

Happy Days as Gerald wins most votes again

A day-trip to Bourne-mouth provided the inspiration behind this year's winning painting in the Alton Art Society exhibition.

Gerald Woolley retained the coveted Jack Riviere Trophy with most visitors' votes going this year to his beach scene, "Happy Days."

It represented a dramatic change of subject for Gerald, a retired professional artist, who won the award last year with his portrayal of Greywell Mill on the Basingstoke Canal.

Delighted by his second Alton triumph, Gerald said he was also pleased to find that, just as last year, the discerning members of East Hampshire District Council's picture purchasing panel had bought his painting "for the nation," so to speak, assuring that, as it does the rounds of public buildings in the area, "Happy Days" will bring pleasure to many, many people.

Gerald worked in London for 35 years as a designer-illustrator before retiring to Church Crookham in 1991.

Now he pleases himself about what he paints but he

also delights in pleasing others and "Happy Days" is one of those paintings guaranteed to bring instant cheer.

"Everyone loves to see children enjoying themselves in the sunshine, playing on the beach," he said. "Mind you, they probably should have been at school!"

Gerald revealed that "Happy Days" was not the first but the second painting of the scene beside Bourne-mouth pier: mark one went down so well at the Camberley Art Society's show, much admired and quickly sold, that he felt he just had to do another.

It's all part of Gerald's continuing success story because, earlier this year, he carried off the best-in-show award at Farnborough with a quite dif-

ferent subject, an interior. He's hoping to score again next month in the Farnham Art Festival. Taking second with one of his distinctive pastel studies and sharing fourth place with another was Cove artist Brian Barton.

"Amber Eyes," his fluffy feline portrait, was runner-up while "Innocence," in fourth place, was Brian's portrayal of a neighbour's child.

He, like Gerald, is a past winner of Farnborough Art Society's best-in-show trophy: more of his work will be on display at Fleet next month.

Third place in the Alton voting went to "Greenshanks of Pagham," by Peter Forey, and sharing fourth place with Brian Barton was Joan Wingate's "Barn Owl."



Happy Days, indeed, for Gerald Woolley (right) winner of the Jack Riviere trophy, and Brian Barton, whose pastels won him second place and equal fourth in Alton Art Society's annual show (JRP Photographic)

Michael's idea for show's future

Principal of Alton College, Michael Gray, opened Alton Art Society's 62nd annual exhibition — with a suggestion for its future.

He referred to the college's award-winning new buildings, paying tribute to its designer, county architect, Colin Stansfield Smith.

"We are very lucky to have his services and perhaps the society might consider holding this exhibition in such wonderful architectural surroundings," said Mr Gray.

Congratulating the society, he said he could not paint or draw and therefore felt "a bit of a fraud."

"But I am very inspired by the amazing talent in our town. This must be the reason for the success of the society," he added.

Mr Gray spoke of the support of the town and district councils for art: "How fortunate we are to be led by such enlightened politicians," he added.

Referring to the display of children's work, he said: "There is a great deal of art going on in our schools and one cannot fail to be inspired by the wealth of talent."

"It represents a large army of young artists that will provide many new recruits for the society."



All their own work... Chairman of Alton Art Society, Peter Forey, pictured with some of the winners in the children's section of the art show at the Assembly Rooms (JRP Photographic)

Angels, sumo wrestlers and temples in Alton's art show

Sumo wrestlers, owls, the temple of Rameses III and a winged angel all set up base at the Assembly Rooms last week.

The world had not turned upside down, however; they were simply paintings and sculptures at the Alton Art Society's 62nd annual exhibition.

Nothing if not varied, there were more than 200 paintings, sketches and sculptures on display, with the chance to vote for your favourite picture at the end of it all.

Landscapes were one of the

most popular themes, from the restful colours of "Autumn in Hampshire" by D. M. Bowden to Trevor Andrews' view of Totnes.

The former made effective use of mellow peaches and pale oranges, producing a simple picture but one that really caught the eye.

Christine Radford's distinctive style also grabbed attention. Her precise brushwork produced paintings that looked almost real and the detail on tree leaves made her work particularly striking.

Excellent brushwork

also characterised Brian Barton's "Innocence" and "Amber Eyes."

The latter, a Persian cat, was particularly noticeable for its lifelike fur but the painting was sharp where it needed to be, in the eyes.

Many exhibits followed traditional styles but two by Arthur Wren—"Cricket Match" and "Moonrise"—were more surreal.

Using vivid blues, clouds and trees were painted in a "swirled" style that certainly marked them out from the crowd.

Watercolour once again proved a popular medium, particularly for landscapes, with Peter Forey's "Greenshank at Pagham" reinforcing the adage that less can often be more.

The muted colours were evocative of a grey day on an estuary and you could almost smell the sea.

There were seven exhibits in the sculpting section and it was a pity some artists seemed reluctant to try their hand at something other than paints or charcoals, as this section was certainly eye-catching, despite its small size.

Here again, Arthur Wren, was one of the few artists to offer something different.

Eyes were immediately drawn to his "Flying Angel," a cartoon-like coloured sculpture, for its touch of

humour and quirky style.

"The Bather" by Wendy Macpherson was an unusual sculpture of a woman stepping out of a bath. It was a very simple piece of work, with all detail eliminated, but more effective because of this.

The children's section was as popular as ever, with entries from several schools, including Amery Hill, Eggar's, Medstead Primary, Andrews Endowed, Selborne School and St Lawrence Primary.

In the five years and under category, Lucy King and Louise Bedford, pupils at Selborne School, produced a distinctive "Market Lady" made from paper, ribbon and felt.

The standard of work was very high, with imaginative pictures in the 12-14 age group from Gideon Frater and Stephen Jones, both 14.

Gideon's "Reflections," in shades of green, had an air of mystery surrounding it, while "Pot Black" showed Stephen had a knack for working in pencil, as well as having original ideas.

Sixteen-year-old Donna Marshall introduced a three-dimensional element into her "Musical Extravaganza," proving that Alton has plenty of talented youngsters to keep art alive and well in Alton in the future. S.M.

Peter thanks team behind the scenes

Presenting the awards at the close of the exhibition, chairman Peter Forey paid tribute to everyone involved in its success with a special mention and a token of appreciation for show secretary, Gina Aronsberg.

Mr Forey also thanked East Hampshire District Council for supporting the event with a grant to offset costs and he said the society was grateful to the local businesses who had donated raffle prizes.

Overall, the exhibition provided a good indication of the depth of talent among local artists, young and old, he said.

Referring to the children's section, he said that after being inundated with Jurassic Park-related inquiries in the course of his museum work, he was delighted to see that it was relatively dinosaur-free.

Lucy King and Louise Bedford, from Selborne School, won the five years and under prize with Tom Clutton, from St Lawrence School, Alton, second. In the 6-8yrs section, Charlotte Goodall, from Holybourne, won with Gemma Heath, from Medstead, runner-up.

In the 9-11yrs, St Lawrence pupils, Mark Greenhalgh and Sarah Fry were first and second while, in the 12-14yrs, Gideon Frater won from his fellow Amery Hill pupil, Stephen Jones.

A former Amery Hill pupil, Nancy Peskett, carried off the prize in the 15-17yrs section, Claire Mackett of Alton Convent being runner-up.

The prize for group work went to Class II, Alton County Infant School, with Selborne's junior-infant class runners-up.

The handicraft prize was won by Gemma Phillips with another Medstead School pupil, Paul Barnes, coming second.



Michael Gray, principal of Alton College, is joined by chairman, Peter Forey, in admiring some of the exhibits after opening Alton Art Society's exhibition (JRP Photographic)

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