



What's been hot this summer

Well, the weather has certainly been something of a hot topic this summer – not least for those deciding whether or not to venture out into the heat.

For those who did, the trip to Compton Verney was a treat, and not just because of the joys of being able to decant from an air-conditioned coach into the cool of the museum, but also some hardy souls even found a shady spot to sketch in the delightful grounds of the house. Valerie Dearlove tells us all about it (left).

Friday's QOD (Quick on the Draw) group is as active as ever, mostly down by the cool of the river and the Riverside Café, while for the Tuesday group the painting goes on until the autumn in various members' gardens. Maggie Baker-Rawle has details of who's hosting when for those who may have missed the email.

Meanwhile, the Thursday evening programme has recently taken us from a talk on fin-de-siècle Vienna (see page 2) to a workshop in oils (see page 3) and a look at the work of a textile artist (see page 2).

And things aren't cooling off just yet, as Abingdon's Heritage Weekend is on the horizon in which everyone is invited to participate. See page 3 to find out how.

And if, after all that, you've found time to go on holiday, here's wishing you a great time.



Compton Verney from the lake and (inset) portrait of Queen Victoria's friend Abdul Mohammed Karim

Cool venue for annual outing

There was much to enjoy on Abingdon Artists' recent trip to Compton Verney in Warwickshire. Valerie Dearlove outlines some of the highlights

What an exciting place to visit. Compton Verney is a Grade-I listed estate in Warwickshire that was once home to noble families after, in 1435, the Verney family began to renovate and expand their manor house and grounds.

In 1993 Sir Peter Moores, a businessman, art collector, philanthropist and lover of humanity bought Compton Verney through his foundation and transformed it into the award-winning public art gallery it is today.

Compton Verney houses six distinct permanent collections: archaic Chinese bronzes, British folk art, Northern European medieval and Renaissance paintings, 17th-century Neapolitan Baroque paintings, and historic British portraits, for example a familiar one of King Henry VIII.

Members found their own favourite painting or sculpture. Mine was the portrait painting of the Indian servant Mohammed Abdul Karim, widely known as "the Munshi", whom Queen Victoria befriended.

To fascinate (and even shock) the visitor with its explicit depictions of *The Seven Deadly Sins* there was an animation based on the drawings of 16th-century Dutch artist Pieter Brueghel, whose style is similar to the Outsider/Insider art of today - an example of art doing a merry-go-round and returning to be appreciated and enjoyed once more. The Brueghel gallery was the perfect place for QOD sketchers to be influenced and encouraged to keep skilfully drawing.

Others were really impressed by the folk art gallery with its examples of art by ordinary, untrained people. I must also mention the Troublemakers and Prophets Gallery featuring Elizabeth Allen, whose creations are darkly funny and strikingly childlike. Illustrated by material stitched to canvas, her life story is worth a read.

NEWS in brief

Artists for the Month wanted

Artists are wanted to display their work for sale in various venues around Abingdon from February 2027. This is an opportunity each month for a new artists to offer their work for sale and to bring a variety of art into the community to be enjoyed by the public.

If you would like to take part contact chairs.abingdonartists@gmail.com

Like to join the party?

Would anyone - especially our new members - be prepared to join the exhibition working party?

We are a small friendly and efficient team, with a maximum of four meetings a year, plus some involvement at the exhibitions.

Please contact Sue Hill via the chairs (address as above) if you would like to help and also if you have any questions.

Membership fees

Just a reminder to everyone that membership fees are now £37 per annum.

If you wish to stay a member please don't forget to renew your subscription by February 2027 otherwise your place will be given to someone on the waiting list.

Vienna - looking at a city of sex, death and design

Ronnie Ireland explains how the changes swirling round the city at the end of the 19th century were to affect art in the whole of Europe. **Carole Elgueta** reports on his recent talk to members

At the turn of the last century Vienna was the beating pulse of the Austro-Hungarian empire which, sitting at a crossroads in Europe, had become an inspirational power-house of architects, composers, writers, poets, thinkers and, of course, painters.

