

artyFACTS

The magazine of the Art Society of Inverness

May 2025



Gelli printing with Susan McCreevy

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR MAY 2025

Well, your committee has been beavering away hard now for several months without the guiding hand and wisdom of a president, and amazingly, seems to be doing fine, thank you. Of course, we do miss having a president but our new enlarged committee has gelled well as a team and just gets on with things. We couldn't have managed to do what we have without the help of our non-committee volunteers, who have taken on the responsibility for particular areas of activity.

Principal among the volunteers is Fiona, who has organised an amazing selection of classes and workshops for us, and Clare, the editor of Artyfacts. The committee is aware that there have been no Saturday lectures for some time now. Our view is that the increase in workshops and classes more than compensates for this. Unless a Saturday event has featured Jonathan, generally speaking, attendances were falling away to an unacceptable extent anyway. If you feel differently, please let me or a committee member know. In any event, the committee is planning a survey of our members' views using Survey Monkey so everyone can tell us what they think then.

Our 80th birthday celebration was adjudged such a success that plans are afoot to have a Christmas party this year.

This year we will have a separate showing of paintings entered for the Highland Art Prize, with an outside art professional judging the winners. This additional event will take place on a Saturday so that everyone can come if they wish to.

Elaine has now settled into her role of treasurer. She asks that everyone follows her instructions when paying money into our bank account, otherwise it can be impossible to work out who has paid for what.

Remember to put your name down for Belinda & Co's weekend outing to Dornoch. Dornoch is a wonderfully inspiring location to sketch, whether your inclination lies in an architectural or landscape direction. I recently walked on the machair at Dornoch: the sky was a piercing cerulean blue, the song of the skylarks filled the sky, and I heard my first curlew of the season.....

WHO DOES WHAT

SECRETARY

David Brown

TREASURER

Elaine French

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Kevin O'Neill

WEBSITE

Bob Peckham

WORKSHOPS

Fiona Morris

LIBRARY

Brian Jones

SCREENS

Belinda Johnson

PAINTING WEEKEND

Belinda Johnson, Mira Staszowski,
Jane Nestor

ANNUAL EXHIBITION

Sue Marshall

MORNING ART GROUP

Sandra Dingwall

EVENING CLASSES

PAINTING DAYS

Jonathan Shearer

BEGINNERS' CLASSES

Michelle Knight

ARTYFACTS

Clare Blois, Jenny Hepburn
David Brown

YOUR COMMITTEE

David Brown

Elaine French

Kevin O'Neill

Bob Peckham

Brian Jones

Belinda Johnson

Mira Staszowski

Colin Munro

Jane Nestor

Liz Hoey

Sue Marshall

ELAINE FRENCH

Elaine has kindly taken on the important role of ASI Treasurer. Here she tells us a little bit about herself:

“I’m originally from Maldon in Essex - famous for its sea salt - but I’ve been settled in the Highlands since 2003 after finally marrying my teenage sweetheart and moving from London to Invergordon. I spent over 40 years in the IT industry and, for the past eleven years, have provided IT support for Blythwood Care in Evanton. Art has long been a quiet part of my life, and while caring for my elderly father, especially during the pandemic, I would attend the occasional watercolour workshop when back in Essex. After his passing in late 2023, and with retirement looming, I began looking for a local art club to reconnect with something creative and meet like-minded people.

Professionally, I’ve worked in project management, systems analysis, and user support, and among many other things, at Blythwood I became the go-to person for Excel and Google Sheets. I was also self-employed for ten years, handling my own bookkeeping and VAT returns. I like to think I balance creativity with a strong attention to detail - sometimes too strong! - which suits a Treasurer’s role quite well.

Initially, I found the name “The Art Society of Inverness” a little intimidating, and the standard of art on the website made me wonder if I’d be out of my depth. But when a call went out for someone with spreadsheet and online banking experience, I knew I could contribute in a different way. Since joining the committee, I’ve been delighted to discover a truly welcoming and down-to-earth group of people. It’s a joy to be part of a team so committed to both creativity and community - and always open to new members wanting to take a more active role, and I’m proud to support the Society’s work behind the scenes.

