

ISLE OF WIGHT ART CLUB

NEWSLETTER – GALLERY – ARTICLES – MAY 26



Welcome to your Late Spring Newsletter with reviews from the Winter Programme and the start of the Summer plein air. We have the usual photos from Riverside and reviews of the Brian Smith demo and Study Day plus exciting news about a new exhibition venue for 2027.

Spring Exhibition at the Minster: *Right* is the painting of 'Ram' by Elizabeth Tucker who won the Favourite Painting vote at the recent exhibition at the Minster in Newport. Well done Elizabeth, we had a lot of votes and a good footfall but unfortunately not many sales. The difficult timings of the opening hours did not help plus all day closures making it not easy to plan visits. The staff at the Minster and the volunteers in the café were very helpful and we send our thanks.



Summer Programme – plein air:

June 2nd: Cowes Parade

June 9th: Harvey Browns

June 16th: Isle of Wight Pearl

June 23rd: Brighstone Village Art Group Paint Out, Brighstone

June 30th: Yaverland Car Park

July 7th: IWAC Summer Painters' Picnic – Carol Owen is very kindly hosting the summer picnic in the gardens at her home in Chillerton. Please bring your own picnic and painting gear, drinks are provided.

July 14th: Newtown National Nature Reserve and Old Town Hall

July 21st: Godshill

July 28th: Golden Hill Country Park

All the details, directions etc for each Tuesday are on the Club website.

Meeting each week at 10.30am.

Our Chair, **Daphne**, gave a critique of members' work on the last Tuesday at Riverside. Over 50 paintings were reviewed by Daphne in the 2 hours and everyone, not just the artists whose paintings were critiqued, learned a lot. Thank you Daphne



The National Gallery Art on your Doorstep May-October 2026



THE NATIONAL GALLERY
ART ON YOUR DOORSTEP
Newport art trail May to October 2026

Art On Your Doorstep is a special collaboration between Newport and the National Gallery, bringing life size reproductions of celebrated paintings into the heart of our County town for all Island residents and visitors to enjoy.

To view the trail map and find out more, scan the QR code or visit:
www.newportwight.org.uk/art-on-your-doorstep



NATIONAL GALLERY

Isle of Wight Council

Coventry

Leeds

Manchester

Sheffield

Stoke-on-Trent

Wolverhampton

Wrexham

Portraits from Riverside:



Brian Smith Zoom water colour demonstration, 31 March 2026

Peter Allen

Brian gave us a fascinating and very informative demonstration on watercolour, working from memory, he doesn't use photographs as reference. During the first half Brian painted a street scene in Majorca and after tea a series of small paintings taking just a few minutes each on a divided-up sheet of paper, scenes ranging from the Lake District to seascape.

Brian paints on NOT or Hot Press paper from Arches and Saunders Waterford. He only uses good quality pigment from tubes squeezed into pans.

Brian was very generous with tips and information throughout the demonstration, too many to list fully here and so in no particular order: Before you start have a clear idea of how you want the painting to develop. Decide on the painting eye level, for interest in the foreground a higher eye level and for interest in the distance a lower one. Avoid a line across the centre of the picture.

Have your focal point off centre and have the light source from the opposite side.

Use lost and found edges to suggest form.



Right: Brian's 'Windsor Castle' winning plein air painting 2023

When putting standing adult figures in a landscape such as a street scene paint the heads on the eye level, Brian uses a table knife to scrape back wet paint to create lighter areas such as in masonry and stone. Use the blunt end of a paint brush to indent lines in the paper whilst the pigment is still wet to create darker marks.

Encourage wet pigment 'to play' and mix on the paper to create interesting textures and mixes of colour.

Tone is more important than colour to suggest depth. In the demonstration light tonal areas were saved in the distance with the buildings being a light tone. The closer buildings being painted a much stronger tone with richer pigment and deeper shadows. Then using tissue to create a path of light shining from a gap between building on the right of the painting highlighting the figures in front of the church on the left.

Use a light opaque pigment to add small highlights to figures/objects that are in light areas.

After tea we watched Brian paint a series of small paintings on a single sheet of watercolour paper fixed to a board with framers' tape and then subdivided into four unequal rectangles with low tac scotch tape around each painting. When the paint is dry the tape is carefully peeled off to leave a neat white border around each picture. Brian uses both sides of his watercolour sheet to paint these scenes. Try this to experiment different ideas.