In his talk to Abingdon Artists in the spring, Ronnie Ireland set out to show, by means of a quick stroll past a series of 'signposts', the zeitgeist informing the changes that were being wrought in this multi-ethnic, multi-faith city that were to have a far-reaching effect over the rest of Europe.

Although an extremely tense, class-divided and anti-semitic society (Jewish kingpin composer Mahler was obliged to convert to Christianity, for instance) with great wealth towering over great poverty, Ronnie explained how new materials, like bentwood and corrugated iron, and ideas, such as Sigmund Freud's theories of the self, were leading the city's cultural elite to edge away from conservative establishment norms and embark on a brave new world.

Buildings were starker and more stripped back, furniture more austere, with designers espousing the notion of 'function over form' and new money was funding sensational effects in craftwork, such as glassware.

Meanwhile, Ronnie told us, the artists of the day were drawn to investigations of the self and individual identity, like Richard Gerstl (1883 -1908) who was the first exponent of Austrian expressionism, Carl Moll (1861-1945) who saw 'nature as teacher' and, of course, Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) perhaps the most famous, who was a pioneer of the art nouveau movement in Europe, leading the Austrian avant-garde with his unapologetic eroticism.

Klimt died at the end of the First World War, as did the empire. And so, said Ronnie, bringing his fascinating talk to its end, began a whole new world order.

For us, the order of the evening had been a lavishly-illustrated dive into how fin-de-siecle Vienna hosted an explosion of the cultural and intellectual change that was to shape modern Europe. Thank you for taking us there, Ronnie.



Top, *The Kiss* by Gustav Klimt. Above, the Secession Building, designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich as an exhibition hall and dubbed a 'temple of art at the time'. Left, self-portrait by Richard Gerstl

And now for something completely different ...

Textile artist Anne Griffiths explains how a single idea can lead one down unexpected paths. **Sue Hill** was there on the night

Anne Griffiths is a fine artist with an interesting background. She had a career in early IT, but yearned to be an artist. Eventually she found herself in a position to be able to study art, and gravitated towards textiles, resulting in a second career as a teacher of City and Guilds textiles courses.

But then she found that all her time was spent teaching, so she took further study in fine art at Oxford Brookes, where she did her Masters and a PhD degrees.

During a recent talk to Abingdon Artists, Anne gave us an insight into how art projects develop over time, from an initial idea to the finished pieces.

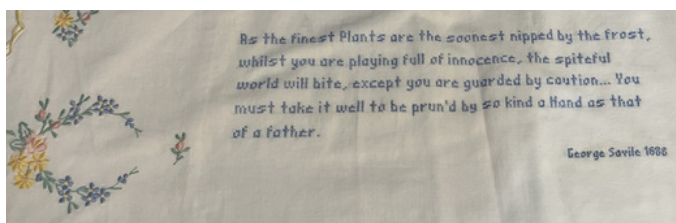
All Anne's work is connected to history, with the themes of art versus craft, and the domestic sphere in history, especially the experience of women.

This project was inspired by the Linnean categorization of plants, which enabled the scientific study of plants but simultaneously excluded women from it, not only because it was thought at the time that plants were too much involved with sex to be suitable for their delicate sensibilities, but all the classifications were made in Latin, a language rarely taught to women.

Anne explained how one idea can spark many art works and can also open up new paths to follow, possibly not what you expect when starting out.

She illustrated this well with some of her lovely pieces. We all enjoyed this talk for the depth of knowledge and variety of artworks that Anne showed, as well as the opportunity to see something completely different.

To find out more visit: www.annegriffiths.com



Above and left, examples of Anne Griffiths' embroidery

Drawing on our heritage

This year Abingdon Artists are once again taking part in the town's Heritage Weekend on September 19 and 20, with the theme of *The History of Everyday Working Lives: - from Agriculture to Atoms*. We are intending to display a frieze of unframed paintings/drawings in any media on the theme, each on size A3 paper, around the walls in Unit 25 upstairs. All entries are welcome and should be submitted by September 11/12 at a venue to be decided.

