



HUDDERSFIELD ART SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

You will see that this Newsletter has a different, simpler format from usual. Unfortunately our brilliant editor Glen Williams is currently unwell, so this has been put together by the Council with contributions from group leaders. We all wish Glen a speedy recovery.

THE END OF AN ERA, BUT THE START OF A NEW ONE

2025 marks 135 years since the founding of Huddersfield Art Society in 1890, and during that long history the Society has adapted over the years to the changing needs of our art community. At this point in time we are at another transition phase as we move the regulation aspect of the society from a 'Friendly Society' to a Co-operative Consortium, which is more appropriate in this modern era and will give us more opportunities to develop and grow further. On Saturday November 15th, we organised a celebration and thank you to David, the outgoing President, for his commitment and dedication to the work of the society for nearly 25 years. David, as well as previous Presidents and Council members, have done an enormous amount of work to make the Society what it is today and we are immensely grateful for everything they have done. "It has been an honour and privilege" David said "to work alongside fellow artists in nurturing and growing such a great art community that helps to promote art in the Huddersfield area. I feel very proud of what we have achieved so far, and look forward to things to come under the new Management Team".

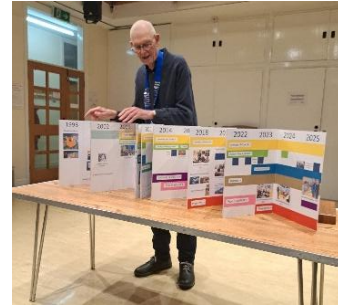
Some aspects of the change that will occur at the end of December into the New Year might feel a little awkward at first until we get used to it. An example is the terminology the Co-operative UK requires such as, instead of having a 'President', we will have a Board of Directors (which essentially ensures that we meet the legal requirements of the Co-operative, and therefore, basically, protect the society and its members) and, instead of a 'Council', we will have a Management Team that consists of the Board and the leaders of the various groups. On the whole, most members will not feel any difference as they renew their membership on the 1st January, but we are using this transition to slowly make further changes, particularly in reducing leadership burden and unnecessary bureaucracy, to progress the Society in today's community, and this reflects how the Society has grown, changed, and adapted since its inception all those years ago.

So, we offer a huge, heartfelt thank you to David, and all the leaders who have gone before, making the Society what it is today, ready to face the opportunities and possibilities going forward. Further information about the new Co-operative status will be sent out to members over the next couple of months and the new Management Team will have their first meeting in January. We will keep you informed and up-to-date!

Saturday November 15th

For the first part of the meeting, Jo Sykes led a discussion with Freya Shaw on how to make art more accessible to people with visual impairment, by using audio descriptions of art work.

The rest of the afternoon was a celebration of David Whiting's 25 year contribution to Huddersfield Art Society. This includes two terms as President, Vice-President, Secretary, Exhibition Secretary, Syllabus Secretary, Website, Outdoor Day Organiser, Gallery Visits and many more. Jo presented a slideshow featuring David and gave David an art book as a gift from the Council. Mary McKenzie presented David with a certificate marking the award of Life Membership, and Britta Atkinson brought two home made cakes forward. David then gave a talk on his 25 years with H.A.S. with an illustrated 'Timeline'.



A summary of Saturday meeting demonstrations since September.

Saturday 6th September

Fantastic demonstration by Bruce Mulcahy using gouache to paint a seascape of Port Mulgrave near Staithes. He focused on colour, tone, shapes, lines and mark making and presented an outstanding range of his seascape paintings.



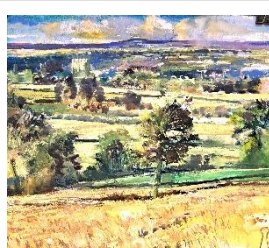
Saturday 4th October

David Johnson (dj) presented a brilliant range of paintings and demonstrated painting a mountain scene in acrylics using both brushes and palette knives.



Saturday 1st November

Excellent demonstration by Robert Dutton who shared tips and techniques of using mixed media. He started with an under painting then worked on this using a range of media including; watercolours, gouache, acrylic ink and pastel.



Saturday 6th December

Brilliant demonstration with Les Darlow using mixed media. He completed three pieces of work, one using watercolours and pastel, one using pan pastels on pastel mat paper and the final one using pan pastels and watercolours on Chris Brooks pastel fabric.



On 18th October members also met for a workshop painting mountain scenes in the technique of dj.

A personal statement from David Whiting.

I was touched and honoured that Jo and the Council team thought fit to organise a celebration of my years of service to HAS, as part of the Saturday meeting on November 15th. It was almost exactly 25 years since I was first admitted as a member, of which I have been on the Council for nearly 23 years and nearly six as President. I am really glad to have been of service, and I have enjoyed it all. It must be obvious that I am someone who likes organising. I have enjoyed working with others to plan events and make them successful, but what I have really loved is that holding the various roles I have has enabled me to get to know and value so many of you wonderful members.

