

THE READING GUILD OF ARTISTS

England & Wales · Charity number 1182221

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2019-02-26

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

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Activities

Objects: THE ADVANCEMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN VISUAL ARTS BY MEANS OF EXHIBITIONS, LECTURES, DEMONSTRATIONS, CRITICISM AND DISCUSSION.

Activities: THE RGA PROMOTES THE STUDY OF ART AND HELPS TO ADVANCE PRACTICAL ARTISTIC ABILITY BY MEANS OF LECTURES, WORKSHOPS, DEMONSTRATIONS, CRITICISM, AND SUMMER PAINTING DAYS. ANYONE MAY JOIN AND MEMBERS RANGE FROM NOVICES TO PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS. ABILITY MUST BE SHOWN BEFORE WORK IS ENTERED IN THE SEVERAL EXHIBITIONS HELD EACH YEAR.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Throughout England

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£16,491	£12,882	-	-
2023-12-31	£10,466	£9,061	-	-
2022-12-31	£10,130	£9,814	-	-
2021-12-31	£8,243	£8,804	-	-
2020-12-31	£6,767	£6,122	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Connell Gerald McMenamin	Chair	2025-05-07
CLARE BUCHTA		2019-04-24
Catherine Elizabeth Perry		2025-05-07
LINDA MARY SAUL		2019-04-24
Paul Whitehouse		2023-05-09
SHELAGH CASEBOURNE		2019-04-24
Stephen Gareth Jones		2025-05-07

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Accounts

(Rear) View from the Chair
by Linda Saul

At 95 the RGA is still going strong! The RGA was founded in 1930 by Professor Allen Seaby, Professor of Fine Art at the University of Reading, and William Smallcombe, Curator of Reading Museum and Art Gallery, so we regard both the University and the Museum as 'home'!

2024 saw us return to one of those homes - the University of Reading. Specifically we returned to the fantastic gallery space at the Institute of Education where we held our 93rd Annual Exhibition together with a series of workshops. With over 400 works from over 90 artists this was a great exhibition, many thanks to all those members who helped with the organisation, but particularly to our Exhibition Secretary Trish Roberts, and to Kerry Webb, who as university liaison kept the whole thing on track, and to the Institute of Education for hosting us. The exhibition was titled 'Collaboration' as it represented collaboration with the University including sections of work from staff and students. We are delighted to be returning to the University again this year for a slightly longer exhibition and we are offering once again a varied programme of workshops. But there is another angle to 'Collaboration'. Our exhibitions are also a collaboration between our members, for our members. There is an enormous amount of work in putting on an exhibition, all done by RGA members. Being involved in this can be enjoyable, satisfying and a great way to get to know your fellow artists. Our plans to have a small works exhibition at the Turbine House in September, as we did

in 2022 and 2023, were scuppered with the closure of the Narrowboat pub. We regrettably decided to cancel the exhibition as the consequent lack of facilities would have had a deleterious effect both on footfall and the comfort of our volunteers. Instead, we rather hastily organised a sale of small works at St Luke's Parish Hall in Erleigh Road, which turned out to be such a success that we have booked again for the same time this year.

The third exhibition of the year was "Outside" - our Reading Gaol themed exhibition that is still online and in augmented reality on the prison walls.

We have continued to offer creative opportunities to members and friends with regular meetings of Earley Painters, Summer Painting Days and RGA Fridays. Details of these can be found on the RGA website and it is thanks to the hardworking volunteers who put together the programmes and organise these events that they are so successful. Over the last year

3

we have had the exciting innovation of the new feedback/mentoring sessions instigated by Paul Whitehouse together with Cath Baldwin and other volunteers. Initially these have been made available to affiliate members only and they seem to have been very well received. We have also had some excellent lectures including the very successful Christmas event with a talk by past President Martin Andrews and one of Mick McNicholas's entertaining quizzes. The monthly tea time socials continue, now at the Griffin in Caversham since the demise of the Narrowboat.

Kerry Webb has continued to keep us up to date with the monthly bulletins. Martina Hildebrandt, our archivist, regularly adds to the "Museum Highlights" on the website. These relate to works by RGA members that Reading Museum has acquired over the years and help give a flavour of the RGA's heritage.

