



The Sketch

The newsletter of the Cambridge Drawing Society

June 2025

From the President

Susan Abbs



Wow – What a Season it's been!

There's a real buzz around Cambridge Drawing Society right now. We had a record-breaking 78 artists apply to join us ahead of the Spring Exhibition. Something special is happening here, and I think it's down to the brilliant energy and sense of community we've all been building together.

Welcome to New Talent

The standard of submissions from prospective members was outstanding this year, and it was heartbreaking having to narrow it down. We don't want to lose touch with the incredible artists, so we've offered complimentary Friends memberships to those who didn't get selected this time, giving them access to events and opportunities.

To all our new Members and Friends, I encourage you to get involved. CDS isn't just about exhibiting - there are sketching sessions, talks, workshops, and lots of ways to connect. Everything we do is run by volunteers, so helping out is a fun and easy way to meet fellow artists and feel part of the community. Make sure to join our WhatsApp group too - it's the best way to hear about what's on, meet-ups and ways to get involved. The more you put in, the more you'll get out.



Some of our new Members with the Committee at the Private View Front L-R: Alice West, Melissa Lhoirit, Laura Chaplin, Gaynor Fryers, Patrick Wilkins

Back L-R: Diane Firth (Social Media), Monica Alikoviene (Exhibitions), Susan Abbs (President), Jane Taylor (Publicity), Sue Law, Angela Garrod, Sue Lee, Sho-Jen Dowell, Tim Duckworth (Membership), Chrissie Havers

In this issue:

From the President
Editorial

Spring Exhibition
Monica Alikoviene

Plein Air with Cake!
Charlotte Bedingfield

Visitor's Favourite
Patrick Wilkins

On Portering
Rob Jones

Meet the Committee
Annelies MacIntosh

Selection - how it works
Anonymous

<https://www.cambridgedrawingsociety.org/>





Out and About

Did anyone spot us on the art benches in Christ's Lane? It's fantastic to see CDS out in public spaces around Cambridge.

A Pitt Stop Worth Waiting For

Our Spring Exhibition took place a little later than usual due to building works at Pitt Building but it was worth the wait. The new entrance has transformed the space - it feels more open and welcoming. We were privileged to be the first group to exhibit there post-renovation. The show looked stunning, red dots were popping up everywhere - some artists even sold out completely! In just 8 days, 91 artworks found new homes. What a great job by our new Exhibition Secretary Monica Alikoviene! You can read more from Monica below.



A Blooming Good Party

After such a fantastic exhibition, what better way to celebrate than gathering together in true CDS style? Our summer party was the perfect follow-up.

Huge thanks to Janice and Derek Anderson for generously hosting us in their beautiful garden. Janice treated us to the most delicious home-cooked spread, with a brilliant selection of dishes - including plenty of gluten-free options, which many members really appreciated. A special thank you to Janice's daughters, who helped serve so warmly and cheerfully throughout the afternoon.

The whole event was superbly organised by our new Events Secretary, Annelies MacIntosh, who not only planned everything with Janice, but also brought along her whole family to lend a hand. It was a lovely, joyful gathering - just what we all needed.

Behind Every Red Dot... a Volunteer

Of course, none of this could happen without our amazing volunteers. From admin and hanging to invigilating and wine-pouring, your support keeps the Society running smoothly. Thank you all!

**Have a wonderful summer, everyone -
and best of luck to all our members
taking part in Cambridge Open Studios!**



Exhibition Report - Spring 2025

Monica Alikoviene



Our Spring Exhibition 2025, held at the newly renovated Pitt Building, was a great success. It was our first time back since the refurbishment, and it felt wonderful to be there again. The show came together thanks to the brilliant work of our artists and the many members who not only exhibited impressive work but also generously gave their time behind the scenes.



A Memorable Opening Night

The Private View set the tone for the whole exhibition. It was a lively and well-attended evening, marking a warm return to a historic venue with a fresh new look. Members, guests, and art lovers gathered to enjoy a varied and inspiring collection of work across different media and styles.

Unprecedented Interest and New Members

This year saw a record number of applications to join the Society, with 78 new candidates submitting work for selection. We're delighted to welcome sixteen new members who have already joined the Society. Their talent and energy are a great addition to our community, and we look forward to seeing more of their work—and to them becoming part of the team effort that keeps our exhibitions running smoothly.

