

# Henley Art & Craft Guild Newsletter January 2025



## WELCOME

I am delighted that we now have the third HACG newsletter in print and would love to hear your comments - good or bad. Even better I would love to publish any articles from you the members. Would you like to tell us about a workshop you've enjoyed or an art or craft exhibition that you've seen? As always, I would love to hear from you at [irene.manson3@btinternet.com](mailto:irene.manson3@btinternet.com) and the workshop team would also like to hear about workshops you may be interested in.

Our winter exhibition was the highlight at the end 2024 and I now hand over to Susan Mildenhall to tell you all about it.



## HACG WINTER EXHIBITION

What an amazing exhibition we've just had! Such a lot of work went into this so a huge thank you to everyone who contributed – helping to put up posters and circulate flyers, being there to organise all the exhibitors, setting up the exhibition and making it look spectacular, stewarding over a period of 10 days and then helping to hand back unsold items, and wrapping up sold items ready for the buyers to collect. But above all, the amazing selection of exhibits – all 430 which we managed to find space for – including not only paintings in oil, acrylic and pastels, but also photographs, ceramics, pottery, textiles, sculpture, jewellery, woodwork, books and furniture. So, you can see, it was a very diverse exhibition which really showcases the talent we have in our community.

The exhibition opened on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November and closed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December. We changed our opening hours to open at 11am and close at 5pm (2pm on the last day). This is new for us, and slightly later than previous years. We found this worked better than opening at 10am, as potential buyers weren't up and about, and we were often relatively quiet until later on.

In the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we had our opening event, when all members of the guild – both exhibitors and non-exhibitors – were invited. Before the party, Wendy Penrose – Chair of the Henley Arts Trail, was invited by our chair Simon Pink, to judge the Best Wall Art, and the Best Craft - images shown below. So just as the party started, she gave her verdict after an afternoon of judging. Katy Garrod won Best Wall Art for her intriguing painting “Supermoon” and Jane Butler won Best Craft for her beautiful felted cat “Princess”. The People's Choice was won by Demi Lang for her exquisite “London at Golden Hour” – all well deserving winners.



We had a great evening catching up with everyone, and to be honest, an opportunity for me, as a relative newbie, to get to know more of our members.

We are hopefully able to implement some new ideas in the future to improve the smooth running of the exhibition. One of the things that need improving is to make sure that everyone feels confident using the Sum-up machine. It's really not difficult but is certainly daunting to those who only come in for one session of stewarding and are expected to use this system immediately. So, we are planning to have an evening, possibly in May, to have a “training” session for this and anything else that members would like to discuss. We want to make everything as simple as possible.

Our next exhibition runs from 2<sup>nd</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> May, and as usual will overlap with the Henley Arts Trail. We have to book our dates two years in advance so we're already looking to book for 2027 early in the New Year. You will be getting more information about this in the next month or so, so look out for emails regarding this.

Although Christmas will have gone by the time you read this, I hope that I will meet up with you in 2025 and it will be happy healthy and prosperous for you all.



## PROFILE OF A TUTOR - Janina Maher

One of our most popular tutors agreed to write for me in this edition. It just goes to show that we have no idea what people get up to when they are not crafting! Read on...

You may know Janina Maher from one of the workshops she has taught with the guild. These have covered diverse topics including handmade books, gel plate printing and painting buildings in line and wash, and this reflects her three main artistic interests.

In fact, she has been fascinated by the urban environment for many a decade and remembers going on drawing expeditions with her father during her teenage years. He was a graphic designer by trade and loved to draw buildings so this interest has been passed down the generations. As Janina says 'He was an absolute expert with lettering and I still look at some of his works for inspiration and ideas'.

Much to her father's disappointment Janina went on to train as a chartered accountant but kept up her interest in art and craft during those corporate years. About 8 years ago she went part time from accountancy in order to spend more time doing art and pursuing her other passion, water skiing. After a couple more years she took the plunge to become a full-time creative artist.