There are so many who help make the RGA the vibrant organisation it is, and some whose contributions are less obvious to those not in the know, but just as important. My last year as chair is drawing to an end and I'd like to thank all on council and those others who aren't (still, or possibly yet) on council but might as well be given how much they do for us (they should know who they are!). I also include a special note of thanks to Jane Somner and John Percy whose hard work has brought this Annual Review to fruition.

It's been a privilege to be chair of the RGA for the past three years

RGAAccounts Jan 1st to Dec 31st 2024 for AGM 2025

Statement of receipts and payments

Receipts	24	Payments	24
interest	411.86	website	709.59
Subscriptions 24	3670.00	members services	95.00
Subscriptions 25	2954.54	Annual review	1284.90
Annual Exh	5098.83	Council meetings	202.67
Small works 24	3056.31	insurance	815.96
Workshop EP	280.00	Newsletters (printed)	20.40
Workshops Fridays	1019.06	AGM	108.93
		Bank charges	60.00
		New card reader	166.80
		Workshop Fridays	844.80
		Workshop EP	525.00
		Lectures	524.30
		Small works 24	2452.01
		Ann Exh	5071.59
Total	16490.60		12881.95

Statement of assets and liabilities

Bought forward Jan 1 st 2024	
CAF Cash	2759.70
CAF Gold deposit	16197.26
surplus exp/payments	3608.65
creditors	0.00
debtors	0.00
Total C/F Dec 31st	22565.61

The Guild finances are in a healthy state as there is a marked increase in the assets held in 2023 (£18956.96) to that held in 2024 (£22565.61)

Membership

Creation of a new online membership renewal method in December has bought forward subscriptions for 2025 thereby increasing the totals for membership for 2024 and 2025 paid in 2024 (£6624.54) from totals in 2023 (£3895).

Exhibitions

Two exhibitions were held , The Annual Exhibition at the University made a very small surplus. This included running workshops . The small works exhibition did very well and made a pleasing surplus.

Workshops

Earley Painters was still running at a loss although attendance has increased . Room Charges have increased but the cost to attendee has been kept the same . This is part of the Guilds charitable aims for art education. Friday workshops have been well attended and have covered costs this year. Bookings for Friday workshops are now paid through the website and payments come through the Stripe platform which charges a small fee per transaction

Other

Publishing the Annual review on paper and sending to members cost £1284.90 . This was felt to be a positive move for members to have a printed copy.

Council meetings are carried out via Zoom which saves on travel and hire of venue.

A new card reader from Sum Up was purchased £166.80 as the previous one from World pay no longer supported the Guild. This is working well and was used during the Exhibitions for sales.

There have been two lectures over the year costing £524.30 again fulfilling the educational remit of the RGA as a charity

The insurance payments have increased and now stand at £815 .96 from £753 in 2023.

Clare Buchta RGA Treasurer
March 2025

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Accounts

View from the Chair
by Linda Saul

Firstly I'd like to welcome the many new members who have joined – 66 new members joined in 2023 and 20 in the first six weeks of the New Year. I encourage you to get involved and meet other members if you haven't already done so. RGA Fridays, Summer Painting Days, Earley Painters and Teatime Socials are all excellent opportunities to get to know other artists.

The monthly Teatime Socials are always on a Tuesday at The Narrowboat* (previously Bel and The Dragon) at Blake's Lock and we have a healthy core of regulars. The date is given in the Monthly Bulletin. Why not pop along and say hello, new faces are always welcome.

I'd like to thank Trish Roberts, our Exhibition Secretary, for her sterling work in delivering three successful exhibitions in 2023, and everyone else, including council members and the exhibition team, who contribute so much to making exhibitions happen. Particular thanks should be made to Jane Somner, our Publicity Officer, who is sadly standing down this year but exceeded her own usual high standards with an amazing PR campaign for our 92nd Annual Exhibition in 2023. For 2024 we have another Small Works Exhibition at the Turbine House to look forward to, and the exciting prospect of having our 93rd Annual Exhibition at the University of Reading. It has been a very rare thing over recent years for us to have our Annual Exhibition in Reading but this year we return to the Institute of Education Art Building, a lovely space that we have used in the past for our Summer Shows. We are indebted to the University for inviting us again. At the time of writing our Reading Gaol Challenge, which was open to all members, has closed to entries and we are feverishly working on an online exhibition of the works – keep an eye on your email for more information.