Public Vote: Audience Favourites

We had great engagement with the public vote this year. The winner was Patrick Wilkins, one of our newly elected members—congratulations, Patrick! He has been invited to create the poster artwork for the Spring Exhibition 2026.

Exhibition Highlights

124 artists exhibited work
91 artworks were sold:
62 framed
29 unframed
50 artists made sales

Greeting Card Sales

Greeting cards remain a popular part of the exhibition. This spring, 879 cards were sold, with 65 artists contributing.



Publicity & Outreach

A wide-reaching publicity campaign supported this year's exhibition. We had posters around the city, Art Benches along Christ's Lane, and over 1,000 invitations sent out. The show was featured in Cambridge Independent, Velvet Magazine, and several event listings, along with a strong social media presence to help us reach new audiences.

Works sold, in order of popularity with buyers:

Framed:

Oil
Acrylic
Watercolour
Print and Mixed Media
Other Media

Unframed:

Edition Print
Watercolour
Gouache
Monoprint
Oil and Other Media

Guided Tours

For the first time, we ran two guided tours during the exhibition, led by CDS member and artist Jill Ogilvy. Jill offered visitors thoughtful insights into selected works, touching on techniques, materials, and creative approaches. The tours were very well received, and we hope to continue them in future Spring exhibitions.

Thank You

This year's Spring Exhibition was a real team effort and a celebration of creativity. Thank you to everyone who contributed – from exhibiting artists to volunteers and behind-the-scenes helpers. We couldn't have done it without you.



Plein Air with Cake!

Charlotte Bedingfield at Histon Manor

Histon Manor hosted a wonderful day on Saturday 14th June with the Cambridgeshire Plein Air competition in their beautiful 11 acre garden on a sunny day. Approximately 80 artists in two categories, professional and emerging, were there painting furiously from 9.30am to 3.30pm, a quarter of them being CDS artists. At the end of the day we collected all the artwork together to display on easels at the front of the house for judges to examine, while we celebrated with glasses of Prosecco. An evening concert with a string quartet, The Cam String Collective, prolonged the evening and the audience had a chance to view all our work before the winners were announced in the interval.

The judges were Luke Bodalbhal from Cheffins Fine Art, Lauren Fried from the Cambridge School of Art, Louisa Riley Smith from the 20th Century Art Archives, Ben MacGregor, winner of the Sky Arts Landscape Artist of the Year and artist Benjamin Sullivan.





Judging time

There was a trophy, and many generous prizes donated by local galleries and businesses. The six winning artists were invited to exhibit their works at Modo Gallery. The whole event, including the evening concert, raised £2,637 for Break, a charity supporting those leaving care. All details of the day can be found on the Histon Manor website

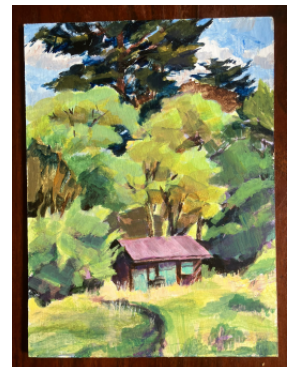
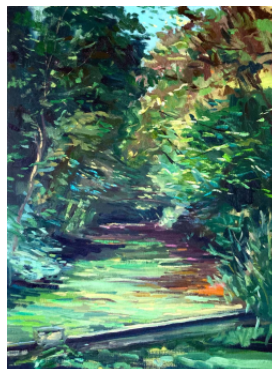
<https://www.histonmanor.com>

It was a truly wonderful day! For me the best part was to be painting together with so many others on a glorious day in a beautiful garden and seeing everyone's work at the end of the day ... oh! and the cake ... oh so much cake!



*Painting by:
Charlotte Bedingfield*

*Left to right
Lyudmila Sikhosana
Ian Dugdale
Cathy Parker*



*Sue Smith
Maureen Mace
Isobel Tombs*



Stop, Check, Turn And Double Back

Patrick Wilkins



The drawing is of Tib Lane in central Manchester, a well known pub, the Town Hall Tavern, is to the right of the picture. I lived in Manchester for 10 years and still visit when I can. I've drawn several pictures of the city, all of them seem to contain pubs!

Night time cityscapes often appeal to me because of the really strong contrast between dark and light. With this street there was also the stark architectural difference between the modern glass tower block and the Victorian street below.