During her business life she maintained an interest in training and education so it was a natural step to start teaching art and craft, initially running workshops on handmade books and selling her books. During lockdown she rediscovered her love of drawing buildings, starting with those close to home in Caversham. This led to a regular feature in the Caversham Bridge newspaper, an annual calendar and a book! She also takes on commissions to paint people's houses and this has provided a regular source of varied images to tackle - some more challenging than others!

If you would like to see more of her work, please head over to her website [www.janinamaher.artweb.com](http://www.janinamaher.artweb.com)

Her next Guild workshop will be Friday 6 June 2025 'Paint your own House in Pen and Watercolour. However, I needed to explore the water skiing comment a bit more and I found out that Janina goes water skiing 4 times a week for 8 months and then has a four-month break. She then posted pictures of herself taking part in the seniors' championships in Florida where her team gained a silver medal



One day when Janina was skiing at the lake, HAGC had an ad hoc plein air painting session. Anne Spicer and Paddy watched Janina skiing while they were painting!

## FORTH COMING HAG PROGRAMME

HACG exhibitions for 2025 at The Old Fire Station Gallery

30<sup>th</sup> April – 13<sup>th</sup> May

17<sup>th</sup> September – 30<sup>th</sup> September

### Workshops

Glorious Peacock in acrylic, 10<sup>th</sup> January – tutor Simon Pink

Beaded Jewellery, 31<sup>st</sup> January - tutor Gillian Hicks

Eye of the tiger in acrylic 9<sup>th</sup> February – tutor Kin Thompson

Art of Jaipur block printing 21<sup>st</sup> February tutor Marea Brown

Silver Birch trees in mixed media 11<sup>th</sup> April - tutor Caroline Crawford

Paul Klee Inspired 'tint townscapes' 11<sup>th</sup> May – tutor Karen Carter

Paint your own house in pen and watercolour 6<sup>th</sup> June - tutor Janina Maher

Abstract painting 12<sup>th</sup> July - tutor Sarah Burton



For more details visit our website, remember you can now book workshops 4 weeks in advance of date.

## RECENT WORKSHOP - Wreath making Friday December 13th

Eileen Pinkarchevski writes... A drizzly & distinctly chilly day saw members gather in the lovely warmth of Dunsden Village Hall (thank goodness for underfloor heating!) to make festive wreaths. This was a poignant occasion as, not only was it Verena's final workshop as Craft Organiser but also Irene Manson's final session as a tutor before she hangs up her secateurs.

I'd never done anything like this before, so was a little apprehensive, imagining a wreath fit only for the inside of the shed door, but with such clear instruction, encouragement and guidance I was soon snipping foliage, twisting wires (who knew they came in such a dazzling array of colours and sparkles) and generally having a lovely time.

We all produced one traditional round wreath and then embarked on a heart shaped contemporary wreath - the results were so exciting and diverse and I was so thrilled with my asymmetric lime green starburst wreath, that I produced another in magenta as a gift for a friend. This was a wonderful, relaxing day - a perfect way to escape the gloom outdoors. Sadly, the workshop was low on numbers but for those of you who missed it here are some tips for future wreath making:

### Tips on making a wreath

Following the successful but rather select class on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> (was it the date we got wrong?) I thought I might share some of the top tips I shared with the learners...

