



**MARCH 2024 - NEWSLETTER 76**



*Raku Pot - Heather Olsen*

**INSIDE**

**Heather Olsen shares her passion for Raku pottery**  
**Details of our AGM and photos from our New Beginnings Exhibition**  
**and lots more**

## Dates for your Diary – More details within this newsletter

2nd April New Beginnings Exhibition hand back 1-4pm

13th April Saturday- AGM with guest speaker the Art Historian John Elliott with and illustrated talk on Monet and his Sunrise . There will be another 'Swap shop" too! . All on the 13<sup>th</sup> April at 2pm. At the United Reform Church Hall Salisbury

1st May 'Hand In' at Langford Lakes

3<sup>rd</sup> May - 7<sup>th</sup> June Langford Lakes Exhibition ((Wednesdays – Sundays, also open on Bank Holiday Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May).

18th May Workshop with Michael Parker- Painting with a knife (in acrylics or oils)

25th May Salisbury Art Trail begins, Langford Lakes has been extended to the end of the Arts Trail on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

7<sup>th</sup> June - Langford Lakes Exhibition Handback 1 – 4pm

20th July workshop on Mixed Media with Mike Bragg –( See newsletter for other workshops)

3<sup>st</sup> August – 31<sup>st</sup> August - our Annual Summer Exhibition at Gallery 4.

Hand in 1<sup>st</sup> August 10 – 12.30am Handback 31<sup>st</sup> August 1 – 4pm

November- our SGA ArtCare exhibition at the hospital.

ArtScene- In between we will be taking part in Artscene on the Market Square on the first Sundays of April, June, August and September.

Friday Art continues every week at 1pm -4pm in Bemerton Methodist hall for just a small donation of £2. Tea, cake and excellent support and welcome from all the members.

Salisbury Sketchers – Watch out for new arrangements.

An SGA trip! Later in the year, with a date to be confirmed, we are planning a coach trip to London to see a major Van Gogh Exhibition at The National Gallery.

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## Salisbury Group of Artists AGM

Calling all our artists and supporters to join us on 13th April at 2pm at the URC Church Fisherton Street for our Annual General Meeting.

We will of course conduct a short meeting to elect Officers and hear a brief description of this last years activities and then we have our speaker.

Our speaker will be John Elliot with an illustrated talk on Monet and his Impression, Sunrise. He is a professional art historian and should give us some profound insights into Monet!

Afterwards we break for refreshments and then have our second wonderful, delightful, fabulous swop shop! Please bring any art items you no longer need and then take something away – however no books this time as we had a humungous pile left behind last time!

What more could you want ? Such a treat – come along and bring any others who might be interested.

**Martin Webster Chairman**

## Notes from the Editor

As I sit going through my notes to see if I have done everything that needs to be done for this newsletter I realised that the issue number is 76 just short of my age! Little did I realise that when so many years ago I offered to undertake this activity I would still be at it. Spelling errors, misinformation apart I do enjoy the activity and hope that it hits the mark with regard to the information delivered as well as being interesting and not too boring. That said any thoughts as to anything I am missing do let me know.

The year ahead as planned for us all is really looking exciting, as you will read about. The required AGM is ahead of us but after its boring bits there is an excellent talk organised. ( Cakes afterwards too!!) Not too be missed!

Deep within this newsletter issue is a short item on the need to redesign our logo. Or in business speak 'rebrand' SGA. The last designs I am guilty of putting together but it is time for ( again in business speak) a refresh. Martin has put out a challenge to ask for ideas. Why not have a go?

**Terry** -[newsletter@salisburygroupofartists.com](mailto:newsletter@salisburygroupofartists.com)



# New Beginnings JOINT EXHIBITION



A collaborative exhibition of members works from -  
Plain Arts & Salisbury Group of Artists

Gallery Four, Salisbury Library  
Friday 8th March - Saturday 30th March  
Open during normal Library Hours



Plain Arts Salisbury  
Email: [info@plainartssalisbury.co.uk](mailto:info@plainartssalisbury.co.uk)  
www.plainartssalisbury.co.uk

Salisbury Group of Artists  
Email: [info@salisburygroupofartists.co.uk](mailto:info@salisburygroupofartists.co.uk)  
www.salisburygroupofartists.co.uk



Pictures from the opening of our 'New Beginnings' Exhibition

## Artist of the month Heather Olsen

Your Newsletter Editor Talks to Potter Heather Olsen about her beautiful Raku Pottery.