Peter Allen

Brian Smith Watercolour Study Day:

Janet Welsh

Goodness, it was a busy day with so much to take in. Brian has so much energy and no end of knowledge to share, plus an infinite range of skills built up over 50 years. He gave several practical demonstrations, and some detailed explanations with diagrams of technical things such as composition, colour theory, and perspective. Also, he spent time with each of us during the two exercises we attempted. There were heaps of examples of Brian's own work to refer to. These were mainly pages filled with quick experimental sketches (amazing images in their own right) and also finished pieces worth thousands. (He said these take a day, max, to paint).

Right & top left: Brian's sketches and work



The morning was concerned with the quick, experimental sketches. The watercolour paper was secured and divided with tape into smaller random areas. Brian had provided a long and daunting list of suggested materials, but he wasn't critical, and believes it is important to have a go *whatever*, and gradually find the paper, paints etc that suit you. He showed us his goals and methods of the quick sketches which are about playing, practice and building up confidence. They should take a few minutes only, drawing only what is needed, for example, the shape of buildings. He showed watery washes, painting soft and sharp lines, building up from the softer background to the darker front, and the use of paper towel or scraper to move paint and create textures. He reminded us that the areas of light are white paper so think before you mark, you can't get that white back. He discussed

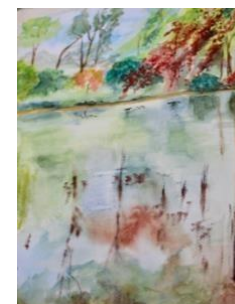


composition and explained that the lines should lead the eye into the picture.

Left, Right and below right, members' work

Then it was our turn to do the quick sketches, we could do scenes from our imagination, from our own photos, or using Brian's sketches for inspiration. Brian reminded us that as artists we can ignore aspects from the source picture and make up whatever we want for our painting. Later he showed us source photos and the finished paintings of his own, the difference was a revelation. So we all did 5 or 6 quick paintings on one page.

After lunch we were to do a full sized painting. Brian expanded further on the importance of composition, the first decision is whether to have landscape (relaxing) or portrait (dramatic). The second issue is what level to have the eyeline, he recommended not across the middle. He gave a detailed overview of perspective and stressed that you can have several vanishing points but they must all be on the eyeline. He also reminded us that if we are on the level of the crowd (rather than looking out of our hotel window), the heads will be more or less, on the eyeline. Thirdly, the question is, what is the focus of the painting. Brian likes to have a narrative, to create a story in the painting, such as the Indian women doing the heavy work. This centre of focus needs a contrast of dark against light, to stand out boldly. Consider where to place it, in the centre is not an interesting composition.



Next, consider where the light is coming from. Brian's paintings are full of drama due to the areas of light, contrasting with the rich shade. Remember to retain the white and light areas which cannot be reclaimed if painted. Brian discussed the colour wheel and pointed out that warm light casts shade with cold tones, and cold light results in warm toned shade. For our paintings we could use one of many source photos that Brian had brought in if we wanted. He reminded us, "indicate don't