- ❖ If you make your wreath from a commercial floral foam ring it can be expensive and although this is easier for a first-time learner, you can wire individual pieces onto moss bound on a strong wire. Please be aware that floral foam is not biodegradable and as such floral artists are limiting its use. There is no need to fully soak your wreath, just put

- it foam side down in a bowl of water for about 15 seconds. Otherwise, when you hang it up there will be a lot of water on the floor.
- ❖ Foliage such as ivy and conifer can be foraged and another foliage such as Pittosporum, Skimmia or Hebe from your garden could be useful. Try to limit your foliage choice to three types otherwise the design becomes fussy. Choosing foliage's with differing textures gives harmony to the design.
  - ❖ As regards flowers, look in the garden and there may be some flowers still available. E.g. dried hydrangea heads, viburnum tinus and although it's not a flower the wonderful soft texture of old man's beard in the hedgerows is a must. By all means buy some roses or carnations to add to the design. Condition your flowers well beforehand i.e., remove the wrapper, remove foliage from the bottom of the stems and cut diagonally across. Place in water for at least 6 hours.
  - ❖ First of all, tie a ribbon round the wreath where you want it to hang. Easier to do this now than when the wreath is complete.
  - ❖ When inserting the foliage do not stand it upright, make it flow round the ring, covering the sides and the interior.
  - ❖ Decide what effect you want your ring to have -natural? So, choose hessian ribbon, pine cones, cinnamon sticks, dried flowers and sliced dried fruits. Something bright and sparkly? Then choose your items accordingly- shiny baubles, sparkly Christmas picks etc. However, there are no rules to say that you can't mix the two!
  - ❖ There are various ways to add items to the wreath e.g.
    - Cones: Wrap a florist's wire round the base of the cone and pull the legs downwards. Repeat on the other side of the cone.
    - Baubles: Remove the top part of the bauble and find a cut stem that will fit in the hole. Failing that a cocktail stick or piece of thick wire will work.
    - Dried flowers: It may sometimes be possible to put a wire or cocktail stick through the flower depending on the thickness, but if that fails resort to the glue gun. However, glue guns are hot so be very careful and have a pot of cold water to hand in case of burns
    - Dried fruit slices - Quite difficult to attach but you could try making a couple of wire hairpins. The fruit slices can also be inserted on cocktail sticks if thick enough. Sometimes better to glue a few together for more impact. Large dried oranges and limes could have a couple of cocktail sticks or thick wire inserted.
    - Cinnamon sticks - These will dry out in the heat of your house so need to be firmly wrapped with wire. Twist the wire twice round a few sticks then bring the legs together and very firmly twist to make one leg. If you don't like the look of the wire, glue on a piece of narrow ribbon.

If you are inserting a heavy item e.g., a cone or dried orange it is better to have two legs than one for balance and security.
  - ❖ Put the finishing touches to the wreath in the hanging position -you will then see what everyone else sees on your front door! Fill in the gaps if necessary. Chose the ideal situation for your design and that may not be on the front door as it may be windy or near the letter box.
  - ❖ If you don't want to hang up your wreath you could put a hurricane lamp in the centre or (and this is my favourite) fill a dish with Celebration sweeties and put it on the coffee table!



We did another very contemporary wreath, very different from the traditional one above

Everyone was given a commercial wire heart shaped frame and asked to cover it with sisal and decorative wire. Learners were asked to make sure they did not obscure the shape of the heart. Strips of raffia were then knotted together with strips of material and attached to the covered heart. It was then up to the class to add whatever embellishments they wanted and as the pictures show the results were amazing!

As mentioned before this was the last workshop of my teaching career and for me it was the pinnacle of how satisfying teaching can be. For a complete learner in the class to complete two (I'm wrong she did three) designs just made my day.

Irene Manson National Floral Art Tutor

### **PROFILE OF A HACG MEMBER - Suzanne London**

I enjoyed art at school but did not do anything substantial until after my Dad's death in 2012.

I started doing an evening class for a few years and then got chatting to an exhibitor at Wokingham Arts Trail (Sam Knight) who suggested I might enjoy doing other workshops. I ended up by joining a group in Reading called Mixed Media Mayhem (MMM), and although I felt like an imposter amongst professional and accomplished artists, they always make new members feel welcome whatever standard they are. In recent years I've started to get more involved and now curate one of the groups exhibitions.

