



The Sketch

The newsletter of the
Cambridge Drawing Society

Number 3 June/July 2021

WELCOME
to the third of our occasional newsletters
designed to keep Members and Friends
in touch during the Covid epidemic

Editorial

Our Society might have appeared almost dormant over the last year, as three exhibitions, all in-person meetings and workshops were cancelled, and subscriptions were suspended. The only sign of life were the online events, which indeed proved to be very popular. However, a great deal of work was going on behind the scenes. Once it was clear that this year's exhibition at the Pitt could not take place, planning started for the online exhibition, the first the Society has ever run. It proved to be an unqualified success and much was learnt that will be invaluable for the future. We must thank Yvonne Jerrold for all the hard work she put in, and the care and patience with which she dealt with all the enquiries she received as members tackled the unfamiliar process of uploading images of their artwork and accompanying information.

At the same time our brand new website was being prepared offline by Lori Bentley, a commercial provider overseen by our committee member Brian Holley. The result is a most attractive place to visit online, providing all the information we wish to share and full of art and colour. Thank you Brian, this was a lot of hard work and attention to detail which is very much appreciated! The web site is now live and Brian will welcome any feedback from members. If you have not yet provided your own material for the site yet it is not too late, new material will be accepted at any time by our Secretary Steve Ashman at secretary@cambridgedrawingsociety.org. In due course members will be able to edit and upload new material themselves.

Autumn exhibition

There is still uncertainty about our Autumn exhibition this year. The Leys needs to use our usual exhibition space for socially distanced mealtimes and will be unavailable. We presently have an option on the Pitt Building but no decision has been made about going ahead with an exhibition there.

Cambridge 6th Form Art Exhibition

Having cancelled last year's exhibition, the organisers are running it online this year. As usual the Cambridge Drawing Society will be presenting four prizes for work that will be selected by Lizanne van Essen, Colin Hayes and Antony Hopkinson. Colin Barker will design certificates to be presented with the cash prizes.

The organisers would like to put together a pool of selectors for the 6th form exhibition next year and beyond. Note: this is for work to be shown in the exhibition and is separate from selection for the prizes we offer. The process takes place over 4 – 5 days in May, ten schools are involved and selection takes about one hour per school. Any members who are interested in being including in the pool for this worthwhile and enjoyable task please contact Lynne Hartland at the Cantab Art Society: hartlandlynne@gmail.com.

Paul Rodhouse



CDS online exhibition featured in the Cambridge News

Online exhibition 2021

Our first online exhibition took place in April and May 2021. The decision to have an online exhibition was made because three of our regular physical exhibitions that should have taken place in 2020 and 2021 were cancelled due to the pandemic.

We had hoped to have our own bespoke CDS Exhibition Website, but this proved impracticable due to the time-scale, so we decided to use an existing OESS Art Exhibition website, which turned out to be a good choice.

A hundred artist members entered the exhibition who, between them, submitted 371 artworks in a great variety of styles, making a splendid exhibition which drew many favourable comments. Fifty artworks were sold, and forty artists sold one or more works.

Our thanks to all of you who took part in the exhibition helping to make it a great success, thanks also to all our members, both entrants and non-entrants, for sending feedback on the online exhibition process. This will help the committee make appropriate decisions about any future online exhibitions the society may hold.

Yvonne Jerrold

From our president

Our Society depends entirely on volunteers to function. All of us who show work in our exhibitions voluntarily help with setting up, hanging, invigilating and taking down. This works pretty well, possibly because we have to pay a fee if we don't help out! Others volunteer for the selection panel, the garden party (in normal times) and of course the committee. This is an active, friendly group which works efficiently and professionally to keep the Society running. The committee is currently operating at below the number allowed by our constitution and in the interests of succession planning we ideally one or more people to volunteer to join now or next year at the time of the AGM. If you are interested and want to find out more about what is involved please contact me or any current committee members or recent leavers.

Social media volunteer needed

Lynn Norton, who has been responsible for maintaining our social media profile, rotated off the committee at this year's AGM. In the absence of anyone to replace her, she generously offered to continue in her social media role for a limited time. She has now sensibly decided to stand down at the end of June – no ifs, no buts! We urgently need someone to take over from her. Social media is such an important element of what we do it can't be allowed to languish. Would someone please step up! Lynn will fully brief whoever takes over and her replacement does not need not become a committee member provided they maintain contact with us.

Paul Rodhouse



CDS Members exhibit at the Tithe Barn, Landbeach

In January 2020 the Tithe Barn Trust, a small charity dedicated to the restoration of one of the few remaining tithe barns in Cambridgeshire, invited CDS to stage a small art exhibition, as part of a trial to see if this type of event could be run successfully in the barn located in Landbeach, a small village north of Cambridge.



Needless to say, the coronavirus pandemic scuppered the plans for 2020. However, the exhibition did go ahead this year on Sunday, 30th May. The emphasis was on showing work from members who live in the locality of the barn. Nine members participated in the exhibition; Tracey Ashman, Ann Biggs, Rob Ellis, Iona Howard, Chris Lockwood, Maureen Mace, Rita Morton, Paul Rodhouse, Giulia Quaresima and Alice Thomson. The work on display was diverse and provided a good representation of the Society to a new audience.

It was a glorious sunny day for the exhibition and around 200 visitors viewed the works on display. A big thank you to Maureen Mace, who suggested the Tithe Barn Trust invite CDS to participate in the trial.

