

En Plein Air 2023

This year's outdoor painting sessions started on 4 May at Upton Country Park to coincide with the beginning of our spring exhibition, Equilibrium. We then had the excitement surrounding the coronation and numbers attending our plein air sessions were very low for a while. Later in May we visited the RSPB reserve at Arne which proved to be a popular choice and numbers improved from then on. Brownsea Island was a memorable day in June when we were able to watch and sketch the breeding terns on the lagoon and eat a packed lunch closely watched by hungry peacocks.

Our annual visit to Shillingstone House is always a highlight and an evening visit to Rockley point produced some wonderful evening light. Gaunts' House just outside Wimborne was an interesting venue, they made us very welcome and supplied tea and coffee so we will be going back to see more of this large estate.

A very successful day saw us at the Scott Arms in Kingston where we were joined by Kate Marr and her art group. The view of Corfe Castle from the pub garden is wonderful and we enjoyed a very sociable morning with coffee, beer and lunch available right next to the easel!

Later on in August we painted at Wareham Quay where we were joined by members of Wareham Camera club who photographed us at work and produced some great images that they shared with us afterwards.

Our final epa at the beginning of September was a beautiful sunny morning at the Cowshed cafe in the courtyard at Lychett Minster. It's the perfect venue with free parking, a good cafe with outdoor seating and toilets, that ticks all the boxes!

Looking back it seems that some of the most successful days are when we meet with other clubs and societies or paint in a social group so I will see if we can incorporate more of these events in next year's calendar.

If you haven't tried painting outside come and join us next year for some great days out.

David Roberts