Jackie Bishop and I also contributed to some of the historical research on Janina Maher's wonderful book 'A Stroll through Caversham' which is a selection of her paintings of buildings in the Caversham area alongside a short piece on the building's history

I'm very much an amateur and don't produce much art over the years so it suits me very well to go to drop-in sessions or workshops rather than paying a lot of money for very limited tuition at college

I started off by producing graphite drawings, then moving on to painting with acrylics. I have attended a handful of workshops on watercolour and am starting to use that a lot more now.

Through HACG and other workshops I have developed a love of monoprinting using a gel plate (gelli printing), painting buildings and doing needle felting, exhibiting under my maiden name as there is an established artist in Brighton Named Sue Breakwell.

Apart from art work I work as a counsellor for adults and young children (soobee.co.uk) and I am one of the vocalists in 'The Rock Project Woodley', a group of adults who learn six cover songs a term and then perform them in a gig.

I also enjoy participating in improvisation and African drumming sessions.

## LOCAL AREA EXHIBITIONS

### The Ashmolean Museum – Oxford

[www.ashmolean.org](http://www.ashmolean.org)

The early Crucifixion painting by Fra Angelico which the Ashmolean Museum recently acquired thanks to a successful fundraising campaign is now on show for all to enjoy at the Ashmolean Museum. Painted in the 1420's 'The Crucifixion with the Virgin, Saint John the Evangelist and the Magdalen' exemplifies the power beauty and sensitivity for which Fra Angelico would become known.

Fra Angelico allegedly never painted a crucifixion without tears streaming down his face. Miraculously the wood at the top of the cross transforms into a verdant tree where a pelican feeds her young with her own blood a symbol of Christs self-sacrifice.

The Ashmolean Museum houses an extensive Italian Renaissance collection that includes important pieces by Raphael, Michelangelo and Uccello



### Have you heard about Jelly Art in Reading?

[www.jelly.org.uk](http://www.jelly.org.uk)

Jelly is an energetic charity - a collaboration of artists supporting each other and the wider community; acting as a catalyst and making space for art in the everyday.

Playing a strategic role in Reading's cultural development working to improve access to visual arts for all. They support and develop visual artists, building pathways towards careers in the creative industries and providing freelance opportunities.

We advocate for artists, improving access to the arts and strengthening the opportunities for emerging and established artists, especially those who may face barriers.

Since 1993, Jelly has moulded and shaped to fit different spaces, adapting & changing to inhabit a space (that is not always a building or venue) to work collaboratively with artists, other cultural organisations, partners and the wider community locally and internationally.

Jelly has a space within the Broad Street Mall in Reading and offers workshops on a wide range of creative subjects and also community art space where you can bring along your current project and work alongside other artists.

**A Little Bird Told Me Gallery - Wendover Buckinghamshire**

**[www.alittlebirdtoldmegallery.com](http://www.alittlebirdtoldmegallery.com)**

A little bird told me gallery is located in Wendover, Buckinghamshire, nestled in the heart of the Chilterns. Although not currently running an exhibition the gallery offers a bespoke framing service, limited edition prints as well as children’s books, unusual cards, gift and wrapping paper.

They also showcase local artists work including, silver jewellers, ceramicists and glass makers.

**THE LONDON ART SCENE**

**Frameless - the immersive art experience**

**[www.frameless.com](http://www.frameless.com)**

Situated in Marble Arch this is the largest permanent multi-sensory experience in the UK. The world’s greatest works of art are presented in ways never seen before.



**National Gallery Highlights Tour (and afternoon tea)**

Have you ever wanted to get an expert to show you the masterpieces in a gallery and tell you a little bit more about them? Then this tour is for you followed if you want by afternoon tea. The tour and tea are £49.00 but the tour on its own is £20.



**If you do visit any of these exhibitions, please let me know how you got on**



## NATIONAL ART COMPETITIONS



The TALP Art Contest is gearing up for its 2025 edition. This long running competition gives artists a chance to show off their skills and win prizes

There are two groups, one for hobby painters and one for pros. Artists can enter paintings or drawings in any style

Judges pick about 70 works from each group to be shown at Patching's Art Centre during a big art festival in Nottinghamshire.

