



Newsletter – September 2023

BURTON EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

We do hope that many of you have been able to see the excellent exhibition at the Burton over the last few months, *Revealing the Human Form: Sculpture from Leading British Artists*. For a small town like Bideford to be treated to such a multitude of works by the most celebrated British sculptors of the 20th century is a huge achievement, and we must pay tribute to the staff of the Burton who brought the show together. More is to come in the autumn:

September 16 – November 3: Ian Davenport – Works on Paper



Abstract paintings, which explore process and materiality. In recent years his work has consisted of carefully poured lines of acrylic paint down a surface, which puddle and pool at the bottom. This technique allows him to explore complex arrangements of line and colour. His work is in exhibitions in London, Paris, New York and Texas – and now in Bideford!

(Black Puddle © Ian Davenport, 2010. Photo: Prudence Cuming Associate)

Private view: Saturday 16 September, 6 – 8pm, with Ian Davenport in the Gallery. All Friends welcome. Do come!

September 30 – 4 December: Rebecca Appleby – Matter



One of the most innovative ceramicists in the UK, Rebecca explores the creative potential of clay as a medium and the theory that everything on earth is connected.

(Detail © Rebecca Appleby. Photo by David Fulford)

November 18 – February 11: Artists Rooms – Louise Bourgeois

ARTIST
ROOMS
**LOUISE
BOURGOIS**

French-American artist Louise Bourgeois is widely recognised as one of the most important and influential figures of modern and contemporary art, with a career spanning eight decades from the 1930s to 2010. Using different forms and materials, her work is often autobiographical and explores personal and universal themes.

Workshops and more

The Burton website displays a wealth of **workshops** for children, and for adults, who in the coming months can try *Paper Litho Printmaking*, *Colour and Mark Making*, as well as *Needle-Felt a Bear* – just in time for Christmas! You can also find on the website an online gallery with much on local traditions and industries.

APOLOGIES AND EXPLANATIONS ...

which probably should have come first, but we really did not want a negative start. That said, we owe you a huge apology for the delay in sending a Newsletter. This is the first since since

March this year, despite many changes. An even greater apology is due to those without e-mail addresses who have received no communications by post for much longer. Many will know that our former Chair, Jane Whittaker, had to stand down earlier this year after a sad year of ill health and loss. Our sympathy goes to her. Pam Orchard, another stalwart of the Friends' Committee also had to stand down. We offer them enormous thanks.

New Committee: At our Annual General Meeting on June 3 a very satisfactory new Committee of 10 was elected: Pam Cattle, Chris Cartledge, Irene Hahn, Jim Jackson, David Howell, Hilary Marshall, Chrissi Newall, David Thompson (Membership), Pam Thompson (Chair), Tim Toghill (Secretary).

I agreed to take over as Chairperson, having been acting Treasurer for over a year, and the Committee has already met three times. There has been much to untangle and restore: bank accounts, Charity Commission details, revision of the Constitution, membership names and numbers, and our mailing list. Much is complete, but the lack of an Honorary Treasurer still hinders us. At present I am tackling both, which probably means that I do neither job satisfactorily, so:

WANTED: NEW HONORARY TREASURER

Could you pay bills, document receipts, keep accounts, report regularly to the committee, produce annual accounts for the Annual General Meeting and for the Charity Commission? You would be a member of the Committee (about 2 hours, 6 times a year) and communicate regularly with the Chair and Membership Secretary, who would both support you.

Please let me know if interested or would welcome a chat: pthomp1059@aol.com.

We also plan to change our current bank account which has become very inconvenient and expensive in charges, but that will probably have to wait until next years' membership subscriptions have been received if chaos is not to ensue. Alas, many of you have not updated your standing orders for some years, despite our pleas, with some still paying only half the current fee of £20.00. Please do update your standing orders now, so that next year's membership fees are correct. We feel it unfair to newer members that they are subsidising other older ones, and, having given several warnings, we fear that we may have to end memberships after next January if the correct fees are not paid. Life members are not, of course, continue their membership.

More New Faces: We have also met several times both the new Chair of the Burton Trustees, Robert Millward, and the new Director of the Burton, Patrizia Ribul, as we want to know how best the Friends can continue to help achieve their priorities. It is some years since we made a fundraising approach to Friends, so are currently identifying a project which might appeal to all of you. HUGELY!

