

**AMA****Association of Midland Artists**  
www.midlandartists.co.uk

# NEWSLETTER

## April 2012

*Dear Members,*

We have had an interesting time, with two meetings last month followed by one in April and the Exhibition at Foster Frame commencing.

In March we heard from Viv Hunt, who showed us slides of wonderful historic stained glass windows and also lovely examples of her own work. She also brought in a board on which she was in the process of making a piece to show us how it worked. Sheila Graham, for whom I believe Viv is making a stained glass panel, has written a **Review** of her work.

At our Evening Meeting we were fascinated and entertained by Phyllis Davies, with her wonderful sketches of Venice, which she went on to make in to paintings and some wonderful textile hangings which she brought in to show us. She had captured the atmosphere and work was vibrant with colour.

We also loved her shoes – very high and spotted! Fiona Metcalfe **has reviewed** the talk for us.

This month's talk was by Hilary La Force, a Ceramatist, who brought in a selection of beautiful bowls and vessels, they were in pale aquatic and moss like colours with white glazes foaming over them, extremely beautiful. She showed slides to explain her ways of working, and answered many questions on her techniques. Moira Osborne, one of our potters, has written **the Review** on this.

**FOSTER FRAME GALLERY.** 27 members sent in over 60 pieces of work the majority of which have been hung or displayed by Nicki Holliday, the owner of the gallery, who will move the work around the gallery from time to time. I was amazed that she could get it all in but it looks very good when you go in to look at it and when you are driving past, so fingers crossed, we will get some interest.

Stratford is very busy at the moment with the Shakespeare birthday celebrations and then there is a



Literary Festival starting on the 26<sup>th</sup>, with some very good speakers, including Jeremy Paxman, so there will be lots of people about. I have left leaflets in all the cafes and some hotels etc.

also my butcher in the high street has put our poster in his window! Do come and have a look, it is worth strolling round the New Theatre. I love the old walls in side, with the films and little figures projected on to them and you can sit and have coffee overlooking the river, there are also a couple of art galleries upstairs to see.

Please could anyone who can help by pinning up a poster in their village or area. We need to get people there.

Foster Frame Gallery, Greenhill St. Stratford upon Avon.

---

## NEWS.

**Sheila Graham** sent in this notice, I am sure it will be well worth a visit –

EXHIBITION AND SALE  
**OF POTTERY, GLASS AND JEWELLERY**  
IN THE GLASS HOUSE, JEPHESON GARDEN STUDIO,  
LEAMINGTON SPA  
**5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> MAY** (Mayday Weekend)  
10.00am. – 5.00pm.

**Jude Tucker**, who was the Chairman, at one time, is about to join us again but I thought you would be interested to know that she has won **the 2011 Noble Sculpture Prize**. I rang her to see if she could make the Evening meeting and she was just endeavouring to get clothes and her stone carving tools in to a small case, light enough, to fly to Nice and then drive over in to Italy to Colletta where the Bernard Noble Foundation Sculpture Park is situated, if you Google her name you will get a lead to the foundation and to other work which she has done. It is well worth a look, it shows her selecting the stone in England with the Directors, the work on the stone and it being shipped off. She was travelling out to chip off the supporting piece of stone ready for the unveiling at Easter. Well done Jude!

**IF YOU HAVE ANY NEWS OR WOULD LIKE TO WRITE A REVIEW PLEASE CONTACT ME 01789 731237 or Email to [juliahayes@btinternet.com](mailto:juliahayes@btinternet.com)**

---

## FUTURE EVENTS

### **MAY**

The next meeting **on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May at 10.00 for 10.15 am** at the Satchell room, Baptist Church, Chandos Street, use the side entrance not the front, there is bell if you are late

.The speaker will be **IAN HODKINSON**. Ian is a printer, a member of **the Milton Keynes Printmakers**, who uses a variety of techniques including etching, collograph, lino and woodcut to produce a range of inspiring work.

