

A Note from the New Editor

Welcome to my first edition of Art News, the official newsletter of Berkhamsted Art Society.

I have a very hard act to follow; Bob Osborn's sterling work over the years brought us beautifully-designed and easy-to-read newsletters, packed with interesting content. My style will, no doubt, evolve over time and I welcome feedback from you, as readers. Please let me know what you think. In the meantime, I hope you'll enjoy this bumper edition, reviewing the last few months and with exciting things to come...

Tracy Dudley

PS Look out for the hyperlinks I've added, to take you to sections, websites or to email contacts.

In this issue: Click on the topic to be taken straight there. (Feature may not work on phones)

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What We've Been Up To... Online Activities

We're now well into the new membership year. Things can hardly be described as normal in any walk of life and BAS is no exception, but your committee and other members have worked very hard to continue to bring you many of the activities we would normally run, albeit largely in a virtual way.

Zoom Coffee Mornings

Catherine Archer and Ian Jones have continued to host the popular Zoom coffee meetings and Catherine reports back on what people have been doing, while Ian posts photos into the <u>BAS</u> <u>Facebook Group</u> as well as sending roundups by email to members.

"The Zoom Coffee Mornings have been running since the beginning of the first lockdown. Although not the same as meeting in person, Zoom has enabled us to stay in touch and to forge new friendships. The themed 'homework' has been a welcome addition in motivating us to keep painting and drawing. There are so many studies about the therapeutic benefits of Art and Craft. Several people from the Society who have experienced difficult times, commented that the themes had enabled them to rediscover their love of Art and start painting again.

Another positive of the coffee mornings has been the exchange of tips and ideas regarding materials and techniques. It is not however just about the Art. We chat about our walks, our friends and latterly our vaccinations, more importantly there is a lot of laughter.

Do join us. 'Homework' is not compulsory!!!!

Stay well. Catherine"



Zoom Life Drawing Sessions

Unable to run our normal, monthly, free life drawing evenings at the Court House, James Honour arranged some free online Life Drawing sessions instead. Here's his report:

"On Monday 5th October, we experimented with life drawing via Zoom. Organised by Cheryl from Harrow, Ros in London, a Royal Academy model, provided numerous poses, including a short slow movement session to music. It worked well and some members have been signing-up separately for other sessions with Cheryl. We booked another BAS session on Monday 14th December which was a 'Fun Christmas Party' with model Valentina. **Another session was arranged for Monday 1st March, with a new model, Safire.** "

On the right are some of Tracy's drawings of the shorter poses from the first session, with Ros. She was a very good model and you can see the variety of poses she gave us.



If you'd like to take part in any of Cheryl's regular life drawing sessions, for which she charges £7, please see her website (www.cheryl-gould.com) or her Facebook Page.

Zoom Demos

We've also had a couple of really good online demos, thoroughly enjoyed by those members who joined in, and a Members' Critique Evening, all organised by James Honour.

Mark Warner, Acrylic Seascape, Nov 2020

With a well-placed camera, and giving us plenty of explanation throughout the process, Mark painted a striking seascape in acrylics on blue Fabriano pastel paper.

As it was our first online demo, we were pleased to find that our view of the artist and his work was better than often achieved in the Civic Centre! He gave us plenty of tips along



the way, including using masking tape to get a straight horizon and what to do if the paper cockles – turn it over and iron it on the back! Having blocked in the general composition, Mark used layers of colour to build up the water. He used a number of different brushes and techniques to apply the paint, as well as blending it, on the surface, with his fingers. Mark had the interesting approach of not washing his brushes between colours, leading to a more harmonious painting. When, later, introducing red and magenta to his main palette of blues, browns and yellows, he mixed them with some of the main blue colour to maintain the harmonious feel, using more than one disposable palette to do the colour mixing.

The result of the 2-hour Zoom session was a dramatic sky and seascape, and a very satisfied audience.



