

ABINGDON

TOWN MAGAZINE
Edition Ten 2021



OXFORDSHIRE
art
WEEKS



Oxfordshire Artweeks in Abingdon • Masters of The Air at Abingdon Airfield
Spring Reads for Young Readers • What's On

— SHOP • EAT • PLAY —



Inner Personal Visions

Oxfordshire Artweeks in Abingdon and Beyond

Esther Lafferty, Festival Director



Caroline Harben (top) and Sandra Hoeft

Sunningwell School of Art is a widely renowned art school in a charming old building beside the duckpond in the heart of pretty village Sunningwell. Here students both young and old take courses in painting, ceramics and more all year round. You are invited to visit over May Day Bank Holiday weekend to have a look round and see some of the 2D and 3D wonders they have created.

Then, from the 15th, there are five venues to visit in town for an art fix. At Abingdon Museum you can see a selection of embroideries of birds by Ticia Lever (Artweeks venue 178). Ticia has always been fascinated by birds and was particularly inspired by them during lockdown, watching them and envying their sense of freedom and flight! This exhibition includes a series of British birds that are handstitched in blue thread on a white background, sea birds on backgrounds that have been rust dyed to create interesting marks and colours, and other species on sheer fine silk stretched on Perspex frames.

Opposite, in St Nicolas Church, you'll find a group of artists showing a variety of paintings and ceramics, and just a few steps away, in St Ethelwold's House on East St Helen Street, two artists exhibiting together take contrasting approaches to landscape: Caroline Harben focuses on colour while Sandra Hoeft is primarily interested in line and shape. Head out of the town along the Oxford Road and in Abbott

Last year the country's first lockdown drove the annual art extravaganza, Oxfordshire Artweeks online so this spring we're doubly looking forward to the festival. This year it includes both virtual art trails on a range of themes – including A Trip to the Coast and Adventures Abroad for those dreaming of sunny days by the sea – and COVID-secure venues to visit for those keen to carefully venture out and about. Here's a rundown of where you can go within a five-mile radius of Abingdon.

Road visit the Pop Up Arts Collective (Artweeks venue 177) where – in a show called 'Under One Sky' – a community of artists are gathering to create an airy outdoors arts trail in the garden and beyond. Expect environmental art, sound, light, textiles, mixed media, photography, and live events too!

Up at Peach Croft Farm (Artweeks venue 176) there's lively new art in a beautiful old barn. The artists here have taken on an interesting 'Grass Roots' challenge!

The Grass Roots Challenge

"COVID put paid to the Peach Croft exhibition in 2020," says artist Barbara Payne, "but out of the pandemic experience arose an idea for a new challenge, inspired by the story of Angus McPhee of South Uist, as told in Roger Hutchinson's book *The Silent Weaver*. Angus, damaged by his experiences in WWII, living in an asylum and unable to return to his beloved island, took to twisting long grass to make ropes, as crofters do in the Hebrides, and then he knitted or wove them into fantastic garments, adding in leaves and ▶



flowers. Late in his life this was recognised as art.

“Roger Hutchinson’s book tells us Art Extraordinary (also known as Raw Art or Outsider Art) arises from a powerful compulsion to create an inner personal vision ... Good art may be created by someone who never thought of himself as an artist; not least because McPhee’s sense of self was shattered by illness. He will not give us neat and pretty work. He will give us raw art,” she continues. “It made us think hard about what we do as artists and the result is a series of artworks created in lockdown conditions, departing from our usual methods of working, using found objects, or whatever materials we had to hand, arising from our own experiences and compulsions. We will display these during Artweeks alongside paintings, ceramics, textiles, jewellery and silver that we have to show at Peach Croft.”

A potter and painter, Barbara Payne has always loved folk music and longed to play the guitar. In lockdown she saw some men on TV making 3-stringed guitars from cigar boxes, tins and scrap wood, and has created her own version: the resulting Wavemeter Spares Box Guitar is named for the wooden box (her grandfather’s) printed with the words WAVEMETERS, CRYSTAL CALIBRATED, MINOR SPARES, SETS. It has a neck made with a length of decking rail, frets from paperclips and sound holes faced with belt buckles.

Eco-artist, Caroline (C. M.) Jackson-Houlston has made a jellyfish from plastic waste to highlight the surge in single-use waste and the impact on the ocean and will be encouraging you to make your own. And textile artist Trudi James, using material piling around her during lockdown, fabricated a colourful, ornate bunch of flowers, made of cut up beer cans!

Just outside of town, there’s gorgeous glass in Marcham where Pip Stacey’s exhibition this year ‘brings nature home’. She is using powdered glass techniques on glass to create stunning elegant roundels in which the colours of tulips, freesias and rhododendrons, rich with the spirit of spring,



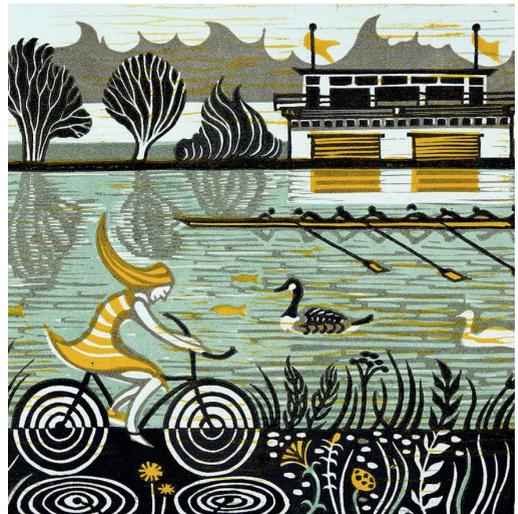
bring beauty and peace to any setting.