*Terry - There seems to be a growing renewed interest in handcrafts not just pottery. I wonder if it is the need for that human touch away from mass production?*

Heather - Definitely, I didn't start making pots until I gave up the stressful high powered job I had - once off that treadmill I never got back on it.

I had never done pottery at school but as soon as I worked with it for the first time, I was hooked. I find it completely absorbing and once I am "in the zone" hours pass in a flash. I am not the only one - so many potters love the way it immerses them in making. And I agree it goes much wider than any one type of creativity - so many people I speak to take delight in repairing their clothes/furniture/picture frames/tools and collecting interesting found objects to create installations/multi-media art - getting great satisfaction from craft.

As for mass production, if you want a set of exactly matching bowls/mugs/plates all in the exact same colour/s, don't ask a potter who produces hand made work - or, please **do** ask, but accept there will be tiny differences in all of them - we are not robots!!!

There are so many variants that can affect the hand-made process - the drying process before firing; the type of clay; shrinkage after firing; where the piece is in the kiln; the firing process; the choice of glazes and colouring materials.....and that is all **after** it is created - there are also lots of subjective decisions beforehand like how am I going to decorate this? If you want to decorate by carving into the clay before it is fired - you need to plan that right at the beginning of the process. And is this the right size/shaped spout/handle/rim?; is it going to have a lid and, if so, what sort of lid - there are lots of possibilities! Is this going to be a solely decorative piece or is it going to get a lot of robust use like a casserole or lasagne dish.

As I have got a bit better at the making process, I think more about how to decorate my work, especially to create texture; how to display work - where the light is coming from; what the background colours are; and include in the display process other things like foliage and wood. I am also much more interested in the chemistry of glazes and the physics of firing. It is great for my grey matter.

*Terry - Clay is perhaps the oldest of craft mediums and how it is worked and crafted takes many forms. You produce beautiful colourful Raku pots that are much admired. I looked up the meaning of 'Raku' and discovered that it means enjoyment, pleasure, contentment and ease. That said I know that the process is perhaps the most dramatic of all modern pottery techniques.*

*What first attracted you to this craft ? The meanings and the process show perhaps a contradiction, how do you reconcile this?*

Heather - The process starts off very much like most other pots - with a first "biscuit" firing. If the pot was allowed to dry thoroughly before biscuit firing (*the process to transform unfired bone-dry clay from its fragile state to a porous and durable state for the second stage of firing*) and you are confident with the throwing or building of the pot, the stress levels are quite low up to this point.

The stress factor ramps up when the Raku process comes and the pot has been glazed ready for firing. I love it because the results are so unpredictable and the firing process so exacting and a bit scary! Definitely an adrenalin rush and a sigh of relief when the piece is safely smoking (though things can still go wrong even then..... The raku firing is short and heats up quickly, bringing the glaze to glowing red quite quickly. Then it is

lifted from the kiln when red hot and dropped into combustible materials; which ignite very quickly; the pot is covered with the flaming materials and a lid put on to keep in the smoke. And there the pot stays until cool enough to remove. The clay for Raku is ideally mixed with other additives to strengthen it to survive the extremes of heat, rather than cooling down slowly in a kiln.

It is a tense process but the result can certainly bring delight! I think maybe the enjoyment factor in Japan was that cups for the traditional tea ceremony were Raku fired. Raku pottery was often "crazed" because the rapid heating and cooling of the pottery caused tiny cracks to appear in the clay and glaze. I understand that this is one of the reasons why raku pottery was used in Japanese Tea ceremonies. Tea bowls made with un-crazed glazes were said in Japanese culture to disturb the calm atmosphere of the tea room through the harsh loud sound of the tea being whisked in the bowl, whereas raku tea bowls made with crazed glazes made a quieter, duller sound. Well, that's one theory.....

I NEVER assume that the picture I have in my head will be the look of the final product. That is the case in spades with raku firing. I have had two pieces in the same firing with the same glaze on both - and they were both completely different! And I don't know how to replicate either of them!



*Terry - Can you explain the process and methods you use in the creation of your pieces?*

Heather - I don't have enough space! The reason I am always so positively engaged is that I do not just make one type of work - perhaps I would be more productive if I did.