Tracy Dudley

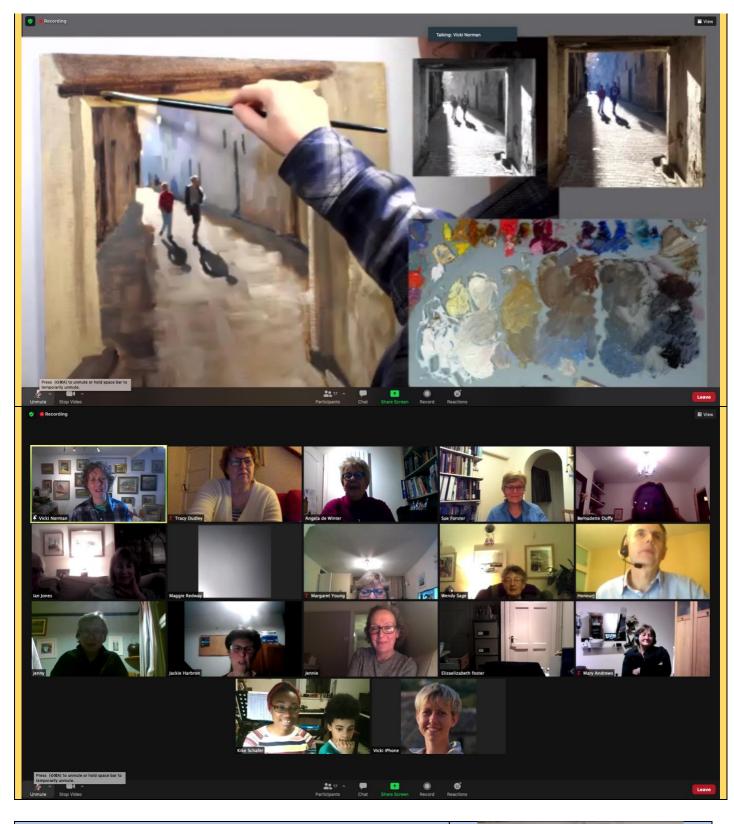
Mark runs lots of online workshops and demos. For details, see his website: www.brushmark.co.uk

Vicki Norman – Tuesday 19th January 2021

In January, we were treated to an amazing Zoom oil painting demonstration by Vicki, in Shropshire. She travels widely and offers painting holidays in the UK and Europe. For our demonstration, we went to an alleyway in Fez, Morocco. Using one her own photos, she explained the merits of testing an image in black and white by switching the digital image on your computer screen. This can help to show if it will work well as a composition and how the tones work. The first half of the evening was spent mainly explaining and preparing her palette, colourmatching and proving how mid-value tones have the most colour, not darks or lights. She then sketched-in the main shapes in raw umber, which can be easily rubbed in, if wrong. Vicki recommended getting the lightest light and darkest dark decided first. What's in light and what's in shadow? Bounced light is tricky, as it is darker than you think. Also, shadows are always darker and crisper nearer the source of shade, fading away from the source. In passing, we had health warnings about harmful pastel dust and also fumes from turps, especially mineral turps, which is even worse than gum-based turps. One of her favourite artists,

who enjoyed capturing the bright sunlight of Spain, is Joaquín Sorolla (Spain) 1863 to 1923. James Honour

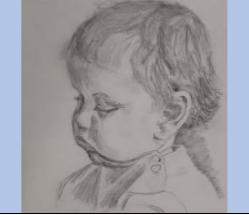
To see a good selection of her work, holidays, courses and paints from her shop, search for <u>Vicki</u> <u>Norman Studio'</u>.



Critique evening Tuesday 16th February

A group of members shared a good selection of pictures with each other for an enjoyable and productive evening on Zoom. Every picture was given some positive comments, or an approach to try to resolve any issues or concerns that the artists had expressed. Suggestions ranged from the use of light and shade, complementary colours and compositional tweaks. *James Honour*

Pencil portrait of my great-niece by Tracy Dudley



In Real Life... Hastoe Life Drawing Last October

"Life (drawing) goes on, so on Saturday 31st October, 14 artists and one model had a very enjoyable morning, heightened particularly with the news emerging that morning of the second national lockdown about to start. We had just managed to meet up at Hastoe Village Hall for the first time in twelve months, with days to spare. There were slight differences this time, of course. Sanitiser was applied to all door handles, light switches, taps and toilet handles before and after our session. Masks were worn, people had their own refreshments and social distancing in groups of six was observed. As it happens, we are normally socially distanced anyway, as we form a large ring around the model.

The relief of being able to be with other people physically for four hours and not having to stare at a computer screen was hugely appreciated by everyone. As always, some wonderful art works were created and it was all over too quickly.

With positive news on vaccines, let's hope the next Hastoe session booked for **Saturday 24th April** is able to go ahead."

