtney, is a bit of a wheeler-dealer and appeared about a month ago on a television programme called *4 Rooms*. Perhaps you have seen it. If not, it's like a cross between *Dragon's Den* and *The Antiques Road Show*. People are invited to bring in unusual, rare, strange etc. objects of art and negotiate with the four resident art dealers to get the best deals they can.

I had never watched this programme before but promised Gerard I would. Sure enough there he was, bold as brass, and smarter than I'd ever seen him before. Three years ago he had purchased at auction an original oil painting by Francis Bacon. He had paid about £4,800.00 for it, but somehow had omitted to mention this to his wife. The only flaw with this painting was that Francis Bacon had, as was his habit when he wasn't too pleased with his efforts, cut out and destroyed almost the entire canvas just leaving a few inches around the edges.

If I hadn't seen what happened next, I would not have believed it. Gerard negotiated and sold the remnants of his Francis Bacon painting and went home with a cheque for £48,000.00. Of course, I'm delighted with my friend's good fortune. He paid off his mortgage and even found the courage to tell his wife about his initial purchase, but I can't help thinking it's a sad reflection on the society we live in that an object, even though it may have been rendered totally valueless, can command such an enormous price simply because of its associated fame.

Anyway, I've put my pen to paper. What do you think?

John Marshall

“Art is the only serious thing in the world. And the artist is
the only person who is never serious”

Oscar Wilde

Whistler and the Thames at Dulwich

I have been looking forward to this exhibition at Dulwich Gallery for some time, as I consider Whistler an extremely good and very influential painter, particularly on British art.

Whistler was an American, but spent a considerable amount of his life in London, usually living close to the river, which he painted, etched and engraved for a good part of his career.

The first room was dedicated to his early etchings and dry points of the river. Many of these were highly detailed and won Whistler a very high reputation. It was a bit distracting to find that these etchings showed a reverse image of the actual view.

We then moved onto views of Battersea Reach including the bridge, which was eventually to feature in one of his most famous paintings. As well as a few paintings and etchings, there were quite a lot of early photos, which did help to place the area in context.

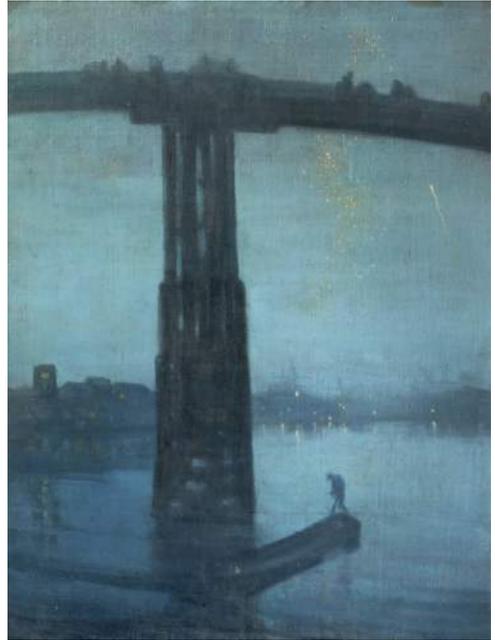
This was followed by paintings and etchings which showed how Japanese prints influenced his painting. These included his wonderful painting called *Wapping*, which he himself praised extravagantly in a letter to Fantin-Latour. Whistler was not exactly a modest man, and he had a very high opinion of himself. This was accompanied by the lovely painting of his mistress *Symphony in White*, who was featured in *Wapping*.



Wapping.



Symphony in White, No.2: The Little White Girl.



Nocturne: Blue and Gold, Old Battersea Bridge.

His Nocturnes followed, these are paintings and etchings giving evening and night views of the river. At the time these were very progressive works, as the subject is only secondary to the subdued colours used in these very evocative paintings. One can see how these must have been an influence on early abstract paintings.

Finally we come to a room devoted to his famous painting of Battersea Bridge, and showing the great influence of Japanese painting on his work.

Overall I enjoyed the exhibition, but I did think that it was rather lacking in content, with too much emphasis on his prints, and filled in with rather a lot of interesting early photos, which helped show the conditions and locations in which he painted, but I felt were put in to bulk out the show.

If you went expecting to see a good selection of his paintings, I am afraid you would be rather disappointed, but if you went to see how he saw the river and expressed his view in paint and prints, you will come away contented.

See more at: <http://berniespaintings.blogspot.co.uk>

Bernard Victor

Members, use your membership card to obtain 10% discount at

ARTLINES ~ OUTLINES

GALLERY. ARTSHOP. FRAMING

58 Glebe Way, West Wickham, Kent BR4 0RL

Tel: 020 8777 0939

www.artlines-outlines.co.uk

Mon - Sat 10 am to 5 pm, Wed. - closed all day

Frames & Art



20% Off

For all Art Society Member
When Present Card

230 High Street, Bromley
BR1 1PQ
Tel: 0208 460 6650
Email: FramesAndArt@yahoo.co.uk

Opening Hours:
Tue - Sat from 11am to 7pm
Sunday from 11am to 5pm
Monday Closed