But I need to take pleasure in what I make, so I make Raku pots (process above), and the big question for me is where I want to smoke to go and, sometimes, do I want to accentuate the crazing on a pot? Black boot polish can sometimes achieve this! But I also make earthenware tableware; thrown porcelain and stoneware; and handbuilt very thin porcelain, so that the translucency of porcelain when thin takes centre stage. This can produce beautiful effects if a light is placed inside a porcelain piece.

And for me, texture of decoration is key. I use found objects like leaves, shells and fossils - a piece of "brain coral" is another favourite. And old lace and crocheted pieces which I get from charity shops. Others don't want them as too old-fashioned, but I give those discarded beautiful things a new life in clay.

Oh, and I do like things that can raise a smile - think ceramic custard creams and jammy dodgers or even a meat and fish display.



'I like pots that raise a smile - this was a commission for a fish and meat display stand - 5 inches x 8 inches and 6 inches high - all individual ice cubes underneath.....I may be insane'

*Terry - Looking beyond pottery do you have any favourite artists and craftspeople that you admire and perhaps are influenced by.*

That's a tricky one. I am influenced by many potters and sculptors. We have been to New Zealand many times and have several big bright oil paintings by a painter in South Island called Rosie Little. She is in her seventies, now, but until then she climbed mini mountains with all her kit and massive canvases and painted en plain air - extraordinary. And I love watercolours and regularly check out the website of the Royal Watercolour Society, which is also the HQ of the Royal Society of Engravers. I am also huge fan of the Newlyn School of painters in Cornwall - something about the Cornish light. And I suppose a female artist trailblazer would be Dame Laura Knight - I was blown away by her war artist work in WW2 of factory workers, especially the women making dangerous explosive devices.



## Exhibitions Update March

From Annie George

### **New Beginnings' Exhibition**

**Don't forget "hand back" for our Joint Exhibition at Gallery 4 is Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1-4pm. As an alternative you may also collect from 2pm on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March.**

### **Salisbury Group of Artists at Langford Lakes!**

**May 3 – June 7, (Wednesdays – Sundays, also open on Bank Holiday Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May).**



**Hand In; Wednesday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 10.30am-1pm. Hand back; Friday June 7<sup>th</sup>; 1pm- 4pm.**

Thank you to all the artists who contacted me to take part. We have been lucky enough to be offered an extra week at the Gallery, until Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June. This came just as we were invited by our friends at Plain Arts, for this exhibition to be included in Salisbury Art Trail from Saturday May 25<sup>th</sup>. We were delighted to accept and will have a half page promotion in the Art Trail brochure. The exhibition will be stewarded by SGA artists throughout so do pay us a visit. The location is glorious and the Café very good for light lunches and delicious cakes!

### **The Antelope Café.**

As reported in our last issue, very sadly Laura Bell, a much missed Exhibition team member, passed away in February. Laura had, for the last two Summers, curated exhibitions of SGA members' work at The Antelope Café. Her friend Laura, who runs The Antelope Café would like to offer the Café for exhibitions by members of SGA

again this summer. It could be solo, small groups, several friends and she suggests each group exhibits for 1 or 2 months.

If you are interested in taking up this opportunity solo or with your friends, please contact me; [annie.george2308@gmail.com](mailto:annie.george2308@gmail.com) and I will put you in touch with Laura at The Antelope Café.

### **SGA Annual Summer Exhibition at Gallery 4,**

Salisbury Library **August 3<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>.**

**‘Hand in’ Thursday 1st August 10am -12.30pm** (we may be able to arrange an alternative time the previous late afternoon)

**‘Hand back’ Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August 1-4pm**

### **OTHER EXHIBITING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Phoenix Emporium, Salisbury, are offering artists free exhibition space in their in-store Curio Coffeehouse and would welcome enquiries from SGA members who would like to display their artwork. Commission taken will be 20% of the selling price. If you are interested please email

[Gotaquestion@thephoenixemporium.co.uk](mailto:Gotaquestion@thephoenixemporium.co.uk) or phone 01722 330589

and ask for Gary, the Store Manager.

You can view the current work of some SGA members from April 6th until April 28th at the Emporium.