Both art and the Society have given me back a sense of purpose at a time when I could easily have felt adrift. I’m grateful for the chance to contribute - and for the community I’ve found in doing so.”



We hope to introduce you to more ASI members in future editions of Artyfacts

RSW EXHIBITION, Edinburgh

Mairi Strachan reports on the 2025 RSW Exhibition that was held in Edinburgh.

(right: an ink drawing by Mairi, "Lookout" 45 x 32 cm)

One day in February I headed into Edinburgh on the last morning of the Turner Watercolour Exhibition at the RSA only to be met by long queues of frozen art-seekers snaking up Princes Street. Rather than join them I decided to head straight to the **Royal Society of Painters in Watercolour 144th Annual Exhibition**. Queues nil, crowds minimal and entry free!

As last year, this was again a stunning and incredibly varied collection of really high calibre work. The term 'watercolour', although accurate, is almost misleading as pretty much every water-based medium was presented with many mixed media entries. I found artists who had inspired and stimulated me at last year's show and yet again I was impressed with the quality and innovation of much of the work.

The 300 pictures were arranged through five galleries so this year I worked through them in numerical order room by room, making it easier to identify pieces from the list. Once I'd recovered from that I worked back through the rooms more slowly homing in on particular pieces that I wanted to focus on and take some photos. Sadly visitors had to buy the catalogue at £6 to get the list of works, however it did show roughly 100 pieces from the collection in full colour. Annoyingly there was no reference to the medium used which I feel would be easy to rectify in future. You can in fact find this information online for any piece that is displayed on the website rsw.org.uk

If you missed this fantastic exhibition and are interested to view some of this year's work - as well as last year's - you can see at least one piece per artist on the virtual exhibition on the website. If like me you missed the Turner watercolour exhibition there is always next January!



“My Experience as a Pod Contestant on Landscape Artist of the Year 2025 in Llanberis, Wales” *KATHY SUTHERLAND tells us about it!*

As I arrived at the stunning location of Llanberis, nestled at the foot of Yr Wyddfa (Mount Snowdon), I was filled with excitement and nerves. We were asked to be on site at 7 a.m. for a short meeting and to have our microphones fitted. The weather was hot for June and I was slightly worried to see the pods facing into the direct sun above the quarry.

We had about half an hour to set up our equipment, and the judges introduced themselves. I was not blown away by the view but liked the sculptural shapes of the quarry so decided to zoom in on that.

Once we started painting, I quickly realised how challenging it was to capture such a dynamic landscape within just four hours. The light changed quickly casting different shadows on the mountain and altering my colour palette continuously. I found myself working quickly but deliberately trying to balance capturing detail while keeping an impressionistic feel. As I painted, I felt a mix of exhilaration and pressure.

The presence of cameras added an extra layer of intensity; every brushstroke felt scrutinised. However, this also pushed me to focus more intently on my work. Throughout the day, there were moments of camaraderie among us contestants in our pods. We shared tips about techniques and materials while encouraging each other amidst our individual struggles. With only minutes left on the clock, I stepped back from my easel to assess my work critically. While there were aspects that did not turn out exactly as I'd envisioned, I felt proud of what I had created under such challenging conditions. When time was called, we all gathered to present our paintings for judging. It was nerve-wracking yet thrilling to see everyone's interpretations of this historic landscape.

Participating in Landscape Artist of the Year 2025 was an unforgettable experience that pushed me creatively and personally. It allowed me not only to highlight my artistic skills but also connect with fellow artists who share a passion for capturing landscapes.

Regardless of how my painting would be received by judges or viewers, I walked away feeling enriched by this unique opportunity in such a stunning setting. The experience has deepened my appreciation for plein air painting and has motivated me to continue exploring new landscapes through my art.

(Note to self: next time remove the microphone when using the bathroom!!!)