### **JUNE**

**There will June be no morning meeting in** because it is **the Jubilee**, and possibly not it July due to the Open Studios however we are having an

### **EVENING EVENT on 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE.**

You will be invited to the PRIVATE VIEW/ OPENING of the Warwickshire Open Studios Exhibition for the **AMA Group of Ten, at Holy Trinity Church, Leamington**. This will be followed by **a Concert** in the church for **Leamington Music Society**, which will include a performance **by Morgan Szymanski, Mexican Guitarist**, with a **screened projection of work by selected artists including AMA member Jane Williams, who is also one of the Group of Ten**. There will be **a discount for AMA Members** who wish to stay for the Concert. We thought it would be fun to make this a proper Summer's Evening **Private View, a Special Occasion for the Association. Full details will follow shortly.**

### **COMPETITIONS**

Grace Newman has given me the details for **Broadway Arts Festival, which is from 9<sup>th</sup> – 17th June.**

**They are holding a National Art competition with prizes up to £1000.** The 2012 will celebrate the work of John Singer Sargeant and the Broadway Colony with a focus on the 19<sup>th</sup> C artist and garden designer Alfred Parsons RA. The theme for the competition is 'In the Garden' details from [www.broadwayartsfestival.com](http://www.broadwayartsfestival.com) or Arabella Kiszely on 01386 853739.

In October we will be involved with **The Big Draw for the Campaign for Drawing**, in the meantime if you go to [www.thecampaignfordrawing.org](http://www.thecampaignfordrawing.org) and click on 'membership' then click on 'John Ruskin Prize' you can find details of a competition, entry by jpg by 1<sup>st</sup> June for a wall mounted work on the subject 'A New Look at Nature' which can be a Drawing, Painting, Print or Mixed Media.

*Julia Hayes,*

*Chair and Editor.*

### **REVIEWS.**

#### **AMA morning talk on Tuesday 6th March at the Baptist Church**

#### **Viv Hunt ; The Art of Stained Glass**

Viv had a fine art training at Leamington Art School but quickly found that she was constantly drawn towards 3D work. She became fascinated by light and colour and created many 3D sculptures to emphasise the movement that the changing light and shadow produced. After college she went on to teach for a while, then in the mid 1990's she embarked on a stained glass and sculpture course. This was to give her the extreme light and colour she had been looking for.

However, she didn't take to stained glass straight away. She found it incredibly difficult. It was so disciplined that nothing could be spontaneous. Her work had to be well planned in advance and carried out accurately. But she persevered until she had mastered the technique, and once mastered she found she was hooked.

She showed us her photographs of medieval stained glass: the fantastic glass ceiling in the Palace of Catalan Music in Barcelona, designed by the Spanish modernist, Antoni Rigalt; the Antonio Gaudi window in the Sagrada Familia and finally the very modern Patrick Heron window in the Tate, St Ives.

she showed us some of her own work – tall lamps, like elongated crowns in pale blues and frosted white glass: freestanding Z-shaped pieces in yellows and greens delicately joined by copper foil instead of the heavier lead; huge ornate mirrors surrounded by geometric shapes or sometimes with the more traditional flowers. And finally the commissioned panel doors that give a house its unique welcome. On trips abroad she painted watercolour landscapes which she then translated into glass, using both smooth and textured pieces to add depth.

Viv will be showing her latest work at her new purpose-built studio in Harbury in July. Her details will be in the Warwickshire Open Studio brochure.

**Sheila Graham.**

### ***AMA evening talk on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March at Oddfellows Hall***

#### **Phyllis Davies - From There to Here**

AMA members and guests were treated to an excitement of colour, shape and texture when Phyllis Davies presented her work at the evening talk on 29<sup>th</sup> March.

Davies works with textiles, paint, pastels, watercolour and acrylics. Her work originally figurative in nature has developed to include a variety of media, collage and textile wall hangings. She is constantly working with form, colour, shape and space, her paintings influencing her textiles and vice versa. A creative exploration she fondly describes as a journey "from there to here and back again!"