All chosen art also goes up on a website where people can vote for their favourites

The deadline is Monday February 17<sup>th</sup> 2025 so get your paint and brushes ready!

Enter now at [www.artopps.co.uk](http://www.artopps.co.uk)

## ART EXHIBITONS IN THE REST OF THE UK

### Material Matters – a holiday exhibition in Caithness



I am always excited when I come across an exhibition when I am on holiday as I know there will be time to go and study the exhibits and not be rushing off to do the next chore! Thus, it was when I was on holiday in Thurso, Caithness this year.

The exhibition was presented by the Society of Caithness Artists, focussing on the wide range of material used to express their ideas. There were oils, watercolour and acrylic on the painting side but also other images using silk, felt, cotton wool and fibre.

Materials matter in life and although it may be perceived that some materials have limitations this is not matched by the artists who enjoy unlimited imagination. The pictures below show work in embroidery, fibre and acrylic on newsprint.

[www.societyofcaithnessartists.co.uk](http://www.societyofcaithnessartists.co.uk)



## FASCINATING ART FACTS AND INFORMATION

Did you know that the Pantone colour of the year is mocha mousse, apparently an exquisite brown that radiates quiet elegance.



Pantone is the universal language of colour for designers' brands and manufacturers, a lead colour is selected every year. This year mocha mousse nurtures us with its suggestion of the delectable qualities of chocolate and coffee answering our desire for comfort.

Ready to add this to your art work? Or even buy a new outfit in mocha mousse?

### Colour story – permanent mauve

Were you aware that mauve was made by mistake? The rich violet - colour was born from the ambition and curiosity of a bright teenager and a scientific accident.

William Henry Perkin in 1856 was studying at the Royal College of Chemistry and was trying to find a more affordable treatment for malaria. He was trying to synthesise quinine from coal tar as at that time quinine - the only malaria treatment- was very expensive.

As well as being a chemist Perkin had dreams of being an artist so he was particularly interested in the fact that one day when he wiped the black residue from his latest failure to produce quinine, he had inadvertently produced a purple dye.

Perkin decided to keep this discovery to himself calling the new colour 'mauveine' and set to work conducting experiments to make sure that mauve was stable when used to dye silk fabrics. It was, and he filed a patent for it when he was just 18.

During the Victorian era mauve became an iconic fashion statement. Napoleon 111's wife Eugenie took to wearing mauve as she decided the colour matched her eyes. Queen Victoria herself appeared at the Royal exhibition of 1862 in an elaborate gown dyed in Perkins mauve which only added to public demand.



**Mauve**

# TIME FOR TEA



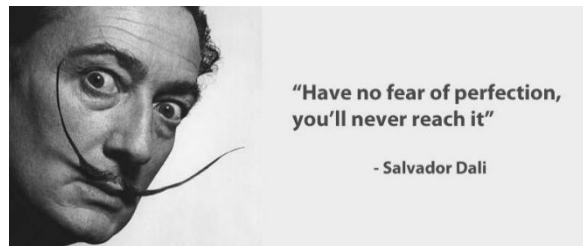
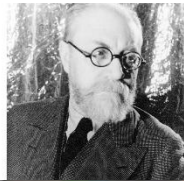
## ART QUIZ – to test the artistic grey cells

How about a little art quiz when your having your morning coffee or tea?

1. Who played JWW Turner in the 2014 film Mr Turner?
2. Who wrote the 2022 non—fiction best seller The Story of Art without Men?
3. Which French art term means ‘trick of the eye’?
4. Which artist is known for working with formaldehyde?
5. The artist Vanessa Bell was the sister of which 20<sup>th</sup> century artist and novelist

Answers on the last page of the newsletter.

