

ISLE OF WIGHT ART CLUB

NEWSLETTER – GALLERY – ARTICLES – JUNE 2025



Welcome to the June 2025 Newsletter with reviews of the demos, talk and Study Day plus new articles. We report on the AGM and also look ahead to the Summer Programme devised by Andrew and look back at some of the portraits and sketches of paintings and still life plus Daphne's critique.



Tony's commission for the Island Sailing Club - oil

AGM 18th March: The Club held the AGM on March 18th at Riverside. Our Chair, **Daphne Ellman** gave a report on the healthy state of the Club, we have welcomed several new members over the winter months. **Janet Welsh** has joined the Council as Minute Secretary and helps with reviews of the demos. **Ben Glover** has joined as aiding Paul Hewson for the technical side of the demos. We welcome both Janet and Ben and look forward to their input.

The Club is in a healthy state financially despite the large increase in Riverside room rental, so we will look at updating our sound system over the summer to enhance the experience for all in the room.

Exhibition at Newport Minster: The exhibition was held for the first time by us at Newport Minster as we are only allowed one exhibition a year at Quarr Abbey. It was a steep learning curve for all involved, not least for the people who run these events at the Minster. After a few 'cross wires' the paintings were hung on Tues May 6th, taken down on Wed 7th and re hung by Peter on Fri 9th! This was due to events taking place inside the Minster for the 80th anniversary of D Day. Apologies to stewards who did a valiant job of finding things after the move! The actual exhibition was a great success with sales comparable to previous Spring exhibitions. Comments were really good about the very high standard of art on display in such a lovely setting. Our organisers are liaising with the Minster to make a future exhibition even better. Meanwhile – get painting for the Quarr Abbey exhibition in early September.

Summer Programme 25: **Andrew Saunders** has compiled a super programme, it started with painting and sketching in and around the Minster on handing in day followed by **Tony Westmore** discussing all things plein air at The Folly Inn. June 3rd is at Mottistone (take membership card) and June 10th at Ventnor Downs, followed by Harvey Brown's on June 17th. All the details of future dates, where to go etc are on the website under Summer Programme and don't forget the new start time of 10.30am. Even if you don't wish to participate in the painting or sketching, come along for the coffee and chat afterwards.

Right: Members enjoying well earned refreshments at the Garlic Farm.



Caroline Underwood demo:

by Janet Welsh

On Feb 25th, Caroline Underwood gave us a very polished and lively demonstration, about the uses of charcoal and chalk.

She started by giving some information about her background, and explained that for her, it was natural to work in black and white. Norman Ackroyd has been a great influence, as has the mark-making of ancient Chinese and Japanese traditions.

As well as using charcoal and chalk, Caroline works mainly as a painter of tonal land- and sea-scapes, often very large. She likes being active outdoors, running and sailing, so she tries to bring this immersion and experience of the natural elements into her work.

The fact that both charcoal and chalk are simple natural materials appeals to Caroline. She reminded us that charcoal is made from slowly burning wood, so that the structure and grain of the stick is retained. While it can be made from different varieties of wood, she likes the basic willow charcoal which grows fast, is sustainable, and comes in variable thickness of stick.

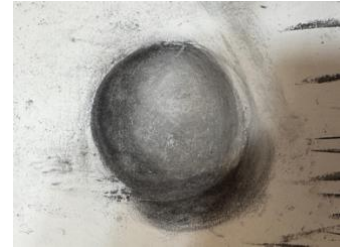
Charcoal can also come in a compressed form, where powder is formed in a mould. This is denser and blacker, but is harder to remove, smudge and blend, so is more useful later in the work for details. We were shown an example of

each, so we could compare the difference in weight and density. Chalk too, is usually a powder pressed into a mould. It has a soft, uniform texture and can be blended with charcoal to create the tones.

A slightly textured paper is best for this medium, such as cartridge or pastel paper. If the surface is too smooth, the powders just fall off, and the rough texture of water-colour paper creates too much of a dapple.

Fixative spray was recommended for more valuable works, but Caroline said that hairspray also works, is cheaper...and smells better.

