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Mrs. Gwep Lambourn, with *At Beddgelert, Wales*, which was voted the most popular painting by visitors to the annual exhibition by Alton Arts Society.

## High standard at art society's show

NEARLY 200 works were on display last week at Alton Arts Society's 56th annual exhibition, held in the Assembly Rooms, Alton.

The standard of nearly all the exhibits was exceptionally high. Works of "professional" members in the society like Dorothy Dean and Arthur Wren were rivalled by the paintings of other "part-time" artists.

The exhibits were multi-media: watercolours, pastels, sculpture, gouache and even batik; but oils predominated.

Landscapes and studies from nature were the most popular subjects, far outnumbering portraits and still-lives. Many landscapes were local, including scenes of Alresford, Windmill Hill, Alton, Tilford, Bentworth, and a fair number of St. Lawrence Church, Alton.

Many of these conventional subjects were depicted in a traditional style, but nevertheless showed great technical accomplishment. For example, Gordon Trimming's oil *Elsted Church, West Sussex*, and Paul Banning's *The South Downs, Elsted*.

Others were more experimental within the genre — for example, *Spring in Elsted* by George Carter. Despite being a dark oil colour with little sky on view, this painting successfully conveyed the sparkling light of spring. The same idea of spring's freshness was seen in *Cape Spring* by Barbara Benians, where a stunning use of blue and orange made the landscape shimmer with energy.

A similarly successful water-colour landscape was *Mountain Near Malaga* by Magdalene Enever, where a delicate build-up of reds, greens, blues and browns created a real atmosphere of warm Spanish sun.

Still-lives and nature studies were popular subjects, yet revealed a diversity of perceptions. Techniques varied from the lovingly portrayed minute details of Joan Wingate's *The Four Seasons*, where every whisker and leaf were carefully delineated, to the deceptively simple watercolour *White Chrysanthemums* by Kathleen Page.

The delicate *Pansies* of Pamela Pell contrasted with the gaudy colours and bold realisation of objects in Robert Bickerdike's *Dieffenbachia Exotica*, to the advantage of both.

Mr. Carter's watercolour *No Longer Required* was rare in showing an unconventional subject: his depiction of household rubbish contrasted with neighbouring scenes of pansies, dog roses and sweet peas.



Oliver Truckle (14), from Eggar's School, Alton with his first prize in the 12 to 14-year-old category of Alton Arts Society annual exhibition.

Many members took their easels abroad and returned with some very successful pieces. In the oil *Jersey Lobster Boats*, Mr. Carter flattened the perspective and created an ingenious two-dimensional effect. Philip Dunthorne cleverly accomplished an effect of space and atmosphere through architecture in his watercolour *Siesta, Choda Patmos, Greece*.

Two works from abroad showed a distinctive style which were far from traditional. One was Barbara Howe's vigorous *Ble-Lisle-Sur-Tarn* and the other was the splendidly forceful *The Bay*, Benodet by J. Spence.

Portraiture was well represented with notable examples in oil and pastel. M. Kirby's pastel of *Mary* was assured and professional as was *Annette* by the same artist. Using the same medium, Philippa Dorling created a portrait in which vibrant colour breathed life into the *Girl with Marigolds*.

The most striking portraits were by Mr. Wren, who managed to

combine an obvious love for his sitter with an awareness of their wrinkles and bulges, as in *Seated Woman with Cat*. In *Mr. Prosser's Summer and Happily Retired*, Thanks, Mr. Wren depicted old people in such bright colours and sharp focus that they appeared to have an inner energy and infectious happiness.

At one end of the exhibition were paintings from school-children; the exhibits were bright, attractive and full of energy. Just one example, *Footballer* by Ruth Jones, aged six, from St. Lawrence School, Alton, showed how plasticine, cotton wool and cut-out paper can combine to produce a charming image.

After this exhibition Alton Art Society, who draw members from Alton, Farnham, Bordon and villages in between, can congratulate themselves on such a level of professional accomplishment and artistic insight, which made a visit such a rewarding experience.

Clancy Wilson.