For the references for this drawing I took several photos from different angles. That way to suit the composition I could edit out some things I didn't want, such as cars and people with umbrellas, and still put in the detail they were hiding. I also rearranged some of the office lighting to better balance the image.



I wanted the street to appear deserted and have an air of mystery, so the viewer is left wondering what's going on, or what is about to happen, as if it was a still from a film. I kept the colour palette fairly limited, mostly using dark sepia and dark indigo coloured pencils, with some yellow ochre on the lights. I used some black on the shadows, I think every art class I've ever done has advised against this, but for me using black not only heightens the contrast but also gives a finality and depth to the shadows that complementary colours just don't.

Working in such detail as I do I'm often asked 'how long did it take you to draw that?' many days, weeks, months, I don't know, but there are no short cuts, no hacks, you just keep going till it's done!

On Portering

Rob Jones



For the CDS spring exhibition this year I volunteered for portering duties for both the new candidate submission and then the selection process at Cottenham village hall. In these roles you get to see the new submissions, meet fellow CDS members, experience first-hand how efficiently the Society operates, and all without having to do any paperwork, what's not to like?

During the new candidate submission process the duties of the porter mainly involve carefully sorting and stacking the submitted works in preparation for the selection process. There are always experienced members on hand to give you tips and tricks on how to do this correctly. The portering role allows you to marvel at the wide range of subjects, media and creativity of new works submitted by the applicants. The creativity in how a few applicants interpret the CDS submission instructions can also be impressive: labels, labels? then why is there no mention of labels on the website?

For the selection process the porters were organised into three groups of four and in fairly quick rotation presented the submitted works for critical consideration by the all-powerful judging committee. The porters definitely have the best job here as we get to opine, amongst ourselves, on the merits of the various works without having the responsibility of the judging committee. Second guessing the judges' decisions is irresistible.

For me this is a great way to get involved with and support our society.



Committee Q&A

Annelies MacIntosh - new Events Secretary

Annelies became a Member of the Society in 2025, having previously been a Friend. She paints in oils and pastels and you may have met her at our Sketchtogether events, or the Summer Party.

How long have you lived in Cambridge? Where else have you lived?

I have used Cambridge as my base for over 23 years. With Dutch and Australian heritage and an expatriate childhood, I have long been accustomed to an international lifestyle. Marrying into the military (now retired) further contributed to a nomadic way of life, leading me to reside in various parts of the world, including South America, the Caribbean, the United States, the Middle East, and Europe.

What did you want to be growing up?

I wanted to be an olympic downhill ski champion. What I didn't realise was that realistically I had to live in the mountains.

You have travelled widely - what is still on your bucket list?

My next ambition is to reach the Arctic Circle by train.

What other jobs you have done?

I am a retired British Architect.

What is the most expensive thing you've bought?

A pack of dried hibiscus leaves from a Turkish market. Totally miscalculated the exchange rate.

Describe yourself in three words

Determined, inquisitive and passionate.

What is your most treasured possession?

I try not to get too attached to possessions but the thing that I most treasure are the people I love



Annelies On Location!



Sketchtogether

Future Events

July 13th 7.30pm - Cambridge Shakespeare Festival rehearsal

July 16th 11am - 1pm - Cambridge Market

August - Cambridge Country Show, Stow cum Quy

September - Bridge the Gap

For more details, watch out for emails or keep an eye on our Whatsapp group.

The Selection Process - your questions answered

As told to Jackie Duckworth

How many people are there on the panel?

The panel consists of nine anonymous CDS members, who serve for up to 2 years. They are chosen to represent the breadth of work created by our members - painters in oils and watercolour, printmakers, mixed media artists; contemporary and traditional. Decisions are never based on personal taste, but on artistic quality and creativity.

Is the selection anonymous? How does it work?

In the online selection for existing members, the panel have three days to review all the submissions at home on their own computers. They are voting completely independently. The pieces by one artist are viewed together. Panel members can see the title, medium and price, but not the artist's name.

For new candidates, there is a single session of a few hours. The volunteer porters carry the four works by one artist into the selection room for the committee to assess. The panel do not know the identity of the artist. There is sometimes a short discussion. They vote with a show of hands on whether the applicant should be admitted to the society, and separately on which of the successful applicants' artworks will be exhibited. Poorly framed work is never accepted.