The monthly email bulletin remains our main means of communication with members together with the new members' website or "wiki". Whenever we have an exhibition or challenge the entry details are on the wiki. Links are provided in the bulletins and other occasional emails. The wiki also includes information on how exhibiting members can request/update a gallery page on the website. We like to notify members of other members' events such as exhibitions and art Monthly Bulletins – are you receiving us? trails in the bulletins, but we can only do that if people let us know what they are doing.

Finally, thank you to our hard-working council members who keep the RGA show on the road throughout the year, planning event programmes, doing the less glamorous but necessary administration, communicating with members ... the list goes on. A case in point is the document you hold in your hands –

the Annual Review – for which we are indebted to our Editors, Jane Somner, Martina Hildebrandt and Markus Hildebrandt, and to the many others who have contributed content.

On the Back Cover: Picture of the Month artists, (left top to bottom) Carole Stephens, Sue Tait, Lou Jessop, Nina O’Connell, (middle top to bottom) Paul Woolley, Isaac Pascal, Richard Cave, Linda Graves, (right top to bottom) Robert Fitzmaurice, Helen Lunn, William Redman, Kate Ellison-Bourne.

* At the time of going to print with this Annual Review we have sadly learnt that The Narrowboat is closing, therefore we are looking for a new venue for our Teatime Socials. Please look out for the Monthly Bulletin for the latest news!

Reading Guilds of Artist CIO Financial Statement of Accounts 2023 - as at 31/12/2023

Statement of receipts and payments

Receipts				Payments			
	see note	23y £	22y £		see note	23y £	22y £
Membership	1	3,895	2,050	Member Services	6	1,958	2,175
Exhibitions	2	4,624	5,990	Exhibitions	7	3,792	5,638
Workshops	3	1,127	202	Workshops	8	1,735	828
Interest	4	304	2	Governance	9	936	0
Other receipts	5	517		Other payments	10	639	-
		10,466	6,767			9,061	8,804

Statement of assets and liabilities

	23y £	22y £		23y £	22y £
Brought forward, 1 Jan	17,553	17,797	CAF Cash current	2,760	1,432
			CAF Gold deposit	16,197	15,620
Surplus / (deficiency) of receipts over payments	1,405	(561)	Cash	1	210
			Debtors	-	
				18,958	
			Gross Assets	8	
			Liabilities (creditors)	0	25
Carried forward, 29 Dec	18,958	17,236	Net assets	8	17,236

General. The accounts are presented in the same format as previously. The receipts and payments made in 2023 are generally recorded as being in that year, even if the event they relate to belongs in another year. Examples are the subscriptions received and room hire, if any, paid in advance for the next year. Overall the Guild has made a surplus mainly due to the increase in members Membership.(note 1) Recorded subscription income was more than in 2022 due to an increase in membership and more members renewing in the current year.

Members services (note 6) Insurance costs have increased (£753) the other expenses were for the website and Annual review (£1002)

Exhibitions. (Note 2). Three exhibitions were held successfully. The Annual exhibition recorded a surplus (£576) . There were no hand in fees for the RBH exhibition and commission went to the RBH Charity. Small works showed a surplus (£146) due to hand in fees from the number of participating artists. Commission on sales here (£199) went to the Museum for hire of Turbine House Gallery.

Workshops (Note 3). Earley painters returned to Maiden Place Community Centre , the rent here is lower than the previous hall but the workshop again made a loss. Friday workshops took place in St Peters Church Hall . These have been very well attended but are still subsidised .Overall workshops made a loss but this subsidy is in line with the Guild's charitable aims of art education.

Interest / Governance (Note 4 /9). Charges on the CAF cash account remain at £5 a month with a nominal interest rate ,interest on the CAF Gold account has increased_realising £304 overall. Council meetings and other meetings for exhibitions etc were conducted via zoom costing £15.59 a month.

Other Receipts/payments (Note 5 /10). there were two donations last year from the families of two RGA members who have sadly died. The sale of Carole Pembroke's art materials raised £357 and art equipment donated from Jacqueline Brown's family raised £160.