Kathy's fellow pod artist Sian has written an interesting piece on her experience: www.sianemmison.com/llanberis-quarry-story

The Llanberis episode was aired in February. View it on catch-up if you have Sky or NowTV

JONATHAN SHEARER CLASSES and WORKSHOPS

Jonathan's evening classes, and occasional Saturday workshops, are held at Inverness Creative Academy (WASPS) at various times in the year. There are also monthly painting days at Killearnan Church Hall. You are receiving regular information about all these by e-mail. Contact Jonathan direct for all enquiries.

Plein Air (2 days) with Jonathan Shearer on 21st and 22nd June 2025. Venue and costs still to be confirmed.

MICHELLE KNIGHT teaches a beginners' evening class at Killearnan Hall. At time of writing the next block of classes is almost full. Contact Michelle direct .

HEADS UP

The Paintbox School of Art has generously granted ASI members a 20% discount on on-line courses purchased via its website. Apply the code "IAS" at the checkout.

THE PAINTBOX SCHOOL OF ART:

www.paintboxartclasses.com

email: enquiries@paintboxartclasses.com

SAM BOUGHTON LANDSCAPE WORKSHOP: *Belinda Johnson reports:*

It was inspiring listening to Sam Boughton as she explained how it had taken her time to figure out how to capture the essence of a landscape in a contemporary abstract way. She found that the turning point in her work was discovering her method of walking and sketching. In this way she can capture different elements of the landscape without being too representational. Her work is abstract but captures the essence of the landscape: it is recognisable as coming from a place and with the atmospheric effects that were present at that time.

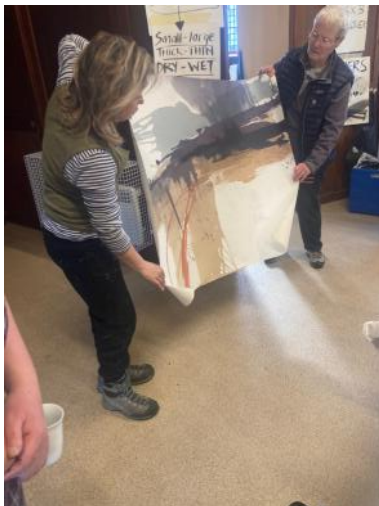
We were shown her process of then turning these sketches into a painting. Her method is to have 3 tones of black ink and to use these to convey the elements that spoke to her e.g., the shape of the headland, the light on the sea, the cloud formation/weather etc. Sam asked us to look at tones and layers to give our work depth, and contrasts in our mark making to make our work interesting e.g. small / large, thick / thin, dry / wet, organic / linear, control / spontaneity, soft / hard, calm / busy. Used well these contrasts would make our work more visually appealing.

We worked on wallpaper lining paper, which was so liberating as there was no worry of wasting expensive paper. The inks worked well on this surface. Pouring and splashing the inks and using decorators' rather than artists' brushes created the textured elements in nature, very loosely portraying the landscape, seascape or grasses and vegetation.

Later, Sam showed us examples of how she then works her sketches up to a much larger scale working on 1m x1m raw canvas. She prefers to keep a simple palette of red, yellow, blue, burnt sienna and burnt umber. When mixing these, adding a small amount of each colour in each mix makes her work more harmonious and pleasing to the eye. An essential technique was watering the mixes down a little as to achieve the harmonious tonal balance. Sam made this look easy!

Near the end of the day, some of us went with Sam to watch her walking and sketching method in motion and from seeing this process we now had more understanding of the concept of abstract landscape, which keeps the essence of what we see, but allows it to be presented in a more dynamic and thought-provoking way.

See Sam's work on www.samboughton.co.uk



Fast and Loose with watercolour and inks at the Avoch weekend workshop with Sam Boughton

MERKINCH MORNING ART GROUP

The next block will start on Monday 28th April and Wednesday 30th April 2025. It will run for approximately 10 weeks, and the fee will be dependent on numbers and room hire charge. Time:-10.00 a.m.-12.30 p.m.

