

## 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	£	£		£
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	-	
			<b>Gross Assets</b>	<u>17,553</u>	
Carried forward, 30 Dec	<u>17,553</u>	<u>17,236</u>	<b>Liabilities</b> (creditors)	<u>0</u>	<u>25</u>
			<b>Net assets</b>	<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.

Clare Buchta RGA Treasurer April 2023