When painting, Caroline says she uses water-based media, with lots of layers and liquids. (Solvents and the chemicals for oil paints are too smelly for her). Black acrylic paint (mainly lamp black, but other blacks too, plus Paynes grey) are used with lots of gesso for the white, in her paintings. The large canvases, or sometimes boards, are painted flat on the floor and Caroline uses squeegees, brushes, fingers and cloths to apply the paint.



After discussing and demonstrating materials, Caroline explained her method of working. Like with physical activities, she likes to do a warm-up exercises first. These involve drawing straight lines and circles in different directions, engaging the whole body, and trying to detrain her mind from the habits of writing.

She has a small white ball which she then drew, using charcoal on its side as well as a point. This was then blended with the chalk, to give the range of tones. (Caroline says really you should use a tissue, rather than your finger to blend the two, in case of allergies). We were warned not to blow excess dust away, but to tip it off the page, perhaps into a bin, at intervals.

Caroline built up many layers of both charcoal and chalk in her bold, distinctive style. In a seascape, and then a landscape with grasses, Caroline demonstrated a technique which involved covering a whole page, using a jumbo charcoal stick on its side. Then she used chalk, again on its side, to create the mid and light tones. These were blended and built up in several layers.



Both materials, and the denser compressed charcoal, were then used on their edges for more intense dark or light areas or details. Caroline showed us how she practices making these darker marks on a separate paper, bearing in mind the gestural shapes of Chinese and Japanese traditions. She is trying to understand and capture the rhythm and pattern of the natural elements, rather than accurate details.

A range of different techniques was discussed. One was rubbing out areas of charcoal, such as in a couple of portraits Caroline showed us. She says a plastic rubber (which can be washed when grubby from use) is useful because it can have sharp edges to make clear-cut negative marks. However you could also use a putty rubber, blutac, or even cheap bread squished into a dough. A different idea is to blend powdered charcoal and chalk with a brush, either dry, wet or with oil. Caroline pointed out that you can't use paint over powdery media, but you can do it the other way around. Another idea is to use chalk on black paper. So many practical details were explained in this demonstration, as well as influences of elemental nature. I'm sure these images and ideas will inspire even those who work in full colour. Thank you Caroline.

Janet



Left: Caroline in front of one of her larger artworks.

Robin MacInnes talk: After the AGM with complimentary tea and cake, Professor Robin MacInnes gave us an illustrated talk on 'The Undercliff'. Showing lots of photos of art of the area as depicted through the ages, it was fascinating to see the changes over time particularly given the large fall causing the road closure earlier between Ventnor and Luccombe, our ever changing Island coastline. Artists have been coming to the Island since around 1690 and Robin's book 'Isle of Wight Landscape Art – an Illustrated Dictionary 1690- 1930' is a fascinating read with hundreds of photographs of artwork through the ages, watercolours, oils, lithographs and engravings.



Far left: 'The Beach at Ventnor' an c1814 watercolour by Joshua Cristall

Left: 'At Bonchurch' an 1856 oil by Edward William Cooke RA

Portraits and Still Life from Riverside Tuesdays: This is just a small selection of the work achieved in 2 hours on a Tuesday afternoon. All the photos of work can be viewed on the IWAC Membership Plus Facebook page. If you aren't on Facebook and generally dislike social media, you can join Facebook but not participate, it's quite easy to do 'nothing' but ask to join our members' only page where you can find 49 of our members already enjoying seeing each others' artwork from over the winter and plein air.



Angela Sowden's Study Day: 16 members enjoyed the day with Angela at Riverside on April 2nd. After introductions, Angela talked us through her sketch books and her way of working and ideas plus her array of paints, brushes papers plus boards. As we would all be doing seascapes from our own reference photos after lunch, we loosened up with familiarising ourselves with all the different blues in various saturation depending on the atmosphere we wanted to achieve in the sky and sea ranging from rainy grey/blue to tropical azure.



Angela then showed how she arrives at a composition and how she achieves the movement in the sea with a variety of implements to scratch, scrape, wipe and mark the under layer, basically anything goes, it's only practice! For the rest of the morning we practiced these techniques to hopefully apply to our masterpieces during the afternoon.