A projector was purchased using the Carole's family's donations for use at the RGA lectures.

A more detailed table of accounts can be viewed on request.

Clare Buchta RGA Treasurer March 2024

THE READING GUILD OF ARTISTS

England & Wales - Charity number 1182221

Accounts

View from the Chair

by Linda Saul

After the previous two years of reduced activity the RGA has been back with a full programme over this past year. We have also enjoyed a bit of a growth spurt in terms of new members, the membership stands at over 230 at the time of writing, and I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you all.

RGA Friday workshops, Earley Painters and Summer Painting Days are all popular and are great for getting to know other members – but they aren't everyone's cup of tea. So we came up with the idea of Teatime Socials – friendly gatherings to chat about art and to get to know each other better. It can be daunting entering a pub to meet a group of people, not sure if there'll be a face you will recognise. But a common interest in making art is a great ice breaker and the Bel and the Dragon is often quiet – we sometimes have the place to ourselves. New faces are always welcomed into the group.

We had four successful exhibitions last year including the RBH Corridor Exhibition No.27, 'Sense of Space' at South Hill Park Arts Centre and the small, but perfectly formed, 'Small Works' exhibition at the Turbine House. The annual exhibition, 'ART Works', held in Henley, saw the inaugural Pauline Mercier Award for 3D work, alongside our well established Marie Dyson Award. The extraordinary work of RGA volunteers is clearly visible, particularly at exhibition time. You might be surprised just how much work goes into exhibitions.

The current (at the time of writing) exhibition at the Royal Berkshire Hospital took a team of 12 to hang. But that is just the tip of the iceberg, a lot of administration and planning goes on before, after and during an exhibition. Our Exhibitions Secretary Trish Roberts has done us proud again this year, supported by many others – the exhibition team, council members and other volunteers.

Martina Hildebrandt, who has been our Webmaster for 10 years, has decided to step down from this role. We are indebted to her for all the work she has done for the RGA.

The website is a rich information resource on all things RGA, and Martina's knowledge of the RGA prodigious (she is also our archivist). We are planning to give the website a refresh this year – we are taking the opportunity to upgrade the technology behind it and make it easier to maintain. Jane Somner, our Publicity Officer, does a great job getting our message out to the local press and beyond. Jane and Martina, together with volunteer Markus Hildebrandt have once again edited this Annual Review which, as usual, gives a fascinating snapshot of what the RGA has been up to over the last year. Kerry Webb took on the role of Administrative Officer last year and has done a fantastic job in producing the new monthly members' bulletins. I encourage all to look at these bulletins, which alongside the website, is our primary means of communication with members. However, Kerry's impact

on the RGA has gone much further than this. Kerry, who is a librarian at the University of Reading, is instrumental in helping us meet and talk to the right people to re-establish our long-standing ties with the University. She organized the excellent Spring lecture at MERL where we learnt about the University's art collection and in May we are participating in the UoR Community Festival. There are ongoing discussions about the possibility of our exhibiting at the University once more, in 2024.

Our lecture programme this year has provided 3 lectures, including a fascinating talk by our retired President Clive Duncan, who I am delighted to say still stays active within the RGA. By some misfortune we have not yet managed to get Clive and our current President Fiona Talkington in the same room together!

I am writing this having just got back from participating, alongside several of our members, in the 'March to the Gaol' – an event organised by Save Reading Gaol campaigners. This was a fun, lively event. I think there is slightly more optimism now that we might eventually attain the goal of a cultural centre at the gaol.

It is impossible to thank everyone individually here but I want to mention two who spearhead the day to day running of the RGA – Shelagh Casebourne (RGA Secretary) is great at keeping us on track and Clare Buchta, our Treasurer, does so much more than just treasuring. To all the other council members, exhibition team and other volunteers including those who organise RGA Friday workshops, Earley Painters, Summer Painting Days and lectures, thank you. And thank you to all of you, our members, for your beautiful art works and for taking part – without your efforts there would be no RGA.

