

Henley Art and Crafts Guild (2013—2014)
Diamond Anniversary(60 years)

The year began with the annual Spring Exhibition which was opened by the Mayor at the private view evening. The Molly Staley award (an annual award for best picture in show) was selected by local gallery owner Barry Whittington. The exhibition lasts for 2 weeks and incorporates The Henley Arts Trail, which was organised by members of the Henley Art and Crafts Guild. It has become a regular and eagerly awaited feature of the early Spring Bank Holiday and attracted 733 visitors to the Fire Station Gallery over the bank holiday weekend. During the exhibition the guild displayed and invited members of the public to paint a communal picture which was then handed over to the Falaise Twinning Association. The guild also organised for each Arts Trail venue to make a small canvas donation, these were then auctioned off and the money was used to provide art workshops for 3 schools in the local area.

Throughout the year the guild organises workshops roughly every 2 or 3 weeks for members. The workshops cover various arts and crafts, from weaving to sculpture and painting in many different media, etc.

Coach trips to Kelmscott House in Gloucestershire and Art in Action in Oxfordshire were a great success. These are subsidised by the guild for members. Occasionally lectures are organised such as the one given by Reading based artist Julian Gordon Mitchell on “The Macabre in English Art”. This event was advertised as open to the public and took place in the Margaret Day room on an evening close to Halloween! The guild meet socially about 2 or 3 times a year and a speaker is usually arranged on topics that would appeal to all. Gary Spencer gave a very entertaining talk on “The Smile in Paintings through the Ages”.

In October the annual autumn exhibition was held in the Fire Station Gallery and on this occasion the guild celebrated its’ Diamond Anniversary. In November the annual craft exhibition was held in the Fire Station Gallery for one week. This is only the second craft exhibition by the guild and it has proved so popular that it has become a permanent feature just before Christmas. The guild also has a close relationship with the River and Rowing Museum. Each Autumn the museum selects work from our members and hangs them on The Wall gallery in the museum. The artists work to a different theme each year which has a connection to either the river, rowing or generally to Henley-on-Thames. The museum also supports Henley Arts Trail by showing artists work in a central display case before and over the period of the bank holiday and by providing a venue to member artists. In return we advertise all the museums courses, some of which are given by our members, on the guild website and in the newsletter.

Lastly, the guild highlighted the need for a better hanging system in the Fire Station Gallery. The money for the system was provided by the council and the guild (who probably rent the space more than most groups) agreed to source and pay for the installation of the new system. The Fire Station Gallery has been totally spruced up and is now a wonderful venue for anyone wanting to display their work. The guild committee are looking forward to hanging their 2014 Spring Exhibition at the gallery on 24th April.

The Henley Art and Crafts Guild Exhibition will be open to the public from Saturday 26th April until Tuesday May 6th 2014.

The Henley Arts Trail will take place as usual over the May bank holiday, 3rd 4th and 5th May.

For more information visit our website: www.henley-arts.org

Cate Stuart (Chairperson)