

1984 cont'

Alton Herald, Oct 12th

1984 Art Society exhibition appeals to wide audience

A SOMEWHAT tardy review of Alton Art Society's 53rd annual exhibition, which was on view in the Assembly Rooms last week — but then I only came by chance to know this exhibition was on at that time.

It followed the usual form, including a display of children's art on the stage, and coincidence in time (but in no other way) with the camera club show next door. When I was there, during the Saturday afternoon, there were a lot of visitors. (The camera club show was almost deserted; there's a lesson there somewhere.)

The art show was well presented, some very interesting work amongst the 85 oils and acrylics, and the 87 "watercolours, pastels,

gouache, screen prints, etc." Plus five pieces of "sculpture, etc." by just two members, L. H. P. Wilding and E. A. Stokes; the latter's "Fruit Bowl in blue cedar" was my favourite from this group.

Like all art society shows, a lot of it is familiar, both in terms of artists whose work one has come to know and recognise, and individual works which have previously been shown elsewhere, including several at the Kiln Gallery, Farnham Maltings. Even though it is after the event a number of artists and works certainly merit individual notice.

Tana Riviere, for example, had several good pictures, seen before but enjoyed again, notably "Seagulls" following a plough. Sheila Halliwell was more enterprising than most in her use of white against white in depicting "Sarah's Room". R. L. Bickerdike was alert to foreground in "Scene near Well", and Molly Dinwiddie had a good, small "City River". Joan Blacker showed a "Wheelwright" and a "Cooper" in their workshops: an interesting idea. But Mary Towsey's long, large landscape "Somewhere near Froyle", a very competent painting, tended to dominate the half of the show devoted to oil and acrylic paintings.

Amongst the pictures in other media I noted Joan Wingate's "Running Afghan", several unusual, but effective, paper cutout collages by Patricia Lesley Smith, Hilda Frank's woodcuts and Viola Peacock's flower studies, no Alton exhibition could be complete without them! Mary Biggs had a well-drawn watercolour of the "River at Alresford" and Guy Vaesen several of his sensitive screenprints, "Courtyard, New Orleans" being, perhaps, the strongest. Most unusually, Lilla Flower showed two intricately worked and elaborately presented tapestry pieces.

Up on the platform the children took over, and prizes had been awarded. Under-eight infants from St. Lawrence Primary School presented a

collage of "Harvest Time"; between 9 and 11 the award winner was Richard Cooke with a picture of a stormy day, wind, people and umbrellas. Lisa Kelly's village street scene won the 12-14 class, and Rachel Glover's still life of objects found in a garage was awarded first prize in the 15-17 group. And finally slab pottery by Richard Platt and Vivian Hostman won the handicraft section.

An exhibition well up to the society's standard. I could wish some members had been rather more adventurous in their choice of subject and treatment, as several of those I have listed individually were. I get the feeling that some subjects were being painted more because, well, they are the sorts of subjects artists paint, rather than for any particular personal reason; and many of the treatments really were "playing safe".

However, against that, all the pictures were certainly being enjoyed by visitors, who gained much pleasure in finding images of known places in and around Alton.

— Peter Sanger



Fifteen-year-old Amery Hill pupil Rachel Glover who was the under 16 winner at the exhibition.



Above: Mary Towsey pictured with her award and her prize-winning painting.

Record price for painting artist wanted to keep

THE "Exhibit of the Year" sold for a record sum on the last day of the Alton Art Society's Annual Exhibition and afterwards winning artist Mary Towsey revealed that she did not want to part with it.

Mary's landscape painting "Somewhere near Froyle" fetched £450 and she said she had put a high price on it because she did not really want to sell it.

However, Mrs. Towsey was compensated by the fact that she became the third winner of

the trophy originally presented by blind sculptor Jack Riviere as her painting was voted best exhibit by visitors to the exhibition.

Chairman of the art society Mr. Patrick Edwards presented the award.

Other results were runners-up — Joan Wingate's "The Seasons", 3. Eric Street's "Hartley Mauditt" and 4. Robert Bickerdike's "Scene Near Well".

Children's section: Under

eight — 1. St. Lawrence Infants with "Harvest Time", 2. St. Lawrence Infants with "At the Seaside". Nine to eleven years — 1. Rachel Cook, 2. Julia Fowler, Alison Hall, Zoe Saunders and Claire Read. 12 to 14 years — 1. Lisa Kelly, 2. Lisa Searle. 15 to 17 years — 1. Rachel Glover, 2. Adrian Watts. Handicraft — 1. Richard Platt and Miriam Hostman, 2. Joanna Titheridge.

Alton Gazette Oct 17th

ALTON TOPS FOR ART, SAYS MAYOR

The recent art exhibition by the Alton Art Society broke all records, according to Alton's Mayor, Mr. Cecil Smith.

He told East Hampshire's Policy and Resources Committee on Monday that it was the most successful exhibition the Society had ever held.

They had received a record number of entries, the highest number of visitors and raised a record £1905 from the sale of pictures. Mr. Smith told councillors that it proved Alton enjoyed a high reputation for the arts as well as for sport.