Statement of receipts and payments

Receipts	see	22y	21y	Payments	see	22y	21y
	note	£	£		note	£	£
Membership	1	2,700	2,050	Member Services	6	2,556	2,175
Exhibitions	2	6,214	5,990	Exhibitions	7	5,829	5,638
Workshops	3	688	202	Workshops	8	978	828
Interest	4	62	2	Governance	9	225	0
Other receipts	5	465		Other payments	10	225	-
		<u>10,130</u>	<u>6,767</u>			<u>9,814</u>	<u>8,804</u>

Statement of assets and liabilities

		21y		21y		
		22y	£	22y	£	
		£	£	£	£	
Brought forward, 1 Jan		17,237	17,797	CAFCash current	1,797	1,432
				CAF Gold deposit	15,755	15,620
Surplus / (deficiency) of receipts over payments		316	(561)	Cash	1	210
				Debtors	-	
				Gross Assets	<u>17,553</u>	
Carried forward, 30 Dec		<u>17,553</u>	<u>17,236</u>	Liabilities (creditors)	<u>0</u>	<u>25</u>
				Net assets	<u>17,553</u>	<u>17,236</u>

General. The accounts are presented in the same format as previously. The receipts and payments made in 2022 are generally recorded as being in that year, even if the event they relate to belongs in another year. Examples are the subscriptions received and room hire, if any, paid in advance for the next year.

Membership.(note 1) Recorded subscription income was more than in 2021 due to an increase in membership and more members renewing in the current year.

Exhibitions. (Note 2). Four exhibitions were held successfully. The Exhibition at South Hill Park incurred no expenses. The Annual exhibition recorded a surplus (£1051) due to excellent sales. Rent for the gallery (£590) for Annual 2023 was paid in advance in 2022. There were no hand in fees for the RBH exhibition and commission went to the RBH Charity. Small works showed a deficit (£76) resulting from hand in fees not covering expenses. Commission on sales here (£246) went to the Museum for hire of Turbine house Gallery.

Workshops (Note 3). Earley painters recommenced in a new location of St Barnabas Hall. Costs of hall hire were more expensive and were not covered by subscriptions resulting in a loss . Friday workshops took place in St Peters Church Hall . These have been fairly well attended but are still subsidised .Overall workshops made a loss of £290 but this subsidy is in line with the Guild's charitable aims of art education.

Interest / Governance (Note 4). Charges on the CAF cash account has decreased to £5 a month and interest on the CAF Gold account have increased realising £62 overall. Council meetings were conducted via zoom , The AGM was held at St Peters Church Hall overall costs for this were £225.

Other Receipts/payments (Note 5). There was a sale at the AGM of art materials donated by the family of the late RGA member Lorna Webber. The sale raised £465 which was generously donated to the RGA to further the art education aims.

There was a very enjoyable Summer lecture for members and guests the final cost for this was £225. The Christmas Lecture incurred expenses due to room hire , refreshments and a gift to the speaker Clive Duncan (£123.11)

A more detailed table of accounts can be viewed on request.

THE READING GUILD OF ARTISTS

England & Wales - Charity number 1182221

Accounts

Trustees Report 2021

We had thought and hoped that this last year was going to be a better year on the Covid front but as we now know, this was not the case. 'Getting back to normal' seemed a long way off but by showing great resolve and encouraging one another with that 'Dunkirk Spirit' we have been able to take the opportunities when they arrived to get back to doing what we do best. Maybe it is only at this late juncture in spring 2022 that we are beginning to see the light at the end of the Covid tunnel.

For the past year the RGA Council has continued its regular meetings, still via 'Zoom'. Much time has been spent trying to reorganise events that were already in the diary. The planned Drawing Exhibition at Reading Museum along with artists' talks and workshops had to be postponed once more. But on a more positive note, along with our two Online Exhibitions we have been able to hold two physical exhibitions – our RBH Corridor Exhibition No.26 and the 90th Annual Exhibition at the Old Fire Station Gallery in Henley.

The RBH exhibition was very well supported by members and we achieved some good sales. Our works of art brightened up the corridors of the hospital and brought a note of positivity for the patients, who had to spend unexpected time there and also for their families when they came to visit. The staff also showed their appreciation; one doctor from Respiratory Medicine commented 'my walk to work from the car park is now a joyful experience thanks to all these wonderful artworks'.