Pip has been a professional gardener for nearly two decades and flowers play a huge part in both her life and design processes. “Glass on first glance is a hard and unforgiving material,” she says, “But this preconception can be picked apart with a seed of inspiration and a little manipulation. Glass can then be encouraged to reveal its softer side. Using glass in its powder form allows me to blend and soften the edges of my designs.”



There are three new faces for Artweeks locally. Wootton’s Amanda Benstead (venue 171) explores colour, texture, form and feeling through diverse artforms; Abingdon potter Fi Cooper is showing her gorgeous pots and vessels as part of Artweeks for the first time in a stunning orchard venue in Little Wittenham (venue 185); and in Lower Radley (venue 175) printmaker Lizzie Wheeler joins long-time exhibitor Susan Wheeler in a charming studio in a Thames-side garden in Lower Radley where you can stop and dally a while with tea and cake.

Below: Susan Wheeler





Susan Wheeler

You can also visit another hideaway overlooking the Thames, the Culham studio of Charlotte Storrs whose pottery is wheel thrown with simple surface decoration and a white glaze. For the handles of her pieces, she uses *akebia quinata* vine, a lovely natural material from Japan.

And last, but definitely not least, in the Sewell Centre Gallery at Radley College, curator Amanda Jewell teams stylised portraiture by Lucy Stopford with stunning sculpture in glass, stone and steel by Johannes von Stumm, former president of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. All are welcome, by appointment only.

Meet Sculptor Johannes von Stumm

Undeterred by the advice of art professionals who warned him against his chosen route and choice of materials, von Stumm followed his instincts, carved himself a niche in the world of sculpture and it is a privilege to be able to see his work here in Abingdon.

Von Stumm grew up in Munich making 3D objects in the cellar of his parents' house during the long winters and it was on a school trip to Paris as a teenager that he first really encountered sculpture and was transfixed. At college, however, his life drawing tutor dissuaded him from planning a career as a sculptor, warning him of the grim realities of being an artist: no money, a disillusioned family and a rusty old car! Von Stumm took this advice and went to university to read law and politics, the "sensible choice", but explains that the lure of being a sculptor was too great – deep inside he knew that he wished to live as one.

"And then even when I was studying fine art," he laughs, "the professor told me that granite and glass were an impossible alliance which would never work. However, I had grown up in the Alps where water, stone and wood are seen together in beautiful



Above & Below: Lucy Stopford



natural combinations, so this was an irresistible challenge for me. I was also intrigued by how age-old materials speak to the soul and wanted to capture that in my sculpture. I persevered and experimented, and after several years and a lot of broken glass I finally developed a way of joining the opposing forces of the different materials in an inseparable and interdependent form as a carpenter might join two pieces of wood."

In the combination of very different and apparently contradictory materials, each sculpture represents both the fragility and strength of life, the solid and the liquid, the dark and the transparent, all meshed together perfectly to form harmonious static entities which have fluidity and dynamism. From the first, von Stumm's extraordinary combinations of iron, granite and glass attracted public and critical acclaim, and he has exhibited across Europe, Asia and America.

What's on

OXFORDSHIRE
art
WEEKS

Abingdon Artweeks Listing

For full listings across Oxfordshire, go to artweeks.org

169 Pip Stacey

Glass

Bringing nature home: powdered glass techniques on glass.

15-16, 20-23 May 10am-6pm

Pear Tree Cottage

7 Packhorse Lane

Marcham OX13 6NT

170 Sunningwell School of Art

Various artforms

Students of all ages exhibit 2- & 3-dimensional work in a variety of media.

1-3 May, Sat 12.30-6pm, Sun 12-6pm,

Mon 12-5pm

The Old School

Sunningwell nr Abingdon OX13 6RD

171 Amanda Benstead

Various

Exploring colour, texture, form and feeling through diverse media to make beautiful, intriguing things.

15-23 May, 11am-6pm

15 Robinson Road

Wootton OX1 5LE

172 Sarah Bond WOA

| Sasha Bond

Drawing, Painting

Colourful contemporary paintings of mountains, seas, renewable energy and Oxford. Beautiful drawings inspired by an epic UK cycle ride.

15-16, 21-23 May, 11am-5pm

Archangel Studio

1 Abingdon Road

Cumnor OX2 9QN

173 Sue Side OAS WOA

| David Williams

Drawing, Sculpture

Atmospheric inkwork, drawings and etchings. Organic tactile sculpture for outdoor and in. All in an airy studio and garden.