This is an untutored group in which the members produce their own work in a variety of media and subject matters. We all help each other out if required. For many of us the group provides the spur and opportunity to focus on our art work, without other distractions, in the friendly company of like minded people. All are welcome.

There is good parking and coffee/tea and snacks are available to buy. If you would like to join the group but have no transport, please contact us and we will try to help if we can.

Contact Sandra Dingwall Tel:-01463 731715
e-mail:- s.dingwall237@gmail.com

NEXT ISSUE OF ARTYFACTS (August)

Contributions please by 16th July. Send them to clare.blois@btinternet.com
Text should be sent in a Word document or on an ordinary e-mail. Please make no attempt at page layout or embedded photos! Send these separately as JPEGs. Please note that PDF, Google, Messenger or Whatsapp messages are not suitable as I will lose them! Thanks!

Via Lucis: Art and Resurrection

A group of 14 artists based in and around Inverness, most of us Art Society members, have been involved in an exciting project to link contemporary art and Christian faith. We are an interesting group of volunteers: some have their own religious faith, others have some family connections, and others simply relished the challenge!

You may be aware there is a long history within the Catholic tradition of the Stations of the Cross. If you visit Catholic churches in this country or in Europe, there are often 14 images displayed of scenes from Christ's journey from his trial before Pilate to his crucifixion and death. These are used as a focus for meditation during Lent.

We have been working on the more modern idea of Stations of the Resurrection based on 14 gospel readings describing the resurrection appearances of Jesus. Each of us has been given one station, the associated bible reading, and a completely free rein in terms of style and interpretation. The paintings will be brought together in the Episcopal Church of St Michael and All Angels in Merkinch and will be used every year by the church in the weeks after Easter as a focus for meditation. We are also hoping that they will go on public exhibition at Inverness Cathedral in June this year.

St Michael's is hugely grateful for the generosity of these artists: Rosie Fisher, Helen Hamilton, Helen Joy, Bernard Ewing, Liz Joss, Donald Macrae, Alistair Geddes, Ian Whyte, Marcus Butler, Mira Staszowski, Sue Marshall, Avril Marr, Margaret McKay and Clare Blois.





“Via Lucis” paintings by Marcus Butler, Alistair Geddes and Ian Whyte.

Huge credit must go to Sue Marshall for organising the project and having faith in the artists - some of us were well out of our comfort zone and it was an awesome challenge! The results make a really stunning display.

ASI Annual Exhibition 2025

The Art Society Annual Exhibition has been booked this year from Friday 5th September to Sunday 14th September at Inverness Creative Academy (Wasps), so please put the dates in your diary and get painting! Whilst it is always rewarding to sell work, the main aim of the exhibition is to showcase the work of every aspect of the society, from beginners, evening classes, workshops, and individual efforts. So please don't feel intimidated if you have never exhibited before; we would love to have some of your work on display. The great joy of the Art Society Exhibition is always the huge variety of work displayed, so please don't miss out.

The committee has decided this year to invite submissions of small pieces of sculpture or 3-D work. We are limited for space so we are restricting this to a max of one piece per artist in place of one of your three paintings, and we really can't take big pieces. If in doubt, speak to one of our committee members.

We will also sell prints/mounted originals and cards.

There is no charge for entries .

You will receive full details by e-mail in due course!

HIGHLAND ART PRIZE 2025

New Selection Procedure

The Art Society of Inverness has again been invited to participate in the Highland Art Prize, which this year will take place in Fort William in October, in conjunction with the Royal National Mòd. The live exhibition will be held from 10th-18th October 2025 at the McCallum Art House, just off Fort William High Street, and we can submit five entries from our members. A shortlist is then chosen from all exhibition entries, leading to the award of a prize which benefits both artist and their club.

More information on the event can be found on the official website at:

<https://highlandartprize.org.uk>

This year we are planning to have a new selection procedure, to find our five entries, which will involve:

- an **independent judge** .
- making the selection based on **real paintings**, as opposed to on-line images.
- just **one entry per artist**.