For more information about the Emporium go to their website

[www.thephoenixemporium.co.uk](http://www.thephoenixemporium.co.uk). or contact Loraine by email at

[Paperstitch@icloud.com](mailto:Paperstitch@icloud.com)

## Workshop Update March

By Annie George

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May - Michael Parker on 'Palette Knife techniques in Oils and Acrylics'. See; [michaelparkerart.com](http://michaelparkerart.com)**



Michael, a well-known Christchurch artist, is skilled in palette knife painting, rarely using brushes! His loose expressionist style and range of subjects has made him a favourite with the Dorset public. Come along and experiment with or improve your technique with knife painting! Working mainly with a knife can give a very distinctive character to your work.



**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July - Mike Bragg- Mixed Media** Using watercolours, acrylics, inks, oil

pastels and collage, Mike uses different techniques in an experimental style, on the theme of **Trees**. More details next month.

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September – Brigitte Scott-Florek “Freeing up the Artist”** Using collaborative techniques, different media, your other hand, working together as a group or on a whole class piece. Final individual pieces will often be much freer than you would normally produce!

**Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup> – A day with Soraya French**

Soraya will be demonstrating with Golden Paints as their Ambassador, showing how they make possible her amazing colourist style, in a demonstration and workshop. A chance to work with this well-known artist is very rare! More details later in the year.

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November – Jenny Muncaster from The Colour Factory Winchester - Creative Wellbeing.** Details to follow later in the year.

To book any of the above ; [annie.george2308@gmail.com](mailto:annie.george2308@gmail.com) or [rose@duly.org.uk](mailto:rose@duly.org.uk)

**Workshop fees; Members £45 per day, guests £50**

**To pay by Bacs;**

**Salisbury Group of Artists**

**30 97 41**

**acc. 03627988**

**ref; workshops**

(alternative payment methods available).

**All workshops are on Saturdays, 10am-4pm, at Bemerton Methodist Hall, Roman Road, Salisbury, SP2 9BH.**

[New SGA Logo](#)

From Martin Webster

We are looking to upgrade our logo – i.e. create a new one! But which has some continuity with our old one and which fits our strap line “Creating Art to enhance life”. Along with talking to a professional designer or two we open this process to any of our members to have a go. So if you like to have a go at designing one please do and let me have it! We will judge the best at a committee meeting in June.

If you'd like to know more talk to Martin, Annie or Terry for further info or encouragement!

## SALISBURY SKETCHERS VISIT TO ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH ON SUNDAY, MARCH 17th 2024

From Loraine Sherlock



Thirteen members came along to this event, most of us choosing to work inside the church though a couple decided to chance the weather and draw and paint outside. Church interiors are never easy subjects to depict with their grand arches and intricate masonry but we all found our chosen places, and had the bonus of listening to a practice performance of organ playing and singing for Passion Sunday, that was being performed that evening.

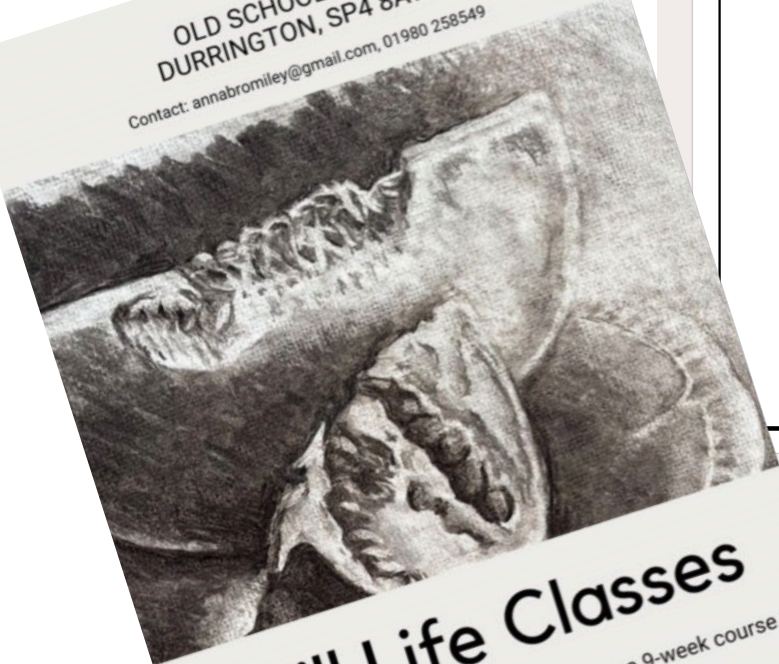
Next month we are hoping for warmer and sunnier weather when we venture to an outside location for the first time. We will be meeting on **Sunday, April 21st, at 2.00 pm at Old Sarum.**

It's been a few years since we visited this spot and I hope that old and new members will come along.

