

(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

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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

## **RGA Accounts Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2024 for AGM 2025**

### **Statement of receipts and payments**

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>24</b>
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
<b>Total</b>	<b>16490.60</b>		<b>12881.95</b>

### **Statement of assets and liabilities**

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

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