It was with a real sense of pleasure and joy that we reconnected with each other at our 90th Annual Exhibition. Unusually this was held in July and coincided with the Henley Arts Trail on one weekend. So our footfall was up as people enjoyed the fine weather and the art. Members came up trumps with superb works of art as well as volunteering to hang and steward the show. Even though masks were still the order of the day, our exhibitions have given us the opportunity to see one another and meet people in the outside world again!

Over the past two years we have missed our usual RGA gatherings. During the autumn of 2021, the council managed to secure a new venue for RGA Fridays. Many of you will have already enjoyed the 're-gathering' and I hope many more members will support future workshops. And Earley Painters has also just begun again – in yet another new venue! I hope that some positive creativity has come out of the enforced isolation of the past year and that we can share what we have achieved with one another, perhaps at one of our workshops.

A great opportunity that we still have to look forward to is the "Sense of Space" Exhibition at South Hill Park Arts Centre in Bracknell during 2022. This exhibition will be quite a departure from many of our usual showing spaces. Many

of our members having responded well to the challenge it provides - to seek other ways of expression from the norm, in our artistic practises.

On another note, I have to let you know that I am going to stand down from the role of Chair, at the AGM, due to family reasons. My brother had a stroke some years ago, but he has needed increasing support lately and I have to provide that for him, as I am his only surviving family member. I have enjoyed my time in the position of Chair, but feel it is time to make way for someone else. I will keep my hand in as part of the Exhibition team. I hope you understand my position on this. Thank you to everyone for your continued support and membership of the RGA.

Here's looking forward to a more positive 2022!

Reading Guild of Artists Annual Accounts 2021

Statement of receipts and payments

Receipts				Payments			
	see note	21y £	20y £		see note	21y £	20y £
Membership	1	2,050	3,530	Member Services	6	2,539	2,927
Exhibitions	2	5,990	1,895	Exhibitions	7	5,408	2,347
Workshops	3	202	330	Workshops	8	858	828
Interest	4	2	12	Governance	9	0	21
Other receipts	5	-	1,000	Other payments	10	-	-
		8,243	6,767			8,804	6,122

Statement of assets and liabilities

	21y £	20y £		21y £
Brought forward, 1 Jan	17,797	17,152	CAFCash current	1,432
			CAF Gold deposit	15,620
Surplus / (deficiency) of receipts over payments	(561)	645	Cash	210
			Debtors	-
			Gross Assets	17,261
			Liabilities (creditors)	(25)
Carried forward, 29 Dec	17,236	17,797	Net assets	17,236

General. The accounts are presented in the same format as previously. The receipts and payments made in 2021 are generally recorded as being in that year, even if the event they relate to belongs in another year. Examples are the subscriptions received and room hire, if any, paid in advance for the next year.

Membership.(note 1) Recorded subscription income at £2050 was less than in 2020 (£3,530), largely because more members had paid for 2020 in advance.

Member Services. (Note 2).Major costs as in 2020 were for website maintenance , insurance and publishing the annual review .In addition a zoom subscription allowed for online council meetings and also on line workshops/demonstrations to minimise contact during the ongoing covid pandemic.

Exhibitions. (Note 3) Two exhibitions were able to take place despite the covid restrictions. The 90th exhibition was held in Henley .RGA took part of the Henley Arts Trail as the timings happened to coincide. There was a venue charge for being part of the trail of £200 . This was approved by Council to support the Trail ,for the extra publicity and anticipated increase in footfall.

WorldPay's commission of 2½% on sales (£99) was not charged to artists but included in costs against the 90th exhibition when the card machine was used. Overall the exhibition was successful and positive financially .(£1132) £582 if previous years payment of gallery hire taken into account.

Next years Gallery hire of £550 has been paid in advance.

The RBH corridor exhibition was also successful. No hanging fee was charged this year , a Council decision made in order to limit social contact and encourage participation . Sales were low but still raised £201 for the RBH Charity Fund from commission.

Workshops. Earley painters had been discontinued for the year . Zoom workshops/ demos/talks were offered earlier in the year at no charge to members ,whilst lock down was in place again. The Friday workshops restarted in September at a new location of St Peters Church Hall .

Cost were £132 for room hire and £690 for tutors including zoom workshops, receipts were received from participants via Eventbrite for the Friday workshops amounting to £202.

