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Brushstrokes

Newsletter of the Harrogate and Nidderdale Art Club

Patron Sir Thomas Ingilby

March 2010



Chairman's Chat

Spring is, allegedly, on its way. However, we have been hampered by the weather and, sadly, had to cancel two meetings at the beginning of January for this reason.

I hope this did not cause too much inconvenience. We circulated to as many people as possible at short notice, but I'm sure there were some of you that were not reached. I hope that common sense ruled in those cases, and the individuals concerned made "executive decisions" to stay close to the fireside at home. Very wise.

However, it now looks as though the worst of the winter may be behind us so let's hope that we can look forward to the remainder of an uninterrupted programme.

Much work is going on behind the scenes, of course. You will see from Geoff's article that he is busy preparing for Ripley, which is looming over the horizon. The end of April will soon be upon us, so please heed his call for entries and offer help where you can.

I mentioned in the last edition of Brushstrokes that the committee is also looking at ways to cope with a future without chequebooks. Whilst this prospect is some way off, there could be benefits to be gained by being ahead of the game and Robin discusses this and its implications in some detail elsewhere in this edition.

There are two important factors that you need to bear in mind in this respect. Firstly any solution we propose will be aimed at protecting all club members in the future, and secondly, no action will be taken without full discussion, and a majority being in favour.

Manchula is working on a new version of the website that she hopes to have running in the next few weeks. The committee has seen the "prototype" and it's looking very good indeed. It is certainly in keeping with the objective of maintaining a forward looking and energetic club.

I hope that you are enjoying the club and what it has to offer. If there are any particular aspects that we currently don't cover that you think may be of interest generally, please let any members of the committee know.

Meantime, enjoy your painting! Especially those you are preparing for Ripley, of course...

Tony Brown



Spring Exhibition

Although winter still has a firm hold on us, the Spring art exhibition will soon be here and we all need to start thinking about getting some paintings done in preparation. The exhibition runs from Friday 30 April

to Monday 3 May and it will again be held at Ripley Town Hall. After the excellent showing in November, I hope that everyone will be thinking of what pictures they can submit this year so we have lots to show. We again invite you to submit up to eight framed pictures and six mounted pictures. While this is a lot to ask, it would be nice to see something from everybody. Please enter as many as you can and don't be shy to show your work. We especially hope that new members will submit some pictures. It is one of the opportunities to show people what we do. It is our showcase. You don't have to sell if you don't want to – just put NFS when asked what price you wish to charge. Pictures should be delivered between 3.30pm and 5pm on the Friday.

The exhibition opens on the Friday with the preview night. This is a rather special evening and is for invited guests, friends and family only. If you can suggest anyone that you think we ought to invite either let Tony know or invite them yourselves but tell the chair or vice chair who you have invited so we can add them to the list for future invites. It starts at 7pm and there will be wine/soft drinks and nibbles. The event closes at 9pm.

The public exhibition on the Sat, Sun and Mon will commence at 10am and finish at 5pm. As usual I will shortly be asking you for the days and times that you can help out with the various duties.

Do think about submitting some cards of your work – they can be priced at £1.50 for small cards and £2.00 for large ones. Also make sure that you mark cards clearly with name and price

I look forward to seeing a bumper submission of pictures this year so get painting (and framing) and let's have a good show.

Geoff Waterworth



Planning for the Future

As things stand, the club is an Unincorporated Association in which every member of the Club has unlimited liability. This means that we could all be called on to meet any shortfall for any debt for which the club may be liable. So far this has not been a problem because we have been able to insure against the very few risks arising from our activities.

This may be about to change if, as reported, banks move to stop issuing chequebooks. If so, we will have to find other methods of making and receiving payments. Bank transfers would probably suffice for making payments and for receiving subscriptions, exhibition hanging fees and payments for other club activities, even though this would result in extra hassle for all concerned.

We could not, however, use bank transfers for exhibition sales and we have therefore come to the preliminary conclusion that in the future we will have to be able to accept debit and credit card payments. This would also be a convenience for members to pay their subscriptions, fees and other expenses, and may result in increased sales at exhibitions.

However, there is a potential liability arising from the use of a credit card machine. For example, if a member were to use information gained from customers' credit cards fraudulently, the amount involved could be greater than we have in our reserves; in which case each member of the Club may be regarded as liable.

This clearly needs to be avoided and there are a number of ways of doing so. We may be able to arrange insurance but we fear that this will prove unacceptably expensive. If this is the case, the most sensible solution for a club like ours may be to become a "company limited by guarantee". The guarantee would be as little as £1 per member. Such a company would pay no dividends and any profits would be ploughed back into the Club. There is an additional benefit in becoming an incorporated entity: it overcomes the problem that many banks and others will not contract with clubs because of their nebulous character.

For similar reasons, a number of not-for-profit clubs and organisations similar to ours have already gone this route.

The practical effect on the Club would be minimal. It would continue to operate exactly as before, except that we would have to register with Companies House and make annual returns. We expect we would be exempted from having professionally audited accounts.

Before making any proposals, we will continue to do our homework so that we can answer all your questions. In the meantime, if there are any members with experience of companies limited by guarantee, or if we have any tame corporate lawyers in the Club, we would very much appreciate any advice that you can give us.

We will discuss these issues with members over the next few weeks, with the possibility of our making proposals to the next AGM. No action will be taken without the approval of a majority of members.

Robin Corner



DVD Lending Library

At Harrogate and Nidderdale Art Club we now have a small DVD lending library which will soon be 'up and running'. All club members will be able to access and borrow the art and painting DVDs. Each Thursday at club meetings I will, as club librarian, be available to loan out the DVDs for a one week period to interested members.

Although the DVD library is at present limited, if popular and successful the library will build in both stock and subject range. Hopefully, in time, the library will have something to offer each and

every member.

To increase the library's usability, the librarian would also be pleased to receive donations of any superfluous DVDs that you may have. We have already received some DVDs from members – thank you for those kind donations and they will hopefully be watched and enjoyed by many members.

Please do let me know of any particular interests, subject matter or particular titles that you would like to see in the library so that we can endeavour to stock these in the near future.

Leisa Mark