James Honour

UPDATE: With the publication of the Government roadmap, **we've decided to try to reschedule the Hastoe session for slightly later in the year.**



Coming Up... Dates for Your Diary

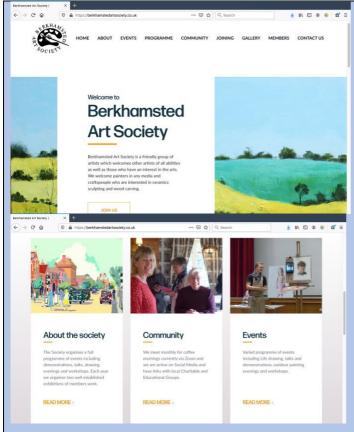
Tuesday 16th March & approx. every 2 weeks – keep an eye on the website! **Coffee Morning - Zoom Meeting –** Starting time 10.30 am with 40 mins to an hour of Chat, Laughter and Art Appreciation. An opportunity to catch-up with Fellow members – **Theme "Texture"** *Free to Members*

Tuesday 23 rd March	Join a Zoom tutorial with local artist, Niki Bell: 'Painting a Hare in Watercolour' 6.30pm to 9pm. In order to keep costs down, we need to charge £6 per member. <u>Contact</u> James 01442 879632 for the Zoom link. Example from a previous workshop to the right:		
Wed 31st March (Exact date around Easter to be confirmed)	Coffee Morning -Zoom Meeting – Starting t hour of Chat, Laughter and Art Appreciation Fellow members – Theme "to be advised" F	. An opportunity to catchup with	
Monday 12 th April Cancelled	Cancelled Free to Members; members-only: Life Drawing Session at the Courthouse 8-10pm Cancelled		
Thurs 15th April (Exact date around mid-April, to be confirmed)	Coffee Morning -Zoom Meeting – Starting time 10.30 am with 40 mins to an hour of Chat, Laughter and Art Appreciation. An opportunity to catchup with Fellow members – Theme "to be advised" Free to Members		
Tuesday 20th April	Join a Zoom Acrylic Workshop with Louise Williams – This a chargeable event at £12.50 for 2 hours and includes information sheets as well as tuition as you paint. Numbers are limited to 10. Please <u>contact Louise</u> if you are interested. Only 2 places left!	<text><text><text><text></text></text></text></text>	
Sat 24 th April Postponed (Check website for updates)	Life Drawing Morning at Hastoe Villag	e Hall	

Looking Further Ahead – Online or Offline?

As we plan our new programme of events and activities, we're considering a mixture of online and "offline" (or real world). We welcome your feedback and opinions on how we should proceed? Do you prefer one or the other? Let us know by emailing berkhamstedartsociety@gmail.com

New Website Goes Live



www.berkhamstedartsociety.co.uk "At the beginning of August, last year, we received confirmation that we had been successful in our application for a £500 grant to help fund the new Web site. Through Janet Birkenshaw, a member at the time, we were introduced to Wirebox in Watford, a software development company. They sent us a skeleton proposal, that met our initial aims for a new modern website, written in WordPress, that would allow us to easily edit it and keep it up to date. Myself, James and Tracy had several meetings to define the layout of each page and what content should be uploaded. We followed more or less the old headings, but decided to add a new page called **Community** where we could post information on the newly established Coffee Mornings, social Media Activity and news on Members using their Art to support Charity. It took several goes and three months of meetings trying to get to where we were happy with how the new website would look.

Wirebox then had to translate our requirements into a website and upload all the scripts and pictures the group had curated. There were issues around where to host the new site and managing the transfer. The website was finally launched on 14 December 2020. By the time you read this we will be in a position to edit the content and keep the Events Programme, Pictures and News Current.

Here are a couple of Members' comments on the New Website:

"The website looks excellent and I think it will prove of great benefit to all artists in the Berkhamsted area. The quality of the look and the user-friendly design will I'm sure encourage more people to join and take part in what is a very active and inclusive society." PH

"It's lovely and bright and inspiring to see everyone's art work. Very professional and easy to navigate. The group comes across as friendly and supportive and encourages new members. Well done!" JT

"It's modern and easy to navigate, giving a good insight into what activities the society provides. I especially enjoy being able to scroll through members websites to see the wide range of painting, sculpture, and ceramics." MC

Our next project is to set up a new page in the website to Host an online exhibition for BAS members. It will be called "Lockdown Art" and launched in April. This will be based on members' Art produced during lockdown, mostly from the Zoom Coffee Mornings' fortnightly challenges." *Ian Jones, BAS Treasurer*

What Some of Our Members Have Been Up To...

Mary Casserley

"Lockdown meant I could not work in my studio which is the top floor of my mums lovely large Edwardian house where I am spoilt for space, so had to make do working from a shared family table in my small house clearing away every day to set the table for meals and homework for my son. I managed well despite the background noises from family members (where I was more used to the soothing tones of R4) I completed half a dozen paintings from my makeshift studio but was unable to complete any orders of signed prints from my website which continued to come in as the



professional printers (I use Orbit Press Chesham) were closed. Luckily, all understood and re-ordered when we came out of lockdown.