Everyone is invited to submit entries and, if you feel in need of inspiration, the Abingdon Art Walk references the town's previous industries and agriculture. There is also more information about Abingdon on Wikipedia, or visit abingdoncivicsociety.org.uk. The County Hall Museum also has sources of displayed historical information and photos/illustrations in the drawers under the exhibits. For more information write to chairs.abingdonartists@gmail.com

COMING Up

Printing workshop

The next Thursday evening event for members at The Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, OX14 1NS will be a Tetra Pack printing workshop with Penny Davis on September 10. Places must be booked via Abingdonartists.programme@gmail.com

There will be a charge of £4 for materials payable on the evening in cash.

Autumn exhibition

The autumn exhibition will take place from October 27 – 31 at Christ Church Barn, Northcourt Road, Abingdon, OX14 1PL.

Evelyn Hancox

The QOD group were very sad last month to learn that one of our regular members, Evelyn Hancox, had had a stroke, and several weeks later passed away in Stowford House. It was something of a shock because it had been suggested that we could go for a sketching session in their gardens so that she could stay in contact.

Evelyn used to join us most weeks whatever the weather, unless family were visiting, and was always enthusiastic to make a start.

She loved sketching doors and quite frequently would arrive at the meeting point, ahead of time and full of enthusiasm, to sketch a new one that she had discovered and would be off to make a start. She always enjoyed social time over coffee and loved to chat and to make new members welcome. She will be much missed.

DIANA MATTHEWS



Oils well that ends well

Building up a portrait in oils can be challenging, as Jackie Wagner was to discover at a recent workshop. However, under the guidance of artist Robin Danely, she reports that some very good likenesses emerged

Artist Robin Danely gave a workshop on May 14 focusing on understanding value or tone to build up the head and features in a portrait painting in oils, using a traditional Zorn palette, the colours being titanium white, yellow ochre, cadmium red and ivory black.

Additionally, Robin told us that we could use lemon yellow, permanent rose, burnt sienna and ultramarine blue if we needed.

With a live model, Robin did a 20-minute demonstration. She mixed a mid-tone with the Zorn palette with which she drew the main outline and features. After that she mixed a lighter and a darker tone to block in and complete the features.

Then it was our turn to start. The goal was not so much to create a likeness but to bring out the tones of the face and features without too much detail, as we would have had to leave the oil to dry before painting a second coat.

I think it's fair to say that for many of us this was a very challenging exercise: firstly to paint rather than draw the outlines; then mixing the colour and getting the correct tone was tricky; and finally working in the features by blocking in with the tones.

The resulting variety of portraits was astounding, however, with some very good likenesses.

All in all, it was not as easy as it seemed, but thank you Robin for leading the way.

Robin Danely is a professional artist who paints and teaches still life and portraiture in the Oxfordshire area. You can view Robin's work at www.robindanely.com



Jackie's oil portrait as painted on the night



The King's Arms, Sandford. By Felicity Jenkins

QOD goes Out and About

On Wednesday, July 15, Carolyn and Sue held their first outing for the QOD group.

A small group took the bus to Sandford Lane where they fortified themselves with coffee at the Proof Social Bakehouse before settling down to sketch at Sandford Lock.

After a good creative session, they went to the King's Arms for light refreshment and to view the morning's efforts, one of which is shown above.

Everyone enjoyed the change of venue and the chance to spend more time sketching outdoors.

The next QOD Out and About will take place at Sutton Courtenay on August 19. Details of bus times and venues will be emailed to QOD members nearer the time. However, if anyone else would like to join the group, email Sue or Carolyn at the address given below.

SUE YALLUP

Getting in touch

For more information about Abingdon Artists, visit our website at www.abingdonartists.org.uk

*To email Abingdon Artists write to: info@abingdonartists.co.uk

*To contact co-chairs Sue Yallup or Carolyn Hawkes write to chairs.abingdonartists@gmail.com

*If you have any news, views or reviews you would like to see featured in this newsletter write to newsletter editor Carole Elgueta at cavarley@aol.com