Above: Morning practice.

Angela gave time to everyone and was very generous with her paints and paper. We all enjoyed the day and we will hopefully see some of these techniques in the work at future exhibitions. Many thanks Angela.

Above top right: Hard at work! Above: 2 examples from what was learnt

Below: An example of Angela's sketchbooks and two of her artworks. www.angelasowden.co.uk



London Plein Air Painters: Members will remember a couple of year's ago when Carol Owen brought the group she'd founded with Tushar Sabale to the Island for a week's painting. Copyright forbids us from producing the article but in the May edition of The Artist (www.painters-online.co.uk) there's all you need to know if you're in London at a weekend. It tells how the group was formed back in 2021 when almost 40 artists turned up for the first session, nowadays about 80 artists arrive rain or shine. All details from londonpleinairpainters.com

Right: Tushar and Carol





Born in 1919 in London, Laurence Fish was to become one of this country's most widely seen draughtsmen and commercial artists and later in life becoming a highly regarded 'pure' artist. As a teenager living in Streatham, Laurence travelled regularly to the Alvis car showrooms in Mayfair where he made careful and detailed drawings of the cars on show whilst creating the designs of the bodywork. The owner of the showroom was so impressed with his work that he was employed to work on the design team for the coach builders of their high-end vehicles. Later he was employed in the Artist Department of a magazine publisher producing coloured artwork for 'Flight', 'Autocar' and 'Yachting World' publications.

This work was brought to an abrupt halt by the outbreak of World War Two. Having been in the RAF Volunteer Reserve Laurence was soon called up to active service. His hopes of becoming a pilot were dashed as he was short sighted and wore glasses. However, his drawing skills meant that he was employed making three dimensional drawings of aircraft parts to help the civilian fitters assemble components correctly. Later he was engaged by MI5 to make drawing of German sabotage devices to help with their disarmament.

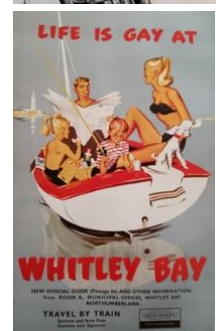
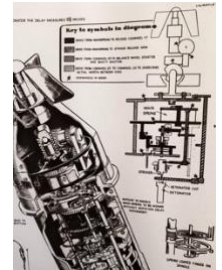
After the war he was invited to join The Society of Industrial Artists. This gained him work with companies such as Shell, Dunlop and British Rail creating paintings for their colour publications and advertising. He also became a book cover illustrator for Pan and Hutchison publishers. Later in the 1950's and into the 1960's he was commissioned by British Rail to create posters for their seaside destinations, often creating an exotic image of places such as Whitley Bay and Ayr as if they were in a sunny, carefree Mediterranean location.

By the 1970's Laurence had largely broken away from commercial art, much of which was now produced with colour photography rather than with paint and brushes.

Like many commercial artists of the time, he became much more interested in a freer and more abstract style of painting. He became interested in colour harmony and light and shadow. His work

was highly regarded by the 'traditional' art establishment and his work was accepted in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, The Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour and The Royal Society of Marine Artists.

Laurence travelled to the Continent including Paris and Barcelona and many of his paintings capture the light of Southern Europe. For the last part of his life Laurence lived in the Cotswolds where he died in 2009 aged 90.

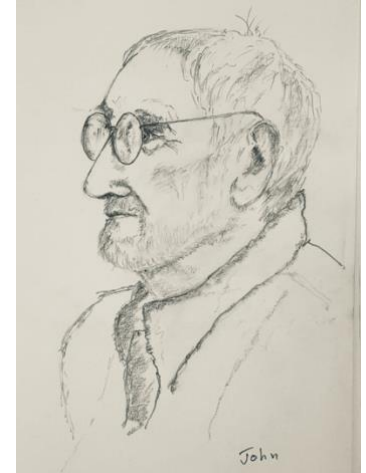


Peter

More Portraits and Still Life:



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Becky Samuelson demo: On April 15th at Riverside, Becky Samuelson gave us a very inspiring insight into the creation of her rich and beautiful paintings. In the short demo session, she created a view from her favourite location of Seaview, managing to almost finish a painting that would normally have taken a lot longer.