Given the uncertainty of the future of the High St- in the realisation I may lose my main outlet-Berkhamsted Imaging. I looked further afield for inspiration. Thankfully, this has not been the case and I'm incredibly grateful to Michelle for keeping me on!

But, thinking ahead I began to paint pictures of Beds, Bucks and Oxon. One of which was Chequers Court, the country seat of the Prime Minister Boris Johnson. I like to paint historic buildings and this 17thC country pile seemed a good subject. It occurred to me to add some figures for interest, so I painted in Boris, his fiancée Carrie, their baby Wilfred, and dog Dilyn having a picnic in the gardens. Once Orbit Press were able to resume, I had a card made which I then posted to No. 10 Downing St. A

few weeks later I received a hand-written letter back from Boris saying he thought the picture was terrific! And he "did not suppose the original painting was for sale"?

I wrote back saying I was delighted he liked the picture and that I would be pleased to sell it to him. Perhaps my next painting should be of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth!

Mary Casserley Sept 2020

Update 18th Feb 2021: Boris Johnson has bought the painting; Well done, Mary!



Jackie Henderson

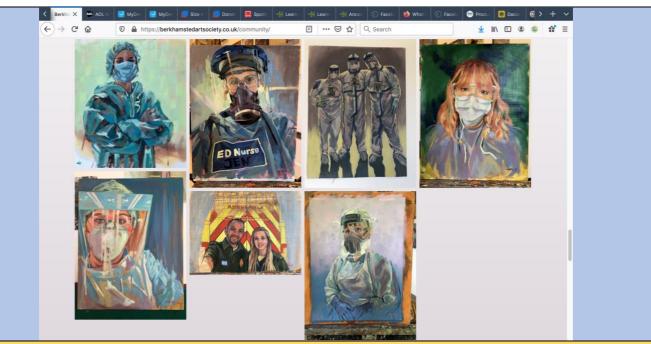
As well as producing a series of NHS Portraits, featured in the last ArtNews and on our website, Jackie was delighted to be featured on a full page splash in Artists and Illustrators December 2020 issue!

"I am totally blown away to be selected for this having been a previous winner in their Artist of the year back in 2017.

I love life drawing and feel it is the best place to practice and experiment methods and to become confident and spontaneous

Painting daily is the best medicine **A** Jackie Henderson Nov 2020

<u>You can see some of Jackie's NHS Heroes Portraits</u> on our website's Community Page



David Satchel

"[Below, left] there are my hastily drawn efforts at Great Gaddesden on Monday 7th September. The stile was actually as decrepit and wonky as it looks. While I was working there were three Buddhist monks who apologised and asked for permission to climb through the mini landscape.

Then, in the dusk, the sky was invaded by about twelve swallows gobbling up insects in the mist. The drawing was done with my 40-year-old

stick dipped in a bottle of Indian ink.

Anyway, the reason I'm sending this is it might be of interest to B A S zoomers who also might want a theme for one of the pre-coffee mornings in the near future. I can help members with this method of doing things if they don't know already.

Thanks for organising the coffee mornings and the AGM. Everybody appreciates how valuable these 'meetings' are- especially me." *David*.

David has also recently produced a book, 'Anyone Can Draw', giving the benefit of his 60+ years' of drawing experience. The book is free and <u>available to members on request to David by email</u>.





IF YOU CAN WRITE YOUR NAME JUST LEARN HOW TO LOOK



by David Satchel





lan Jones

Using the raku kiln for adding horsehair decoration to terra sigillata pots.

"At one of my Zoom coffee mornings with a friend I mentioned that I was opening my kiln at 600° to add horsehair decoration to pots I had covered with *terra sigillata*. My Friend John had a quiet fit: he had been told that opening the kiln at that temperature would damage the elements. He wondered if using the raku kiln would work and suggested this to me.

John hadn't used his raku kiln for ages. For him, it is usually a social thing: raku in the garden and barbecue on the patio; no alcohol until the flames are out, kind of thing...

My pots are wheel thrown White clay, burnished and then coated with *terra sigillata*. On one, I had added blue stain to the *terra sigillata*, giving the pot a blue hue.

John usually used the sophisticated 'it looks a bit shiny' method of knowing when a raku firing is ready but I had a secret weapon. A proper temperature gun, because I only wanted the pots to go up to 600°. The first one out was put on a small pile of sawdust and then draped with horsehair. Both the sawdust and the hair burned at once and the effect on the pot was beautiful, but unfortunately the thermal shock was too much for the pot and it cracked. I was philosophical - I have a 'gold, mending kit' that I is looking forward to using.

