

# FLOWER PRESS



## Message from the Chair

Greetings to all members older and newer and welcome to the new edition of Flower Press. There is lots of news and interesting information and I am sure you will find this an interesting read. As you will see we have had a good series

of meetings so far this year and the committee is busy planning next year's tutor and painting days. We hope to introduce you to some new names as well as some of the favourites from the past.

We had an excellent painting day in July with 25 members attending many bringing roses which was the theme of the day. It was a great chance to see how we all tackle the same subject and to swap ideas and tips.

The energy at meeting continues to grow and I hope to see many of you at our meetings over the coming year.

Liz Green

## Forthcoming Workshops



**OCT 18<sup>th</sup>** The October Workshop will be led by Billy Showell who will be demonstrating 'Techniques'. Unfortunately only twelve members can attend what looks to be a very instructive day, but I am sure that in the B.S.B.A tradition they will pass on this knowledge to the rest of us.

**NOV15<sup>th</sup>** Institute Analytical Plant Illustration- I.A.P.I: When doing botanical painting your results are so much better if you have studied your subject. This workshop will be led by Roger Reynolds an experienced botanist and illustrator. The workshop will be based on Dr. Anne Bebbington's book 'Understanding the Flowering Plant'. Roger will take you through how to do a Scale Bar, flowers and how to deal with their terminology and structure and what to look out for to make sure your representation is botanically accurate. Then in the afternoon he will conduct a practical workshop on half-flowers, floral formulae and floral diagrams - how to construct them from live materials, this includes the use of low power dissecting microscopes. Cost of this workshop will be £10.00 per member

**DEC 20<sup>th</sup>** This will be 'painting a postcard' completion. There will be a set theme which will be announced by our Chair well before the day so you can have plenty of practice. As you know there is ample of room at The Walker Memorial Hall for all members to attend so we look forward to seeing you there.

## Events: Workshops and Exhibitions

**16<sup>th</sup> August** – Jeni Neale - Unfortunately I was unable to attend this workshop but I am told by those who did attend that it was a thoroughly instructive day painting with gouache on black. Jeni, a very experienced tutor, took everyone through the process and even though this medium was new to some of the members, everyone had a great time and, from what I have heard, many were surprised with the results that they achieved. It is hoped because of popular request that Jeni will give another such workshop in 2016.



### **20<sup>th</sup> September** - Ann Swan

- I had the opportunity to attend this workshop and although the theme was graphite it had a plus factor that turned it into a day of learning for all – as all good workshops should be.



We started first of all learning how to sharpen a pencil correctly (and yes you do get better results) and then we learnt the correct side of the paper to use when working in graphite and coloured pencil (another useful tip to learn). Our first drawing task was to be given a leaf that had been painted white and we then had to draw its

tonal values in graphite. What seemed a simple exercise was a bit more difficult in practise but none the less a very good exercise to practise what is fundamental to all good botanical art - tone and form.



This led to everyone being shown a technique that Ann has developed – ‘underpainting’. This involves putting down a thin layer of colour, either in pastel or coloured pencil and then melting this onto the paper with solvent to get rid of the binder that holds the pigment.



You then have a surface on which to use your graphite pencil to depict the texture and form of the object - we were all surprised at the results and is a perfect process for doing things like bulbs, nuts, vegetables etc in fact anything that is not a vivid colour like a bright red or purple.

### EVERY MEETING IS A PAINTING DAY:



Between the tutor lead workshops we have 'painting days' when all members can get together and concentrate on a particular topic and at the same time drawing on the wealth of experience of other member. Yes you can sit at home and paint or visit your favorite 'garden' but here you can pick up those useful hints and tips that the 'books' do not tell you about.

Celia- opposite – covers her work with tracing paper just leaving a window cut in the section she is working on. This way any drips from the brush (or in this case pencil), or dirt and oil from hands, does not get onto the completed section, or stain the paper she wants to leave white.

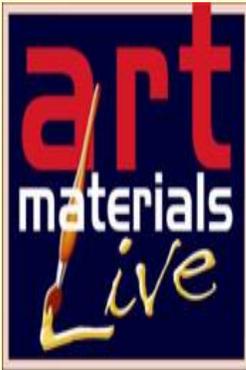
Even on workshop days if you are not attending the workshop, you can still attend the venue and spend the day painting/drawing with like-minded people.

Bring a particular project you are working on, and if you need any help there is always another member about who will offer advice.

**And all for the price of a cup of tea and a piece of cake!**

**NEC, Birmingham**

**5-8 November 2015**



The Birmingham Society of Botanical Artists has been given a unique opportunity to promote the society at this annual Show at the NEC in November. With an expected audience of 40,000 the potential alone for new members is just

one of the exciting aspects that this show offers.

For members it is a show not to miss. All the major Art Material Suppliers will be therefore you to grab a bargain plus daily art and material demonstrations. Go to the web site for more info and ticket booking.

## Painting Matters:

### Understanding your pigments

**Ultramarine:** This deep blue colour is a pigment which was originally made from grinding the rock Lapis Lazuli into a powder. The name derives from the Latin *ultramarinus* of which a literal translation is 'beyond the sea'. This was because the pigment was scarce and found in only a few places. Italian traders during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries imported it from Afghanistan and it became much sort after by wealthy art patrons but it was extremely expensive. It had varying degrees of intensity depending on the grinding. Because of the cost a Renaissance patron would often supply the painter with this particular pigment, and would also specify which grade they wanted and where it was to be used. The finest was often reserved for the most prestigious parts of a painting, more especially for the robes of the Virgin Mary for which it came to symbolize holiness and humility. Armenian Blue and Lazuline Blue are old names for genuine Lapis ultramarine.

During 1826 a synthetic version was invented which is often called French Ultramarine. It is a more vivid blue than the natural ultramarine as the pigment particles are smaller and more uniform which lets them diffuse the light more evenly.



natural



synthetic

Synthetic versions are sold as French Blue, Gemelin's Blue, Royal Blue and New Blue with different brand names offering different strengths and different degrees of grinding and has such the results are differences in their tinting power.

Remember that French Ultramarine will tend to granulate (some manufacturers more than others) so always test your pigments first for colour strength and granulation.

## Exhibition News

**Sept 19<sup>th</sup> – Oct 7<sup>th</sup>** Lichfield Society of all Artists: Lichfield Library WS13 6QG

**Oct 10<sup>th</sup>** Studley Art Circle - Studley Village Hall, High St, Studley 10am-4.30 50p admission

**22<sup>nd</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> Oct** - Birmingham University Cadbury Research Library  
Free Exhibition on different forms of botanical illustration from c1485

**26<sup>th</sup> Sept-6<sup>th</sup> Oct** - Leicestershire Society of Botanical Illustrators ‘The Medieval Cornucopia’ The Guildhall Museum, Guildhall Lane, Leicester daily 11.00am-4.30pm

**October 10<sup>th</sup>** - ‘The Big Draw’ Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens - drawing event to take place at 12.30.

Society of Botanical Artists – Next London exhibition will be held from **15<sup>th</sup> to 23 April 2016** and will focus on ‘Shape, Pattern, Structure’ – although a contemporary title it is intended to display the diverse range that nature produces within the plant kingdom to suit particular habitats.

### Way forward



Just like Auguste Rodin’s ‘Philosopher’ I sometimes think that you have to sit down and take stock. Well the society has done just that. Over the coming months as the Society moves forward let’s always remember that it is your Society and it needs your input and enthusiasm to succeed.

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