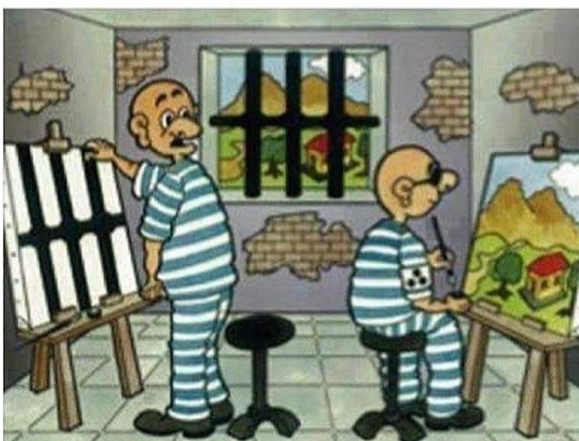
Creativity takes courage.  
—Henri Matisse



The art of knowing is knowing what to ignore.



Everything you can imagine is real.  
—Pablo Picasso



## How to take care of your paint brushes

1. **Clean your brushes immediately after use.**
2. **Store brushes bristle-side up.**
3. **Reshape brushes while drying.**
4. **Use soap and water for acrylics.**
5. **Use paint thinner for oils.**
6. **Invest in a brush conditioner.**
7. **Avoid soaking brushes.**



## Artists... have you ever wondered how you can make your drawing look like they are popping off the paper?

The answer is one word - shadows. Getting those shadows dark enough is your key to making your art look realistic.

How do I create dark shading?

### Chose the right pencil

The numbers on the side of the pencil are not just for show as every pencil has a different grade like H, HB, 2B, 4B and so on. A common mistake that many artists make is to try to shade realistically with just an HB pencil. It cannot get dark enough for deep shadows.

To achieve darker values, use softer pencils labelled B -the higher the number before the B the darker the pencil will get like 4B or 8B.



### Adjust your pressure

You can apply more pressure with the pencil you are already using to get darker values. For example, if you are using a 2B pencil with medium pressure switching to heavier pressure will give you a darker value.

However, pressing too hard on the pencil can flatten to tooth of the paper making it tricky to add more layers. Therefore, maintain medium pressure and switch to a softer pencil.

### Accurate shadow placement

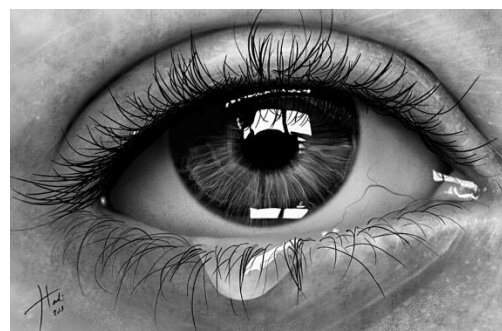
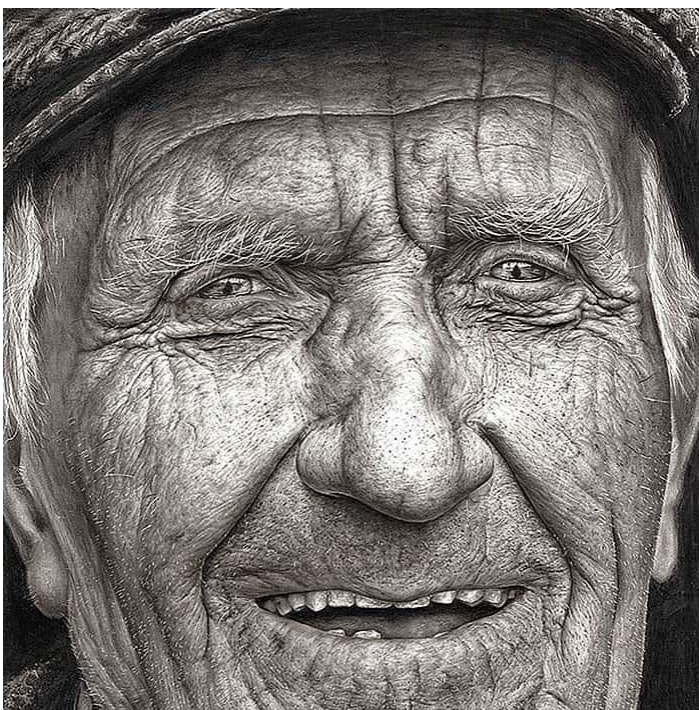
To make your shadows look realistic and give your drawing a 3D appearance it's important to place your shadows correctly. Study your reference and identify where the light is coming from and how its hitting the subject. The darkest areas are usually those getting the least light. For example, on a face the neck area is often the darkest as it gets least light.