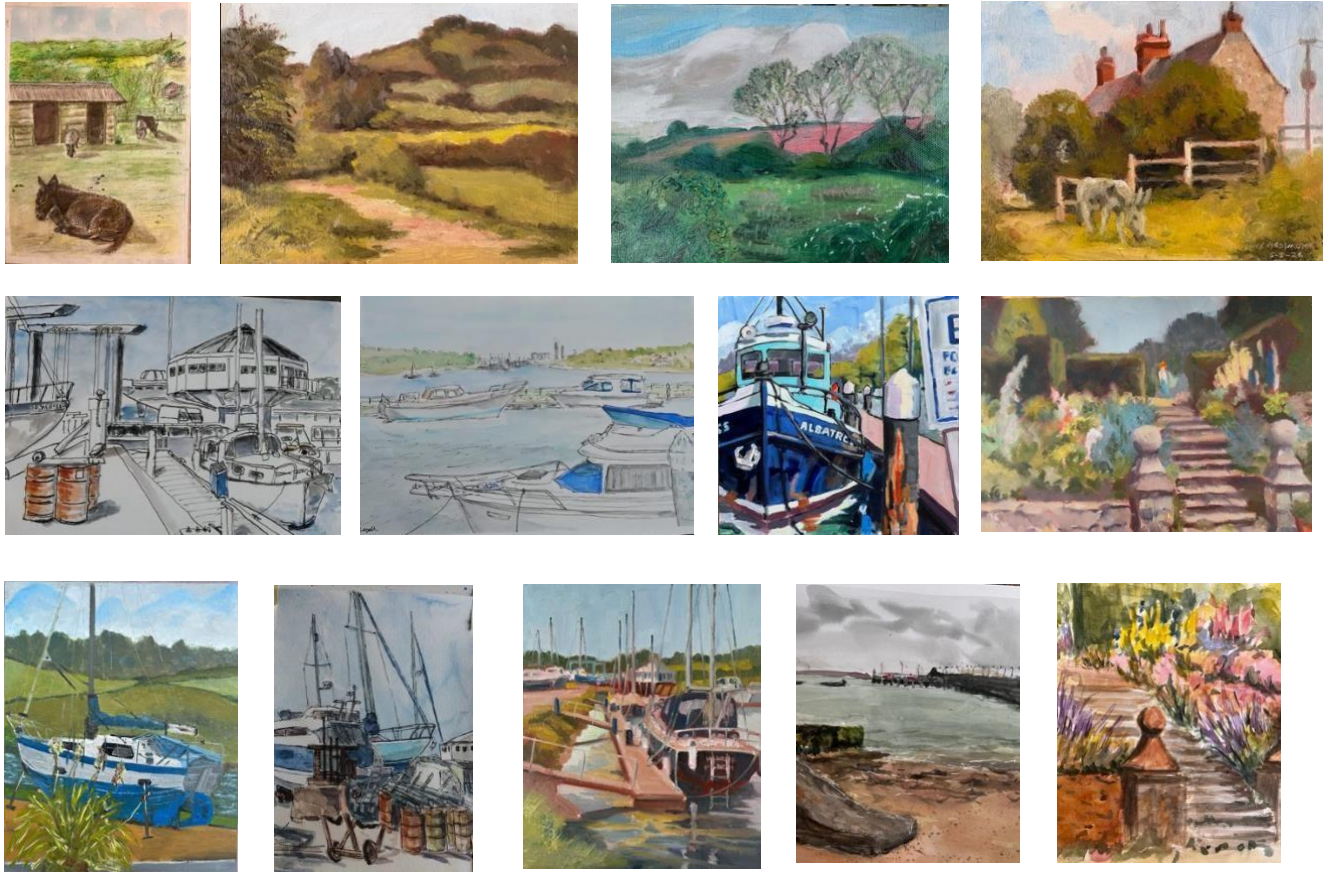
state” that is, suggest details rather than include everything, we can ignore and invent. Trying to remember all these principles and techniques, we attempted our paintings, with Brian’s advice and support. The last tip he uses is when the picture is dry, he scratches some of the raised bits of the textured paper off with a scalpel, to create some white highlights.



It was a wonderfully informative day. So much useful information was clearly demonstrated, and I think we were all inspired. There were two main takeaways for me. One, was to practice quick sketches (of scenes but also groups of people) with a big brush, which will be so useful in our up-coming plein air sessions. The other is, that colour (and yes, composition and perspective, but especially colour) absolutely makes a picture. Brian transformed fairly ordinary scenes into stunning images through his magical choice of colour.

Janet Welsh

Plein air – The Donkey Sanctuary – Island Harbour – Ryde – Mottistone Manor Gardens



Letter from the Chair: We’ve been inside for the past six months and judging by the work you presented at the critique, you have all been working really hard and very successfully. I did so enjoy seeing so many pieces and such variety - thank you.

