

## THE HISTORY OF



The first meeting of Wareham Art Club was held at the Methodist Church Hall in Wareham in September 1991 attended by some 20 people of all ages. Pam Hayes, the founder of the Club, said at the time "I am very pleased that so many are interested in this." Pam's son Peter had died suddenly earlier that year, and she wanted to do something in the community in his memory. Pam's wish was that "The accent is on people getting together and enjoying art and painting". Therefore, this is our ethos, and something we are constantly striving to maintain and improve on.

Initially the Club met twice a month on a Tuesday evening and twice on Wednesday mornings, with a demonstration evening on the second Tuesday of the month. At the first AGM in January 1992 a committee of ten members were elected, and local professional artist and lecturer, John Bowen, agreed to become President of the Club – a post he holds to this day. A logo competition was held, and the winning design was incorporated into the Club's stationery, as above.

Workshops, demonstrations, exhibitions, trips, together with fundraising and social events have continued enthusiastically up to the present time. Exhibition screens were made for the increasingly frequent exhibitions and craft sales at various local venues, which generated much interest locally.

In 1993, with a membership of over 50, the Club moved to its present home of the Parish Hall on Wareham Quay, in order to facilitate easier access for all. Subsequently the workshops increased in frequency and changed days to most Monday evenings and Tuesday mornings, with demonstrations once a month on the second Monday evening.

The fifth anniversary of the Club in 1996 was celebrated with a busy programme of events, including a display at the Dorset Arts Week "Show of Strength" exhibition. By the end of the decade the membership had increased to 70, with 28 works of art being sold in 1999.

The tenth anniversary was marked by a special exhibition and display in the Town Hall in July 2001 – complete with banners, balloons and birthday cake!

In 2004 the idea of painting a Map of Wareham, adding notes of local history in between the roads and buildings, was put forward. This was run as a competition with members painting their favourite buildings, each being completed on 6"x4" cards given by the Daler company. There were 128 entries, from which our President had to choose the best. 1,000 words of history were written and checked with a local historian. Each picture was reduced, assembled with the text on a copy of the town map, and a digital image was made and printed by Dolphin Fine Art Printers. It had taken a year to produce this lasting souvenir of our town, which has been sent to

families and friends all over the world. In 2014 one was sent to Wareham, Massachusetts, USA and was put on display at the exhibition to commemorate the 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town's inauguration.



In 2011 the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Club was marked by holding a competition of paintings depicting Wareham through the ages at the July exhibition, where the public could vote for their favourite to be the winner.

Later that year, 20 members completed a piece each of a jigsaw painting of Wareham Quay, composed of 20 individual acrylic paintings joined together to make one large and striking whole work of art.



In 2014 we created Venetian-style masks to mark the opening of Purbeck Art Weeks.



For the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016 we decided to have display boards of 2 x 25, 8x8in paintings at the 2-day summer exhibition in July. Everybody was asked to contribute at least one painting, some doing two.



These paintings were also for sale and quite a few were sold. John Bowen, our president, drew two portraits of Pam Hayes, our founder, who sadly died in 2015, and one of them is now displayed, along with a plaque, on the wall at Wareham Town Hall in her honour and memory. The picture is on the right-hand board, bottom row, second from left.

This year, 2018 a visit was organised by our Chairman, David Cole, to Sandham Memorial Chapel (National Trust Property) near Newbury, Berkshire, which holds paintings of Stanley Spencer. Nearly 20 members attended and a very informative talk was given by one of the on-site volunteers.

Wareham Art Club is a friendly group of people of all ages and abilities who enjoy painting and drawing, and who meet in Wareham Parish Hall most Monday evenings and Tuesday mornings throughout the year. We socialise and produce our own work, learn from demonstrations by visiting artists once a month and also hold still life evenings once every couple of months. There are exhibitions three times a year in Wareham Town Hall, one day in March, a 2-day in July and a one day in November. The March and November exhibitions also have a Craft fair included. At our summer exhibition held at the end of July there were over 120 paintings

exhibited with 15 being sold. The Club continues to be a truly creative organisation, with a current membership of nearly 60, developing hidden talents, and having fun!

Our President, John Bowen, is a professional artist and is the former head of art and design at Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education. We have several members who regularly exhibit at both Purbeck Art Weeks and Dorset Art Week, including Roger Lockety and David Cole.