First, Becky described the materials that she uses. Her favourite boards are Pebeo, which are linen covered, primed and ready for use. They are a dusky colour; if she does have a white board, she paints it a pinky colour to start on. The paints are Liquidex or Italia, soft or heavy body, Becky uses them interchangeably. (If she is using oil paints, she uses the same procedures that she showed us in this demo).

The colours she laid out on the staywet palette were, unbleached titanium white (which has a hint of other tints in it to make it a creamy hue), Naples yellow, Prussian, cerulean and blue hue, light blue violet, yellow oxide and burnt sienna, plus teal which she finds useful to mix with other colours. (She may use a spray bottle to keep them damp, later.) Her brushes, Becky said, are a mishmash. They are of varied width, some are Rosemarys, some watercolour brushes, all are flexible.



While using imagination and choices as she goes along, Becky likes to have a photo or the actual scene in front of her, which she refers to constantly. Having outlined the main composition and horizon line on the board in pencil, she begins to fill in the main areas of sea and sky. Moving between the big spaces using a wide soft brush, she uses thin washes in lively varied strokes, building up the layers. She is interested how these broad areas relate to each other.

She starts from the mid toned colours, collecting a little more paint of different colours on the corner of the brush, rarely washing it so that the different tints and hues build up to a deeply rich surface. A bit of raw sienna can tone down the blues, a bit of burnt umber can give warmth to clouds. The teal adds richness to the sea. She has favourite colour mixes, but also experiments, and the paint also gets mixed on the board. Becky reminds us that that paints dry darker.

If the colour on the brush appears wrong, Becky will use it somewhere else in the picture. She says that although she has a plan, it is a series of adjustments: she can adapt the composition and the exact paint colours as she goes along.

Adding lighter and darker colours where appropriate, she builds up the depth and tones, blending and moving the paint around as it gets thicker and sticky. Later she changes to a smaller brush for detailed areas. The small features of the boats will be overlaid last, so aren't painted around. She can go back to work more into the sea and sky at any time. Swivelling the brush, scrubbing, pushing and pulling the paint, add richness and depth. For Becky it is the relationship between the different shapes and elements that is important for the success of the picture. Another issue is that instinctively she favours the bright range of colours.

The rocks were painted in yellow oxide mixes, with some violet and raw sienna for warmth. Becky took time to build up more tones as reflections in the sea, and went back again to adapt the contrasts in the sky. She used a pastel pencil to mark the positions of the distant boats, and started to paint them in, but despite rushing for us, time was against her.

The painting looked stunning with its vivid light, and richness of subtle colours! However there were details Becky didn't have time to complete, and we look forward to seeing the finished picture.

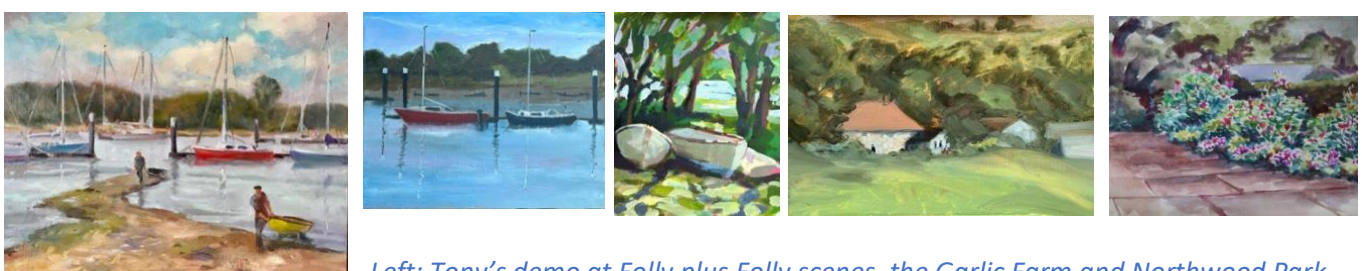
This was a very inspiring demonstration, the happy exploration of colour and texture and composition, combined with so many practical details. Thank you, Becky.