Now it’s the turn of the outdoors! Whilst not so many of you manage to partake of our very varied venues, I was so pleased to see such a good turnout at The Donkey Sanctuary for our first venue. It was great to see so many sketch pads out and paintings happening. However, as I wandered around I heard some mutterings of “they’re quite a ways away,” “they’re a bit hard to see”. The answer to that problem is photography! Most of us have a mobile phone these days with a camera - and a good one at that. For animal painting I believe a camera is essential and trust me the artists of the past would have jumped at such a tool. It is obviously useful for something that moves a lot but it doesn’t need to stop there. If you are painting a scene or buildings etc. you are having a race with the changing light direction. The sun moves round quite quickly giving a different take on shade and colour and form as it goes. When the weather is part sun with some cloud it is even more important to capture a moment. I’m not suggesting you paint from your screen - painting en plain air gives a spontaneity that seldom happens in the studio. But to use the captured moment as backup info. Incidentally I also do this with still life subjects that I set up - light changes indoors too. I’m sure we are going to have a great summer season in the venues Andrew has found for us. Most of them have a coffee/tea shop or some such facility so if you are a little nervous of getting your sketch pad out in public then come and have a cuppa and a chat with us - you never know you might be inspired to take some photos! Hope you find this useful!

Daphne

EXHIBITION VENUE FOR EASTER 2027: MOTTISTONE MANOR & GARDENS

We are very pleased to announce that we have been offered Mottistone Manor for our Spring exhibition for 2027. We have built up a great rapport with the National Trust over the years we've been going to the Gardens for our plein air visits. As we can only have one exhibition a year at Quarr Abbey in the late summer, and Newport Minster not being as successful as hoped in the Spring, we hunted around for a suitable venue. Andrew has followed on from Neil, Peter and Nicky further building on the relationship and Denise, our contact has said that although other art groups had enquired about exhibiting at Mottistone Manor, IWAC is who they would like to partner with.

During Tuesday's plein air, Council members put forward our ideas and we were offered 3 separate sites for our paintings, an art trail starting with the Reception area, into the first room in the Manor House, then the Barn which will have tables for people to sit at and hopefully demonstrate! We are also exploring having themed areas which we will explain nearer the time, we still have Quarr at the end of August!

The dates for next Spring - opening on Good Friday 26th March until Sunday 11th April 2027



Above: The Reception area, the starting point of the exhibition: Centre: The right hand half of the barn which will be well lit: Right: The first room inside the Manor House will be used for table easels.

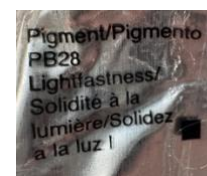
While on the subject of Exhibitions, the current organisers are giving up most of the jobs they currently do in the lead up to an exhibition actually happening! A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to make it a success. We would love new members to step forward and offer help however small. Please contact a Council member when you are out with plein air or email the address below or the Club website. Thank you.

Student or Artist Quality Paints? For and against – you get what you pay for!

Part 1

When starting out on our painting journey, one is tempted to buy the cheaper Student range of paints whether it is oil, acrylic or watercolour or even cheap pastels. However there is a vast difference in the make up of Student and Artist quality ranges.

Artists ranges contain more pigment which cost more depending on the Series number, series 1 up to series 5. They are rated depending on pigment quality, like expensive genuine Cobalts or Cadmium being the dearest. Other qualities include being single pigments and lightfastness. The less pigments mixed together, the purer the resulting colour will be. All reputable makes of paints ie W&N, Sennelier, Golden, Daler Rowney and more, will have the pigment make up written on the side of the tube so you can see the make up and how many pigments are present.



Above: Artists single pigment Cobalt Blue

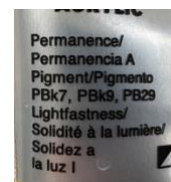
Student ranges are not usually divided into Series, all being one price or similar. They are more often blended colour of cheaper pigments with fillers to pad them out. They often have the word 'Hue' after the name, as in 'Cobalt Hue' showing that there is no genuine pigment. Often these are several different colours mixed together so if you add another colour to it you could get 'mud', it won't be a clean colour. Lightfastness is not always guaranteed.

There is a place for Student colours if you already have some as under paintings.

The very cheap tubes you get from some non art shops are usually not even

student quality and to be avoided for paintings particularly if you're selling the artwork, it will fade!

Permanence: Most paints that are made in this country adhere to the A system of permanence. AA - is the best for no colour change and lightfastness over time. A – is still good and permanent up to archival quality. B – will probably fade over time whilst C - is classed as fugitive, will definitely fade. Other countries use a different system of numbers or letters but the meanings are the same. **Part 2 will be in the next Newsletter with more paint information**



Above: Students with 3 pigments

Any photos you would like to see here or articles, please contact the Editor at gilliannye@rocketmail.com Thank you