I joined Council after just over two years as a member, and very soon took on the organisation of outdoor days. I continued this for 18 years and found it really enjoyable but risky because of weather. Normally we hired an indoor venue but in 2020 and 2021 this was not possible due to Covid. Working entirely outside was fine in 2020 but we had some horrendous washouts in 2021. I was Exhibition Secretary for six years from 2004, handling all the admin and finding speakers for official openings. Once pieces were selected (by an independent 'expert') they were handed to the Art Gallery staff to hang, which made life easy for us, but commiserating with members whose work was rejected was never easy.

After four years I took on the additional role of Secretary and during the first year in this role I organised the setting up of a website and an email account for the Society. Then I took on the running of gallery visits, initially at Christmas but later at various times of year. I exchanged the role of Secretary for Syllabus (the old name for Saturday programme) Secretary, finding this very rewarding to arrange a variety of demonstrations and workshops over six years and see how members responded each time. I stepped up to President in 2017 and very much enjoyed this first term especially leading Annual Exhibition openings. We had a very strong Exhibition team, making it easy for me. We did not envisage that those three years were to be the last in the Art Gallery for at least 10 years. Returning to the Presidency in 2023 I have been involved in coordinating exhibitions on the Piazza, which was a more open public venue at first, without selection. It was hard work having to set it all up ourselves but I was proud of the resulting displays.

I had heard much about the Society's past, particularly how the legacy of £10000 in 1964 was dealt with, so while President up to 2020 I did a lot of research which resulted in my publication 'A History'. Little did I envisage I would be President again three years later, but that I would also be the last ever to hold that office, as it too becomes history after 135 years.

It was great that many of you joined me on the 15th. I have thanked the Council team for the gift of an Art book, the cakes, but most of all the honour of Life Membership. Thanks also for all the cards, and a further gift from a member. It is a day I will remember always, which proved to me that all my efforts over the years were worth making.



Reports from the groups.

Portrait Group.

Fiona Colston

The Portrait group has a lovely family feel, with a core group of about 14 attendees. This includes one new regular member and two others who are dipping their toes in. We've formed a What App Group this term, this is proving useful and will be helpful if we get any significant weather concerns in the coming months. The group works well sharing weekly responsibilities, providing sitters and helping each other out.

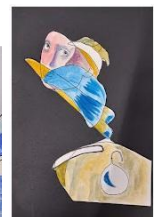
I would love to introduce Portrait group to existing HAS members and new potential members. I fear without growth the group may struggle. So, if you're reading this and fancy coming along, please do. Or if you fancy being a sitter, then that would be fabulous too.



Abstract Group.

Louise Heptonstall

We have had another great year with the Abstract Group covering many different topics. In July we had a wander around the grounds of the Quaker house when we looked at en plein air abstracting. In August we explored our own favourite artist and favourite painting. In September we experimented with Japanese Art. This topic was researched and presented by Kathryn Atkinson. Our October topic was collage, and this was researched and presented by David Whiting. Thanks to our guest leaders Kath and David for their super contributions and also thanks to Jo Sykes who has supported me all year in leading our wonderful group. Our group is super supportive, inspirational and everyone has their unique style which is welcome and embraced by everyone. I am stepping down at the end of this year, and Jo will be taking on the lead role. Our first group in January will meet on Friday 30th at our new home of Kirkheaton Community Centre, Fields Rise, Kirkheaton, HD5 0LZ. Please see the website for further information



Life drawing is continuing until December 11th, then resuming on January 9th. Meeting every Thursday at 1.30.
Life drawing is an opportunity to improve observational skills and we are lucky to be able to offer this to members with a very varied range of professional models.
We have a moderate attendance but would like to see a greater uptake. Previous experience is not essential. If you haven't tried Life drawing before come along and give our group some support.



Gallery Visit to Cartwright Hall, Bradford Saturday 8th November

14 members (plus two non-member partners) travelled by minibus to Cartwright Hall, where the four finalists of the prestigious national Turner Prize had an exhibition each, the unusual venue outside London recognising Bradford's year as City of Culture. A further group of members attended independently. The group began by watching videos about each of the four artists, then moved on to see each of their exhibitions. We went into the Refreshment Room café for a pleasant lunch, then gathered in a room to chat about our views on each of the exhibitions. We concluded with a vote on (a) which artist each of us thought should win, and (b) which we thought would actually win according to the judges' criteria. The result will be declared on December 9th so we will be looking out for this.





A personal note: I was pleased to be organising another gallery visit after a break of over a year.

I chose the Turner Prize rather than a more conventional exhibition to be perhaps more of a challenge to us all, and was delighted by the constructive and thoughtful responses from the group members. Thanks to Rachel for the gallery photos and to Richard for the group photo.

FINALLY...

*May we on the Council team wish all members a
Happy Christmas and an enjoyable New Year!!*