The second time John took the lid off the kiln and I draped the horsehair over the pot while it was still in the kiln. We

replaced the lid and let the pot cool more slowly. It was really effective. The pot did lose a little of its sheen, but I planned to wax and polish it to bring back the shine.

The temperature does seem to be crucial: if the pot isn't hot enough or too cool the burned horsehair does not seem to 'take'.

John and I had a very enjoyable afternoon and learned a lot from one another. This is certainly a technique that warrants further playtime!" *Ian Jones*







Frances Evershed

"2020 was Hertfordshire's Year of Culture. The Dacorum branch of Herts Visual Arts was offered an empty shop, near H Samuel, in the Marlowes for September's Open Studios. This was extended into October with the offer to continue until the end of January. Local artists and crafts people exhibited and sold a wide variety of paintings. cards, pottery and jewellery etc. Sadly, it was closed during November and again since the beginning of January." *Frances* Right: One of Frances's works from the exhibition.



Members' Recommendations: Online Demos and Workshops

Several members have been attending online courses or watching online demonstrations and have tutors to recommend:

Niki Bell	Peter Keegan		
https://www.nikibell.co.uk/video-tutorials	https://www.thecourtyardartstudio.com/		
Posaro Watermill – masses of online classes by	The Open Door Berkhamsted also have online classes		
different tutors, for a donation: in art and other subjects:			
https://watermill.net/painting-	https://www.opendoorberkhamsted.co.uk/get-		
holidays/painting-holidays-online-courses.php	creative.html		
	https://www.opendoorberkhamsted.co.uk/whats-		
	<u>on.html</u>		
Louise Williams	Susan Gray		
gocreate123@gmail.com	https://susan-gray.co.uk/workshops.html		

Welcome (Back) to our New Members

Welcome to the following members, who have joined us since the start of this membership year:
Mary Andrews, who has very kindly taken over as our new Membership Secretary!
Isabel (Issy) Bower
Gillian Dalgas-Wright, who has recently moved to the area from Spain
Sally McIver
Welcome back to the following members, who have rejoined us this year:
Maggie Redway
Kike Schafer

90th Anniversary Celebrations!

You may remember reading about the origins of our Society in ArtNews 386 (October 2019): A group of 9 people met in December 1929 at The Poplars, on Berkhamsted High Street, at the invitation of a Mr P. Brandon Jones. The Poplars still exists, opposite the Methodist Church, as does the original Minute Book, which refers to 'The Berkhamsted Arts & Crafts Society'.

We had planned a social summer picnic birthday party for June 2020, but this was not to be... We have not forgotten and will arrange this when it is possible, safe and legal to do so, either this coming summer, or the summer after, if necessary. Watch this space!

Can You Help?

All the work required to run our Society and its activities is done by our members on a voluntary basis. We have a small Committee (see below) and we occasionally need to ask for help from other members for specific tasks or where we lack specific skills or experience. Could you spare some time and offer us some valuable skills?

Do you have graphic design or other skills to design an eye-catching poster or flyer to advertise our forthcoming online exhibition, both in the real world and online? Can you help us by organising our publicity activities and producing publicity material, generally and on social media, to help us get noticed?

If you'd like to help, please contact us at: <u>berkhamstedartsociety@gmail.com</u> or give one of us a ring.

Our Committee

Chairwoman	Frances Evershed	01442 832236
Vice Chairman and Events Programme Organiser	James Honour	01442 879632
Treasurer	lan Jones	01442 876034
ArtNews Editor, Facebook Admin. & Website	Tracy Dudley	01442 874756
Secretary	Bernadette Duffy	01442 864373
Membership Secretary	Mary Andrews	

Berkhamsted Arts and Crafts

During the lockdowns, Jo and the team at Berkhamsted Arts and Crafts have kept going, supplying local artists with all their art materials.

"Order by WhatsApp (07711 339492), email (orders@bacshop.co.uk) or phone (01442 866632) during the Covid Chaos! Collections and deliveries until normal life resumes! *Open 10-3 Monday-Saturday*."

It's been a really tough year for our local, independent businesses, so please support our local art shop by buying all your art supplies there!

Please mention this article when you order.

https://bacshop.co.uk/



Facebook Page and Group

Don't forget that we have a <u>Public Facebook Page</u> & a <u>Private, Members-Only Facebook</u> <u>Group</u>, where we can share our art, have discussions, ask for advice etc. There may be a slight delay after you request to join the Group, while we verify your membership.

The next Art News will be published in June 2021.

If you have any news or an article you'd like included, please send it to tracydudley@aol.com by 15th May.

Art News is an independent Publication of Berkhamsted Art Society and is not affiliated to any other group or organisation.