Friends of the CDS

In February the Society changed its constitution to enable a Friend to sit on the Committee 'to represent the voice of the Friends' community'. Sandra Buchanan was subsequently elected to the Committee and began her term of office by getting in touch with her Fellow Friends to seek their views about the benefits the Society provided for them. Approximately half of the Friends responded and most were very content with the Society's provision, particularly enjoying the exhibitions, talks and demonstrations.

What was absent from the replies, however, was the sense of any sort of 'community' among the Friends; there seem to have been few, if any, opportunities for them to become acquainted with each other, even before the pandemic. If restrictions are lifted and the Society is able to hold its exhibition this autumn, it will be used as a focus for Friends to begin to meet, to get to know one another and to develop a sense of 'community'.

Artist Profile:

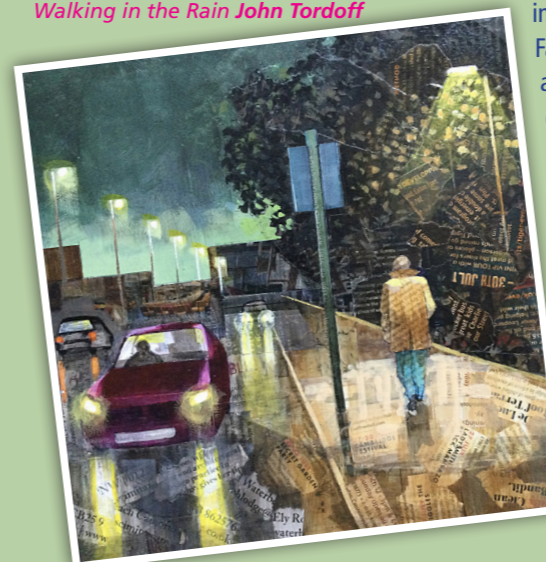
JOHN TORDOFF

John Tordoff's distinctive mixed-media collages will be instantly recognisable to anyone who regularly attends CDS exhibitions and are always among the most popular exhibits at any Society show. After graduating from RADA in 1957, John worked as an actor, director and writer, active in both theatre and television. While still working as an actor, he took art courses at adult education colleges in London and in 2005 had a solo exhibition at the Barbican Library in the City of London.

John moved to Cambridge on his retirement in 2009.

He became a member of the CDS and has had work selected by the Pastel Society and the Society of Wildlife Artists for their exhibitions at the Mall Galleries in London. He also exhibits at commercial galleries, including the Byard Gallery on King's Parade, and in 2016 his work was included in Art Fair East. John participates in the annual Cambridge Open Studios event, during which visitors to his home can admire not only his artwork but the beautiful, award-winning courtyard garden which he and his partner have created at the rear of their terraced house.

Walking in the Rain John Tordoff



John has recently published a richly illustrated book about his artistic aims and methods, entitled *Working with Collage*, which is available direct from the author at: tordoffjohn@icloud.com

Cambridge Drawing Society

DIGITAL ART DEBATE

In April the Society hosted a zoom debate on whether digital art might have a place in a society devoted to traditional media and to gauge the interest of members. Digital artist Oscar Gillespie, argued for, whilst CDS member Janice Anderson argued against. A non-binding vote afterwards showed a majority against digital art.

The matter was later discussed in a committee meeting held on 29th May. The Society places a high value on the traditional practice of art. Hand-crafted artwork has always been the Drawing Society's core value and the number of new candidates each year reveal that interest in traditional skills remains high. The Society has never

accepted photographic work or giclee reproductions and this is laid down in our constitution and rules.

The production of digital art is prolific and can be viewed in a huge variety of formats, many of which use photographs as a starting point. The fact that digital art needs to be printed electronically – potentially in large numbers – would undermine the CDS membership who are permitted to submit only an original paintings sculptures and hand-pulled prints.

Traditional art celebrates the skill of artists in their chosen media. The committee determined that digital art would not have a place in the Society.

Edited and designed by Colin Barker

Further information about the Cambridge Drawing society can be found by checking in to <http://www.cambridgedrawingsociety.org>

Upcoming CDS Evening Talks

Members can look forward to some fascinating Autumn talks from September to Christmas. There will be four Zoom presentations, and one interactive 'live' presentation given by Maureen Mace who will be holding her talk in the Wilkinson Room at St. John's Church, Hills Rd, Cambridge. Maureen's talk involves audience participation. Information on each talk will be emailed a month before the given date. Those interested can request a Zoom link or book a place for Maureen's talk.

22nd September:

Zoom Online Event - A life of graphic design - Colin Barker

20th October (tbc):

Wilkinson Room - Maureen Mace 'Night Skies & Tiny Brushes'

17th November (tbc):

Zoom Online Event- Sam Motherwell 'Drawing and Painting Mill Road'

8th December (tbc):

Zoom Online Event - Colin Lees 'A Portrait of Polly - Mary Charlotte Greene, CDS President, 1926-1932'

January 2022:

Zoom Online Event- Jane Fellows 'Stained Glass'

Valerie Pettifer 1949-2021

It is with great sadness that we mark the death of Val Pettifer who died after a courageous struggle with cancer on 14th May 2021. Val was elected to the Cambridge Drawing Society in 2011 and was an active member of several other local art societies. She exhibited frequently, helped with stewarding and setting up exhibitions, and served on the CDS committee for several years. She also ran an art group in The Old School Studio, Whittlesford in which she hosted workshops and, with Lesley Rumble, ran twice weekly painting sessions attended by several members and others. Val was a very active person with good organizational skills so that whatever she took on could be relied upon to be a success. She also had a talent for painting in various styles that were always bold and lively. She was a well-known and popular person and will be greatly missed.

Rosalind Ridley