Janet



Becky's finished acrylic

Early plein air paintings:



Left: Tony's demo at Folly plus Folly scenes, the Garlic Farm and Northwood Park

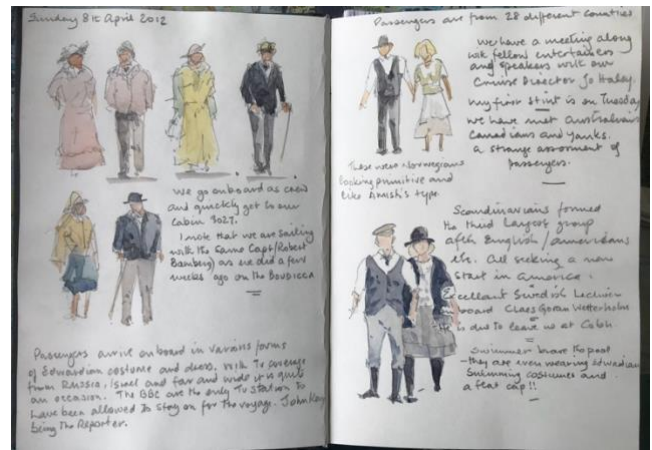
Art Sessions at Sea - Tony Westmore - Part 1 of 2

On leaving school I started work at JS White's shipyard as an Apprentice Engineer, with the intention of following a sea going career, early dreams and plans do not always materialise and marriage and a young family thwarted my boyhood dreams.

My art was however a means of keeping contact with the sea and ships, this together with recording the maritime scene became an ongoing happy pastime.

After a life in Engineering the opportunity of early retirement presented itself and offered me a new life outside of work, a little later I was given the opportunity to take on a small teaching class, this soon flourished into becoming twice a week sessions.

Still having a yearning for the sea, I managed to persuade my partner Liz to take a cruise to 'get it out of my system', I decided that I must capture this opportunity in a sketchbook. Armed with my watercolour travel box and book I recorded that voyage to the Canary Islands together with the ports we visited. This did not go unnoticed as the Entertainment Manager spotted me painting and sketching up on the deck saying this was just the activity they like onboard cruise ships, he subsequently gave me a contact number of the agents who supplied their onboard entertainers.



From Tony's sketchbooks

Following up the contact, I received the comment 'we like your work - and will keep you in mind'. A few weeks later a phone call enquired if I was still interested and available at short notice, as a tutor had been taken ill and was unable to take up a booking.

This particular cruise was a bit special, as the Balmoral had been privately chartered several years previously for the occasion of the Hundredth Anniversary of the Titanic's fateful voyage in April 1912, the cruise would relive that fateful voyage and hopefully complete the voyage to New York!

Liz was travelling with me as my Assistant, and we joined Fred Olsen's Balmoral where passengers from 28 countries arrived to board the ship, many of whom were in Edwardian dress, a scene that was captured by BBC cameras and television crews from various other countries. My programme was all based on the Titanic, its history and the voyage itinerary, a subject that I am well versed in as an enthusiastic maritime historian. I had to do two sessions a day on sea days, scheduled for 45 minutes each, although this usually extended to well over an hour, when the time and space permitted. I started with a class of around fifteen for both of my sessions, with Americans, Australians and Scandinavians prominent in the group, among them descendants of some of the original passengers who had lost their lives on the Titanic.

That was my start, and I was soon to be offered other opportunities, to the Baltic the Caribbean and beyond with Fred Olsen, P&O and Saga. (To be continued)

Tony



Daphne's end of Winter Programme critique:



On April 29th, our Chair, **Daphne** gave a very well received critique of members' work produced over the winter. Daphne joined us after her annual successful month exhibiting at Hilliers at Ampfield outside Romsey.



These photos are just a small selection of the art shown. Her knowledge helped many with tips to improve their work covering composition and tone and those watching also learned valuable lessons to add to their work.

Gillian Hodson and **Anne Toase** are already working on the upcoming Winter Programme for October with demos booked, Study Days and a competition. Enjoy the summer and we hope to see you out and about for plain day Tuesdays especially for the IWAC Summer Picnic at **Carol's** on July 8th. Thank you gilliannye@rocketmail.com