15-16, 19, 21-23 May, 11am-6pm

39 Robsart Place

Cumnor OX2 9QT

174 Lucy Stopford OAS

| Johannes Von Stumm
OAS OPC

Painting, Sculpture

Behind the Curtain of Reality: painting, drawing and sculpture. Email acj@radley.org.uk to make an appointment.

15, 17-22 May

Sewell Centre Gallery

Radley College

OX14 2HR

175 Susan Wheeler OAS OPC

| Lizzie Wheeler OAS

Printmaking

Linoprints and monoprints by two professional printmakers in rural village near the Thames path. Tea and cake in garden.

15-23 May, 11am-6pm

115 Lower Radley

OX14 3BA

176 Peach Croft Farm Artists

Various artforms

Lively new art in a beautiful old barn. Paintings, ceramics, textiles, silver and jewellery

15-23 May, 10am-5pm

Peach Croft Farm Barn

Twelve Acre Drive, Abingdon OX14 2HP

177 Pop Up Arts Collective

Various artforms

Under One Sky: a diverse group of artists gather to create an arts trail in the garden and beyond.

15-18, 20-23 May, 10am-4pm

(Sat 22nd eve by appt)

30 Abbott Rd

Abingdon OX14 2DU

07890 068768

popupartscollective.co.uk

178 Ticia Lever OCG WOA

Textiles

A variety of bird images worked using both hand and machine stitching.

15-16, 18-23 May, 10am-4pm

Abingdon County Hall Museum

Market Place

Abingdon OX14 3HG

179 Abbey Group

Ceramics, Painting

Inspired paintings and creative ceramics by five talented local artists.

17-22 May, 10am-5pm

St Nicolas Church

18-19 Market Place

Abingdon OX14 3JD

180 Caroline Harben

| Sandra Hoef

Painting

Two artists with differing approaches to landscape: Caroline is a colourist and Sandra is interested in line and shape.

15-23 May, 11am-6pm

St Ethelwold's House

30 East St Helen Street

Abingdon OX14 5EB

181 Charlotte Storrs

Ceramics

Functional stoneware, wheel-thrown. Studio in beautiful secret garden close to the Thames. Ceramics displayed in garden gazebo.

By appt only; please call 07702 099610
15-23 May
8 The Green
Culham OX14 4LZ



182 Clare Owen | Nandi Ablett

Painting, Pottery

Pottery showing images from nature and influences from around the world. Bird paintings on wood and dog portrait lead plaques.

15-16, 20-21, 23 May, 11am-5pm
(Thu/Fri 2-5pm)
42 Little Wittenham Road
Long Wittenham OX14 4QS



Liz Gascoigne & Fi Cooper

183 Sylva Wood Centre

Various

Stunning wood craft and nature-based art by resident and invited artists. Café. Free parking. Great for all the family.

15-16, 22-23 May, 10am-5pm
Sylva Wood Centre
Little Wittenham Road
Long Wittenham OX14 4QT

184 Martin Damen

Wood

Maker of hand-carved spoons and bowls and regular tutor at the Sylva Wood Centre exhibits traditional and contemporary work. Demos.

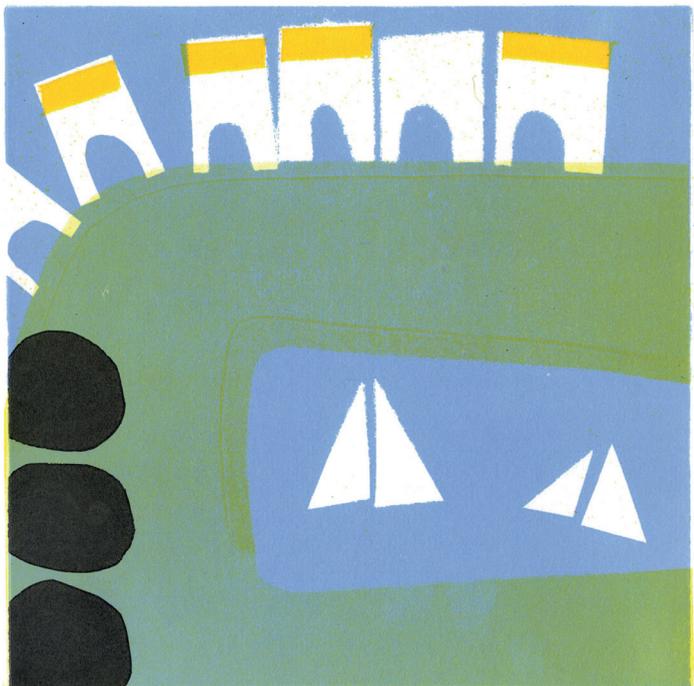
15-16, 22-23 May, 10am-5pm
Sylva Wood Centre
Little Wittenham Road
Long Wittenham OX14 4QT

185 Liz Gascoigne | Fi Cooper

Ceramics, Painting

Contemporary paintings, flow painted imagery, pottery and ceramics in a barn gallery and outside in an ancient orchard.

15-16, 19-23 May, 11am-6pm
The Barn Studio, Clumps Orchard,
Little Wittenham OX14 4RE
01865 407572



Lizzie Wheeler