Future dates planned are Sunday, May 19th at the Breamore Estate

Sunday, June 16th at Heale House Garden . Let's hope for a fine summer.


OLD SCHOOL HALL,  
DURRINGTON, SP4 8AW  
Contact: [annabromiley@gmail.com](mailto:annabromiley@gmail.com), 01980 258549



**Still Life Classes**  
Learn to draw and paint still life scenes in a 9-week course.  
Thursdays 14:00-16:30 beginning 18th January.

# ArtWrite

@ The Antelope Café  
Catherine Street, Salisbury  
3pm Mondays

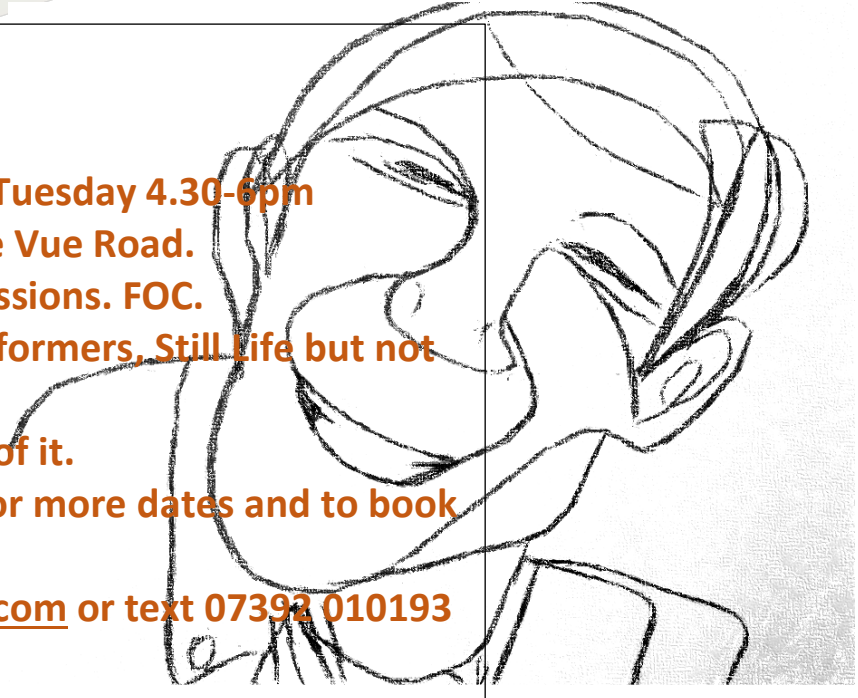


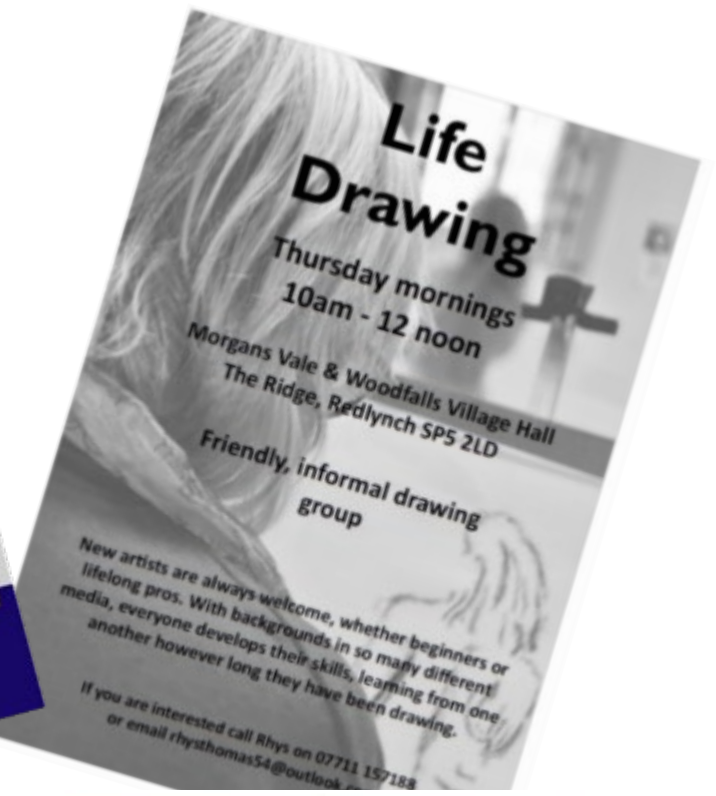
Old Harry Rocks by Angie Street

**Anarchic Writing with ArtWrite**  
Led by Angie Street  
# 5 and 19 February # 4 and 25 March  
Creative scriptwriting/poetry in response to art and artefacts in the Antelope Café.  
**LOOK at it, TALK about it, WRITE about it.**  
Just roll up with pens and paper and a measly £3.  
Booking E: [astreetwriter@yahoo.com](mailto:astreetwriter@yahoo.com) T: 07392 010193

## The Drawing Room

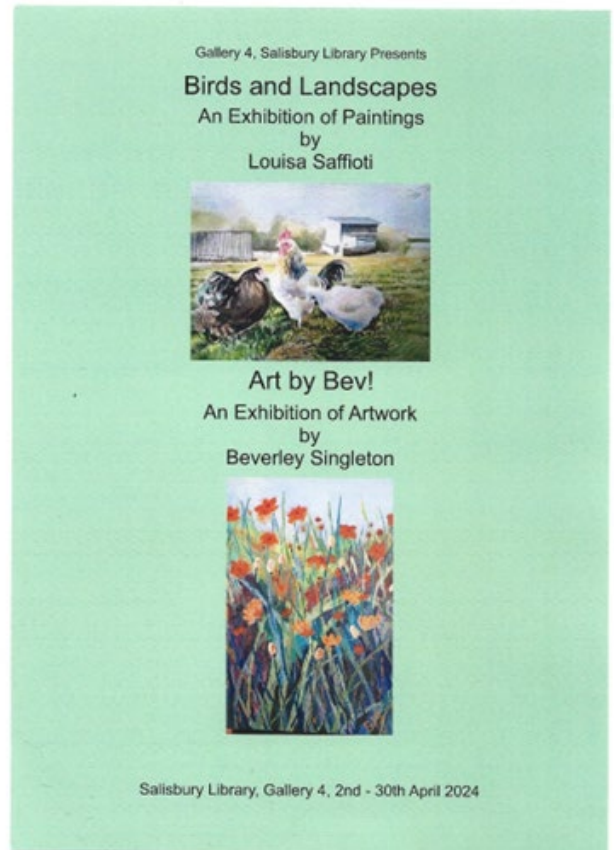
Monday 7- 8.30pm or Tuesday 4.30-6pm  
Central Salisbury, Belle Vue Road.  
Fortnightly drawing sessions. FOC.  
Portraits, Dancers, Performers, Still Life but not as we know it.  
Why? Just for the hell of it.  
Contact Angie Street for more dates and to book a seat. Sweet.  
[astreetwriter@yahoo.com](mailto:astreetwriter@yahoo.com) or text 07392 010193