Davies trained at the Glasgow School of Art in the 1960s, where the syllabus, informed by the Glasgow Boys and Scottish Colourists was figurative and orientated towards learning the craft of drawing. Whilst drawing is fundamental to her work, Davies describes the importance of tonal values and places a high premium on the significance of a 'feeling' for colour. Davies sketches and researches to develop her ideas and translates these into paintings or wall hangings, often merging aspects of her work through the use of digital imagery; playing with Photoshop she creates scenes from many of her favourite subject areas, including nature, the garden and Venice, a city which holds a special, magical place in her imagination.



Her images are strong, potent reminders of the complexities of light, shade, contrast and texture. Davies's wall hangings, bold in design and scale, blend a variety of materials, recycled garments, builders' scrim and crushed silks, often representing more abstracted ideas taken from paintings and drawings. The depth, detail and complexity of the fabric, collaged with intricate layers of stitch invites you in to explore close up sections which form small perfect pieces in themselves but stand back and each small, finely considered and embellished part becomes a richer whole.

Davies is an accomplished artist and craftsperson, her drawing skills well honed through the strict discipline at Art School and then years of practice and as a dedicated teacher. She described the process of working on different surfaces and through textiles as a means of breaking new ground, not to reject her more formal training but as a way of liberating herself from it. Her work is a continual discourse between the contrasts of shadows and light, beauty and decay, splendour and grime, stillness and movement and through this Davies maintains an energy and vibrancy in her work.

Phyllis Davies generously shared with the group her thoughts and ideas, showing a range of work and through slides and questions articulating her own artistic biography. Stylishly dressed in black with a stunning pair of shoes, her flair and originality and passion for form and colour is clearly an essential part of her whole being.



For more information go to [www.phyllisdavies.co.uk](http://www.phyllisdavies.co.uk)

**Fiona Metcalfe**

***AMA morning talk on Tuesday 3th April at the Baptist Church***

**Hilary LaForce; Ceramic Artist**

Hilary started her career with an Arts Foundation course followed by a Ceramics course at Farnham West Surrey. This was based on Bernard Leach's methods of working, with three day intensive throwing of various objects such as jugs then bowls to perfect the differing forms. College was followed with a spell in a Tile and Flowerpot factory with very different methods of working in Terracotta clay. After this

range of experience Hilary started her own studio in Brighton and eventually came to Chipping Campden, and now has her studio near Bidford.

During this time her range of work has progressed from wheel thrown porcelain bowls with a landscape influence, to coiled vessel based on Greek pottery forms with burnished matt and textured glazes. Hilary's present work is mostly coiled and she uses a range of glazes from crystalline to volcanic to superb effect on a range of both large and small vessels.

The coiled bowls can take two to three weeks of work to complete and several are worked upon at a time. The extruded coils are added to the bowl three or four at a time so as not to distort the shape and a former, a shaped wooden implement, is used to start the pot off so the sides are of equal design. Once this is established the remainder of the bowl is worked freehand as the shape develops. The coils of clay are constantly smoothed together to give an even thickness and to ensure a good bond. Finally the completed form is placed on a banding wheel and centred so the final finishing with a "kidney" tool can be carried out when the clay has dried to a firmer texture. At this point Hilary pares back the thickness of the bowl and thins the rim. When the bowls are thoroughly dried, which can take up to two weeks, they are then biscuit fired in an electric kiln. When the kiln and vessels have cooled down they can be glazed.

Hilary has experimented and mixed her own glazes over the years from her early barium turquoise glazed bowls with a white rim, through fragile rimmed delicate porcelain bowls to her present work with textured volcanic looking outsides and smooth crystalline interiors. These are created using slips as well as several layers of glazes which have to be dried between each application. The crystalline glazes are technically very difficult to achieve as it requires the kiln temperature to be finely controlled by varying the temperature at critical times and for differing lengths of time. This enables the crystals in the glaze to grow at different rates to produce "ice" or "floral" effects.

Hilary brought some beautiful examples of her work from small bowls with torn edges, to tall narrow necked vessels and a spectacular bowl. These together with her slides showed a large range of her work which she exhibits and sells through galleries and at open studio events.

**Moira Osborne**

***Julia Hayes (Chair) 01789 731237.***