Interest /charges (note 4). CAF gold deposit account ,interest has gone down dramatically , £2 over the year, and the CAF current account charges have increased to £8 per month (£96)

Clare Buchta February 2022

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Accounts

The View from the Chair

by Anthony Wilder

2019 Chair's View in the Rear-View Mirror.

Yes, this 'View from the Chair' will be my last as I have now completed three years as your Chair so this is an opportunity to glance in the rear-view mirror!

One of my hopes was that RGA would be able to reach out and consolidate links with other organisations, notably the University and the Museum, for the benefit of all our members.

Our links with the University's Institute of Education was already well established when I took over, as we had staged two exciting exhibitions there and had built up a good rapport with Gill Hopper and her colleagues.

You will remember from last year's report that this had all received a severe setback when the University was concerned that the campus' non trading status would be compromised. With patient and persistent negotiation, and goodwill on both sides, a solution was found just in time for the 2018 exhibition to go ahead. This was a very good thing as it was our fifth show, it was very well received and the Vice Chancellor, Sir David Bell was on hand to open it. This exhibition with its associated workshops now seems secure for the future.

The next major exhibition after this was our Royal Berkshire Hospital show which was well received and thanks to Hilary's undercover work, Bayer gave us a donation of £250 effectively matching our percentage from sales so the hospital benefitted by approximately £500. Sadly, as expected, we have not been invited to hold an exhibition there in 2019, but we hope 2018's fundraising for them will help us to hold a show there in 2020, our 90 th birthday year!

All the hard work with last year's Pop-up at the Museum, together with the Big Draw in the autumn, paved the way for our Annual Exhibition to be held there for the first time in a number of years. Elaine Blake found that she had a gap in her exhibition schedule and was delighted when we offered to fill it! We started with a pop-up over the half-term week with small works on the wall for sale and family-friendly activities featuring a 'medieval' banquet. This was brilliantly organised by Lorna Webber, who headed up a new workshops team, encouraged by Clive Duncan and ably assisted by Sadie Brockbank and Lynda South. This was followed by our 89 th Annual Exhibition which featured 163 works plus sketchbooks and other items. Everything submitted was displayed and it made a stunning show – it was very well received and it was a fitting climax to Hilary's time as our hardworking Exhibitions Secretary.

The need to find a solution to the problem at the University spurred us on to transform the RGA from

a Registered Charity into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). You will remember that our lawyer,
2

Alison MacLennan, attended last year's AGM which voted to do this. Since then she has been working hard to bring it about and at the time of writing, the Charity Commission have just completed the process of registration. This new structure means that Councillors and Officers have more legal protection and will be able to serve RGA with increased confidence.

Apart from links with the Museum and the University, contacts and opportunities for some of our members to exhibit work with other commercial and business venues in the town have also happened during the year and we are seeking to develop productive relations with other art-based groups in Reading.

I have been very impressed with the lively and imaginative programme which Earley Painters and RGA Fridays provide for our members and the wider public. These activities continue throughout the year and in the warmer weather, Summer Painting Days make a welcome addition to the programme.

In last year's report I mentioned the increased pressure which all this expanded activity had placed on your officers. To meet this challenge we have been extending the idea of establishing support groups for each officer. In some cases the officer will be able to delegate some of the tasks to named members of the group, while still being responsible to the Council for all the activities. For this reason you will see that the members of these support groups for 2019–20 are listed in your AGM paper work although they do not need to be formally elected. For that reason I have not listed them here but we are all hugely grateful to them for being willing to help RGA in this way.

While on the subject of 'thank-yous', several officers are standing down this time including Hilary Parkinson and Jane Somner. Hilary has put a huge amount of hard work, time and thought into her task as Exhibition Secretary, mounting far more shows than she might have expected when she took on the role two years ago. Jane has also worked very hard not only as Vice Chair, where I have found her support particularly valuable, but she has also made an indispensable contribution to the publicity and communications group. Thank you both!

Looking ahead, there will always be challenges as we seek to present to the public the high quality of work which our members produce in an increasingly wide range of media and styles, both to be enjoyed as well as for sale. But I am sure that the hard work that your Councillors and Officers have put in, over the last two years particularly, will have paved the way for a smooth

run into our ninetieth birthday year in 2020.

Anthony Wilder

Retiring RGA Chair