### Embrace the dark side

It can be scary, but those deep, dark values will make your drawings come to life. A bigger range of values is your ticket to realism.

So, study your subjects, find the shadows, and use the right pencils and pressure to create those beautiful, dark shadows. Trust me, it's worth it!



## ART HISTORY

### Paper and underwear for artistic beauty

The first image below is by paper sculptor Ivan Markovic born in Montreal in 1970. He creates paper sculptures of people who live on the fringes of society and also builds models of derelict homes that allude to our connection of the past. Paper is perfectly suited to express the psychological state of people facing adversity. The medium is delicate but characterized by strength and durability.



Have you ever tried to create art on your washing line on Monday morning? The second picture is by London based artist Helga Stentzel where quirky clothes line creatures saunter across a landscape illusion to create laundrosaurus. So next time you are hanging out the clothes look carefully and see what you can create email photos to me at [irene.manson3@btinternet.com](mailto:irene.manson3@btinternet.com)



**Portrait of the artist JMW Turner**



The travelling watercolour set of JMW Turner

Joseph Mallard William Turner born in 1775, was an English Romantic printmaker, painter and watercolourist. He is known for his impressive colouring, imaginative landscapes and turbulent often violent marine paintings.

Intensely private, eccentric and reclusive Turner was a controversial figure throughout his career. His art intensified following the death of his father in 1829. In 1841 Turner rowed a boat out into the Thames so he could not be counted as present at any property in that year's census. He lived in squalor and poor health dying of cholera in 1851. He is buried in St Pauls Cathedral.

Turner entered the Royal Academy of Art in 1789 aged 14 and showed an early interest in architecture but was advised to concentrate on his painting. Turner exhibited watercolours each year at the Academy and in the summer travelled widely through Britain particularly to Wales where he produced a wide range of sketches for working up into studies and watercolours.

Turner experimented with a wide variety of pigments. He used formulations like carmine despite knowing that they were not long-lasting and against the advice of contemporary experts to use more durable pigments. As a result, many of his colours have now faded.

Turner also captured the magnificence of natural sunlight with the pigments he used. He frequently used Gamboge and King's Yellow to capture sunlight in its many forms: as an ethereal quality in its abundance, in its lack, as a vapour, and as a physical quality soon to be replaced by the artificial rays of Edison's lightbulb. Turner was so enthralled with a palette of bright whites and burning yellows that one critic even suggested he had 'yellow fever'. In art historian Ernst Gombrich's words, the artist 'had visions of a fantastic world bathed in light and resplendent with beauty, but it was a world not of calm, but of movement, not of simple harmonies but of dazzling pageantries.

Two of Turners paintings are shown below:

Valley of Oasta: Snow storm Avalanche and Thunderstorm

The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons



I do hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. Please feel free to comment and/or send articles in to me for publication.

Best wishes for a prosperous 2025

# Irene

Irene Manson -Editor [irene.manson3@btinternet.com](mailto:irene.manson3@btinternet.com)

## Quiz answers

1. Timothy Spall
2. Katy Hessel
3. Trompe d'oeil
4. Damien Hirst
5. Virginia Woolf