We are now inviting any members who wish to participate to prepare their entries for this selection process, which will be held at WASPS on the afternoon of **24th August**.

Participants should also send good quality images of their works, together with title, medium and dimensions to: ripeckham@hotmail.com before **15th August**. This will allow us to show all the entries to members on the website, and will provide a helpful preview for the judge.

In order to maintain anonymity, the works should preferably not be signed until after the selection process. This year the works should have been completed in the 15 months prior to 15th September 2025, and as in previous years the selected five entrants will have to arrange for the transport to and from Fort William in October.

(For those who have not seen them, the ASI Members' entries in 2023 and 2024 can be seen on the ASI web pages under "Archive")

This year, owing to capacity constraints at the gallery, if they receive too many large-scale artworks (where one dimension is greater than 100cm), they may have to rotate them during the week. They still remain eligible for the competition.

Bob Peckham

Tutored Life Drawing



(Suitable for all abilities)

With Tutor, Jana Emburey and Life Model, James Montgomery

Improve your Drawing Skills

Explore, Line, Tone
and Mediums

Demonstrations on
Techniques and Styles

WHEN, WHERE, HOW MUCH?

Sunday, 11 May 2025
10am-4pm

WASPi Creative Academy
Midmills Building
Stephen's Street
INVERNESS
IV2 3JP

£65 for ASI members,
£75 for non-members



To Book
or for more information

Email Fiona at
fionamorris285@gmail.com

DON'T FORGET

that you can exhibit your
work on the ASI website.
Bob Peckham is keen to
receive your images! Have
a look at what fellow
members have been up to
on www.artiverness.com
Details on the website or
in February's edition of
Artyfacts

Fused Glass for Beginners



Series of 5 classes *with*
Catherine Carr, Glass Artist

£205
Includes materials
£195 for members of
Art Society of
Inverness

Week 1 – Basic Skills and Creating Samples

Week 2 – Design & Fused Glass Coasters Project

Week 3 – Creating Your Glass Masterpieces

Week 4 – 2D to 3D, Slumping, Draping

Week 5 – Cold Working, Display, Revision & Review

WHEN

Tuesday 3 June
Tuesday 10 June
Tuesday 24 June
Tuesday 1 July
Tuesday 8 July

9.30am-12 Noon

WHERE

WASPi Creative Academy
Midmills Buildings
Stephen's Street
INVERNESS
IV2 3JP

To book (or for info) email
Fiona at:

fionamorris285@gmail.com

For more information about
membership of
Art Society of Inverness:

www.artiverness.com



DON'T FORGET

the painting weekend
at Dornoch on 31st
May and 1st June. A
fun annual event for all
members (no limit on
numbers).

Remember to book.

Full details in
February's Artyfacts, or
on the ASI website.

Gelli Printing workshop by Susan McCreevy held at WASPS on Saturday 1st March 2025. *Margaret Macdonald reports:*

This was a beginner's class using a gelli plate to print on a variety of papers and to create a botanical collaged board book and bookmarks. I had tried this method of printing at a taster session Susan had at the ASI's 80th Birthday celebrations in North Kessock Hall and I was so taken with the process that I booked a place on this all day workshop as soon as it was advertised.

Susan gave us a demo of the process using a printing plate made of gel known as a gelli plate, which can be washed and reused. She showed us how to apply dried or fresh plant material to the gel plate, then using a small roller, apply acrylic paint on top of the plant material. Paper of your choice is then pressed into the plate then peeled back to reveal the first print. The second 'ghost' print is then taken which shows up finer detail. Both prints can be used later when they are dry.

She had provided a selection of papers to print on, ranging from cartridge and newsprint, to wet strength tissue paper and many more.