Our Constitution has not been updated for many years and is now seriously out of date. It has now been revised and will have to be approved by all of you at a meeting in the near future, though possibly just at the next AGM. Perhaps we could combine that with a social event for Friends.

Together23 event, July 29



A day for charities and volunteers at Bideford Pannier Market. A small group of us represented both the Friends and the Burton itself with a stall at the event. It was good to be seen as part of the area's strong volunteer force and to give face to one of the major cultural charities in the area. (Photo: Rosalind Power)

So, much has been happening, which, I hope, explains why we have not managed to communicate all of it to you more quickly.

BENEFITS OF FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP. First, a warm welcome to the 29 new members who have joined the Friends in the past year. Not all may be aware of the benefits their membership brings. Now that our mailing list is re-jigged, we hope you keep you up-to-date with all Burton events in good time though you can always find details on the Burton's website (<https://www.burtonartgallery.co.uk/whats-on-at-the-burton/exhibitions-activities/>) and in the Burton's brochure. Do ask them for one if you are not on their mailing list.

Friends can attend **private views** of new exhibitions and talks connected to them. Our own **programme of talks** was suspended several years ago, as we could not count on a good audience. Would you like to give a talk or propose a talk you would like? Which times for talks would suit you best? Perhaps we can then re-start a programme. Do let us know – we need feedback. We would also like to arrange more **visits**. Suggestions for visits will be welcomed.



Sandy Brown, one of our patrons and an Appledore-based ceramicist, has offered a tour of her wonderful studio on Wednesday 18 October at 2.30pm. There may be a chance of an additional date if numbers are too large. Access to the gallery involves stairs, so please check. **Please book your place by September 30. Bookings to: pthomp1059@aol.com**

Discounts at the Burton: for purchases at the Burton over £10 in the shop and craft gallery, as a Friend you can gain a 10% discount.

Another Quiz: our two fundraising quizzes last year were quite successful and raised very worthwhile funds. Another is now planned for the evening of **October 26th** at the Bideford Rugby Club. Pat Kivlin has kindly volunteered to present the next quiz, so you can escape being questioned by me again. Do try to come. It's great fun, and a rare chance for a goodly number of Friends to socialise. Details to follow soon.

OPEN EXHIBITION. Our Open Exhibition has always formed a firm foundation for our fundraising for the Burton, while providing excellent opportunities for the display and sale of local artists' work. As previously reported, our Christmas Open Exhibition can sadly not happen in December this year, a great loss for Friends and for local artists who submit works. A clash of exhibition times means that our Open will now take place from the end of February 2024 and run until after Easter. Full details will follow as soon as dates are fixed. We do hope that you will all submit works as usual and that sales of works will continue to

aid both our artists' and the Burton's coffers. We hope very much that the Open will revert to a December date in 2024.

VOLUNTEERS. The Burton somehow exists on a devoted, close-to-skeleton staff, almost all part-time. Any voluntary help you can offer will be greatly appreciated. In particular, volunteers are always needed to steward at exhibitions (including this autumn), some of which, from other august institutions, require full-time surveillance. Help is needed almost immediately. If you can offer even a few hours, do contact the Burton. There may also be projects in which your experience would be really helpful. Just ask!

YOUR SUPPORT/OUR SUPPORT. Volunteering is just one way to help the Burton. They operate with a small part-time staff, so far for 7 days a week, but funding is tight. The Friends have for over 70 years regularly supported specific needs at the Burton, helping to fund acquisitions, expand the building, and help with contributions to the many funding applications they have to make every year to ensure survival. In recent years, we have reduced our reserve funds significantly in order to help with ever-increasing general running costs. We realise that a continuing depletion of funds cannot continue if we are to maintain and develop our support.

The Burton continues to be financed by both Torridge Council and the Arts Council and the Friends, but those sums have to pay for staffing, exhibitions, building maintenance, heating costs (as for everyone, now much increased) and all the other costs a gallery and museum cannot avoid.

Not all Friends are in a position to help financially in current difficult times. But, if not now, could we plan to help later? Many of us already have wills, but have we considered a legacy to the Burton which has for many of us brightened our lives in Bideford and formed a focus for artistic and cultural activities across the wider, local area? Please consider a legacy by adding to a will or obtaining one. It does not have to be at great expense. Alongside solicitors, there are many reputable will-writing firms, and many charities offer free or much reduced help with wills. The Burton and its Friends really do need you!

