

## Exhibition Report Spring 2026

What a difference a bit of sun makes! After a notably chilly start to spring, suddenly summer weather was upon us and Lichfield exploded into life. Visitors were sneaking into the exhibition and our first two sales made before the doors officially opened. Admittedly one customer was Neil Rogers, who judged, bought a painting and joined the society! And speaking of judging, what a task he had on his hands. 39 members exhibited 100 art works and once again the quality of submissions was outstanding. After much deliberation, the choices were duly made. Our exhibition newcomers did particularly well, including Bidy Brough who came away with Best in Show with her collage 'Goldfinches'.

In a change to recent years, we held our award ceremony on the Saturday morning and it was pleasing to be able to award the certificates within the gallery space. Our Guest of Honour was Andrew Matheson RBSA, ceramic artist and owner of the Lichfield Pottery, tucked away in Tamworth Street since 1981. Andrew graciously stepped in at the last moment to stand in for Cllr Doug Pullen who was unable to attend. The award winners will be listed on the website soon.

The sun clearly put people into a good mood and sales went well. We counted 912 visitors over the 5 days and in total we sold 13 art works, plus nine from the browser and a steady stream from the Art Shop. Ceramics from the shop sold particularly well. We also gained new members, (eight at the last count), and many more expressions of interest which is terrific for the long term health of the society. Ultimately we sold work amounting to £2214, and took £180 in membership fees.

Thanks to our stewards proactive pursuit of unsuspecting visitors, 719 votes were cast for the Peoples Choice Award, excluding one vote for a work not actually in the exhibition(!). As always I was struck by the wide spread of the voting, reinforcing the message that art is a very personal choice. The winner will be announced at the next Demonstration Evening.

I have so many people to thank. Obviously there would not be an exhibition without our members and their fabulous artworks and I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know you all a bit better. The exhibition is a large undertaking in a small space of time and we rely so much on the goodwill of all involved. Helen Winterton, Michelle Read and the caretakers from the Guildhall are always supportive and helpful during our tenancy at the Guild Room. I leaned heavily on Liz Thomas and Pete Wilding who helped me enormously with logistics, admin and sanity. Dennis Harper and Ray Blundell formed the hanging crew, and we were aided by those who stayed on to help with the tear down, Jaki Randall, Stephen Cadwaladr, Freda and Oz Harris, Joan and Dennis Rollason and Yoshi Nishio. Jan Flynn who takes photographs for us and works so hard to publicise us on Facebook. Especial gratitude to Angela Nicholls and Alex who made transporting equipment so much easier with a big beautiful transit van. A shout out to Ross at Lichfield Live who gave us a full page spread in their newspaper and promoted us on Facebook. Last but not least, I thank all those who forgave my many mistakes. Who knew that Wolesley has two 'E's'?!

Sasha Lauer (Exhibition Organiser)