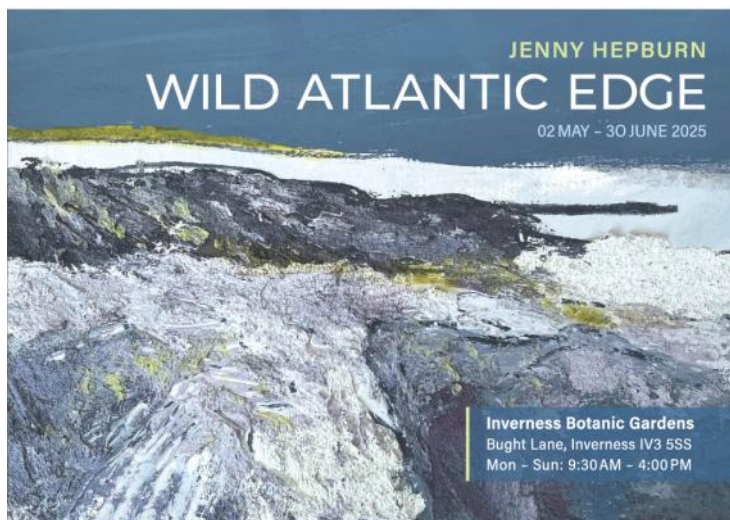
We then had fun trying the printing out for ourselves and our prints were laid out to dry or we could speed up the drying by using a hairdryer.

When the printed papers we had created were dry, we were then able to use various stencils, sponges and other mark-making tools on top of the prints, using acrylic paints in contrasting or harmonising colours

After lunch...the exciting stage in the process! We used the prints we had made in the morning to collage and upcycle baby's board books. We tore and cut out our papers and layered them onto each page of the board book using a matt medium as glue to create the individual pages of the books. We used the same process to make bookmarks later.

Later we each tried Image Transfer printing with Susan's help, using a page from a glossy magazine, which was a different variation of a monoprint.

Susan carefully explained each stage in the day's work and was very attentive to everyone, giving individual help as well as group demos. She is an excellent and very patient tutor and I would highly recommend her classes in person and online. Everyone enjoyed the day, shared in the creative experience and made new friends. I enjoyed learning new skills and look forward to using the printed papers in future artwork.



Jenny Hepburn invites all ASI members to the opening of her exhibition at the Botanic Gardens, on **Thursday 8th May, 5.30 to 7.30 pm.** Do go along!

This collection of paintings has been developed from sketchbooks completed at coastal locations across the Northern Highlands and Islands. Many are based on sketches from Altandhu, Coigach, where the bedrock is deeply scored by ice, huge boulders have accumulated on the shore and the sea stretches over to the Summer Isles.

Jenny enjoys an experimental approach to painting and has developed this body of work using a variety of materials. Some paintings concentrate on the lines in the landscape while others on texture created using cold wax and sand to convey the rocky surfaces. Whatever the medium, the aim is to capture the feel of this enduring and exciting part of Scotland.

Jenny lives in Inverness and has a studio in Inverness Creative Academy, aka Wasps. She exhibits in local galleries such as One of a Kind in Eastgate and Gallery 48 in Cromarty.



Below: some pictures from the gelli-printing workshop. See also front cover.





REDCASTLE ART GROUP

Exhibition of Paintings
by 15 Highland Artists
2nd May - 23rd June 2025
Inverness Creative Academy

Open Monday to Friday 9 am - 5 pm, Sat 10 am - 3 pm, closed Sunday
Free Admission, Café open Monday - Saturday
PREVIEW Friday 2nd May 5.30 - 8.00 pm, ALL WELCOME
www.spanglefish.com/redcastleartgroup **wasps_**




(above) ASI secretary David Brown takes some well-earned time out.



FREE ENTRY

OPENING NIGHT 17 Apr • 5.30-7pm
Art Exhibition
17 Apr – 25 May 2025

'Bring on the Blooms'
by **Emer Beattie & Katherine Sutherland**

**Alchemist
GALLERY**

48 High Street • Dingwall IV15 9HL

Two exhibitions worth visiting, both involving ASI members.

Redcastle Art Group is delighted to be staging a major exhibition in the Assembly Hall at Wasps through May and June, whilst Kathy Sutherland and Emer Beattie show their captivating contemporary flower paintings at the Alchemist Gallery, Dingwall. Please go along!