



The 2017 Annual Exhibition was a great success, despite being held in the middle of a building site! We got off to a flying start with an extremely busy Private View on Friday evening when the exhibition was officially opened by Mary Thomas, professional artist and art tutor. Mary spent all Friday afternoon prior to the opening going round the show picking out three winners of the Award of Artistic Merit prizes. At the presentation during the Private View Mary made a point of stressing that she was tremendously impressed with the standard of work on display and had found it very challenging to whittle her choices down to just three winners, who were....

Judith Reece-Russell for her lovely watercolour painting 'Butterfly cakes'



Maria Ellis for her colourful acrylic painting 'P-P-P-Penguins'



Lisa Bartlett for her beautiful oil painting 'Where watercress grows'



Huge congratulations to all three artists, each of whom received a £15 gift token and rosette as their prize. Well done!

The number of exhibited paintings was a tiny bit down on 2016 (162 paintings hung vs 167 last year and 52 folios vs 59 last year) but that drop was definitely not reflected in sales which were the best they have been since 2012. We sold 20 hung paintings (vs 11 last year) and seven folios (vs two last year) - a fantastic result! Many paintings were sold at the Private View but sales during both Saturday and Sunday were steady and lucrative too.

The raffle also did much better than the previous year, raising a total of £400 for the group (against £342 last year) and teas also increased their revenue bringing in £175 against £145 in 2016. The only area that showed a slight drop was sales of greetings cards where we sold 123 cards (by 25 members) this year against sales of 185 (by 22 members) in 2016. However last year was a bumper year for card sale; it's worth noting that we sold 128 cards in 2015. The iZettle credit card machine was worth its weight in gold once again, being responsible for over 95% of all paintings sold – it has certainly been a good investment for the group and well worth the 2.75% commission paid to iZettle for each transaction.

Due to the drop in the number of paintings exhibited the entry fee income was slightly down on last year (£764 vs £806 in 2016) but despite that display space was once again at a premium, presumably from an increase in the average size of paintings entered whilst a couple of members also took advantage of the option to show one big painting. We will consider investing in more exhibition panels next year to give us a bit more flexibility on displaying hung works but of course we are restricted by the size of the room!

Once again the exhibition can only happen with the help and commitment of members giving of their time freely in the run up to and during the show. Thank you once again to all who helped by being on the Exhibition Committee, building the stands, helping with the hanging, stewarding at the show, baking cakes for the tea stall, offering prizes for the raffle and helping with the dismantling. You were all fantastic, well done!

At the end of the weekend the votes for 'Best in Show' were counted and it was a very tight race. The eventual winner was Ann Grigg for her delicate pastel painting 'Garden Wall Gossips' (shown below), and Jan Mabbott was the runner up with 'Cottages on the Hill'.



Congratulations to Ann who was awarded the Peter Adams Trophy, to be retained for one year, plus a £25 gift voucher.