Belmont Fine Arts - established 2007 offering giclee and digital prints from business cards and greetings cards to 60inch wide canvas, A2 flatbed scanning and bespoke picture framing we are sure we will be able to help. We work with individual artists and photographers as well as commercial clients nationwide producing an excellent finish to showcase your work at its best. Visit us in our studio and barn just outside Salisbury to discuss your needs, choose mounts, mouldings and papers or just have a chat about how we can work with you. We are a friendly family run business with a growing customer base so drop us an email or give us a call and we look forward to hearing from you and working together soon. (We want to be able to give you our full attention so by appointment only please)

2 Belmont Cottages,  
 Southampton Road  
 Clarendon  
 Salisbury  
 SP5 3DE



## **FEES**

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE** £20 individual; £30 Family  
**WORKSHOPS** £45 members (booking essential ) £50 Guests  
**UNTUTORED LIFE CLASS** £12 per session.  
**TALKS / SALISBURY SKETCHERS** free.  
**FRIDAY ART** £2 per session.  
**VISITS** fees vary. See website/ newsletters

FRIDAY ART MEETINGS ARE HELD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, EXCEPT AUGUST, AT METHODIST CHURCH HALL, ROMAN RD., BEMERTON, SALISBURY. SP2 9BH

FURTHER DETAILS OF ALL THESE EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE.

[www.salisburygroupofartists.co.uk](http://www.salisburygroupofartists.co.uk)

## **CONTACTS**

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